

DEDTEA Reference Number: DC22/0038/2014

Basic Assessment for the proposed cultivation of 90 ha of fallow grassland to sugarcane on the remainder of the farm Langopdravende no. 1111 in Eston, KwaZulu-Natal

Background Information Document

January 2015

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The Zibophezele Community Trust is proposing to cultivate 90 ha of land to sugarcane on the remainder of the farm Langopdravende no. 1111 in Eston, KwaZulu-Natal. The agricultural development will entail the cultivation of fallow (virgin) grassland for sugar cane and triggers a listed activity in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, Government Notice Regulations (GNR) 546 of June 2010 promulgated under the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (Act no 107 of 1998).

AIM OF THE DOCUMENT

This Background Information Document (BID) provides potential Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) with:

- Information on the proposed project;
- A description of the Basic Assessment process; and
- Details on how to register your interest in the project and receive further information.

As a registered I&AP, there will be opportunities for you to be involved in this Basic Assessment (BA) process through receiving information, contributing issues and commenting on the Draft and Final BA Reports (BAR). The input from I&APs, together with the information and assessment provided by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (CSIR) and relevant specialists, will be used by the Competent Authority, in this instance the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DEDTEA) KZN, to determine whether to grant Environmental Authorisation (EA) to the proposed project.

PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed project will be located on the remainder of the farm Langeopdravende no. 1111 in Eston, KwaZulu Natal (**Figure 1 below**).

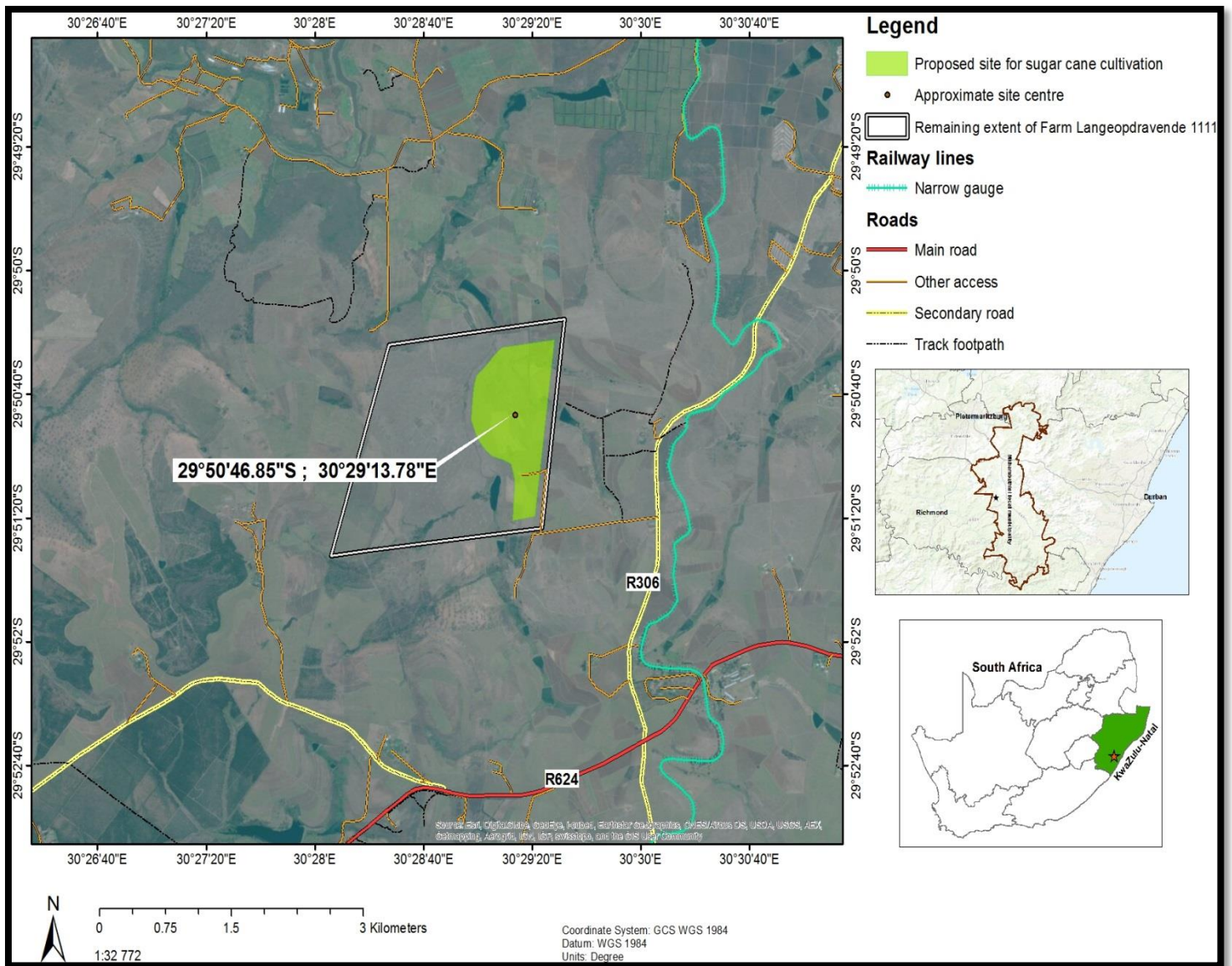


Figure 1: Location of the Zibophezele Community Trust Sugarcane Project Site

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The key components of the proposed project are described below:

