

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT



GENADE BOERDERY MIDDELPLAATS PIVOT EIA

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:

- This Background Information Document (BID) provides you, as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP), an overview of the proposed project.
- The BID invites you, as an I&AP, to participate in the required Public Participation Process.
- The BID provides you, as an I&AP with an opportunity to contribute and participate in the formulation of the Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Reports.
- The BID also provides you, as an I&AP an opportunity to provide the project team with your comments, concerns and objections to the proposed project.

INTRODUCTION:

Genade Boerdery (Pty) Ltd has appointed Environmental Impact Management Services (EIMS) as the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to assist