- Cultivation of 90 ha of land for sugarcane which will be supplied to Illovo Sugar Ltd.
- Construction of small unpaved access roads
- Utilization of an existing farm house.

NEED AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROJECT

The Zibophezele Community Trust was identified by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform as a community who would benefit from their Recapitalization and Development Support Programme (RECAP) funding. This proposed project would have far reaching socio-economic benefits and rural upliftment objectives. The development proposed would enable the Trust to extend its agricultural footprint which will increase cane production to an estimated 5600 tons of cane per annum. The Trust has 33 beneficiaries, 14 are women, 14 are youth and 33 households are represented, all of which will benefit from the success of the operation. The objective of the Trust is to fully utilize the potential of the

land to create wealth, capacity building, and employment opportunities and to contribute positively the economy.

ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION –SUMMARY OF THE BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

In terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations published in GNR 543, 544, 545 and 546 on the 18 June 2010 Government Gazette 33306, a Basic Assessment process is required as the project triggers the following listed activity in GN 546 (detailed in Table 1 below).

Table 1: Listed Activities

Relevant notice:	Activity No (s) (in terms of the relevant notice) :	Description of each listed activity as per the Government Notice:
GN.R546, 18 June 2010	14	The clearance of an area of 5 hectares or more of vegetation where 75% or more of the vegetative cover constitutes indigenous vegetation, except where such removal of vegetation is required for: (1) purposes of agriculture or afforestation inside areas identified in spatial instruments adopted by the competent authority for agriculture or afforestation purposes; (2) the undertaking of a process or activity included in the list of waste management activities published in terms of section 19 of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act No. 59 of 2008) in which case the activity is regarded to be excluded from this list; (3) the undertaking of a linear activity falling below the thresholds in Notice 544 of 2010 (a) In KwaZulu-Natal: i. All areas outside urban areas.

This listed activity requires EA from DEDTEA. The Basic Assessment process that will be undertaken for this project is summarised in the following steps below:

Step 1: Notify Authorities and potential I&APs (30 days) (current stage)

The first stage in the process entails notifying all potential I&APs of the proposed project and providing I&APs with an opportunity to register as an I&AP.

I&APs are required to register their interest on the project database within 30 days (in order to be included from the outset of the BA process) and/or raise issues of concern.

Step 2: Draft Basic Assessment for Public Comment (40 days)

The BA process is undertaken in order to identify and assess potential environmental impacts, both positive and negative, that may be associated with the project. Mitigation and management measures will be identified to reduce potential negative impacts and maximise positive benefits. These mitigation and management measures will be included in the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) for this project. Two specialist studies will be undertaken as part of the proposed project: an Ecological Impact Assessment and a Socio-Economic Impact Assessment.

The Draft BAR will include comments received from all I&APs and findings of the specialist studies. All registered I&APs on the project database will be notified in writing of the 40 day comment period for the Draft BAR.

Step 3: Submit Final Basic Assessment Report

The Final BAR will be released to all registered I&APs for a period of 21 days to comment on the report. Comments from I&APs should be sent directly to the DEDTEA and copied to CSIR. The DEDTEA will look at all received comments in conjunction with the Final BAR for their decision making.

Step 4: Notification of Environmental Authorisation and Appeal Period

The final step in the process entails providing written notification to all I&APs on the project database of the issuing of the EA and appeal period, including appeal process.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

1. By responding to our invitation for your involvement as advertised in the local newspaper (advertisement placed in The Witness on Thursday 15th January 2015).
2. By mailing, emailing or faxing a comment form to the consultant indicated below.
3. By telephonically contacting the consultant if you have a query, comment, or require further project information.
4. By reviewing the various reports within the stipulated comment periods provided.
5. By attending any meetings, which may be held during the review period.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT?

Environmental Assessment Practitioner Details

To register as an I&AP, please complete the Registration Form included with this BID and kindly send to:

Kelly Stroebel	
 Email:	kstroebel@csir.co.za
 Tel:	021-888-2432
 Fax:	021-888-2473
 Address:	CSIR, PO Box 320, Stellenbosch, 7599
 Website:	http://www.csir.co.za/ems/specialneeds/



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
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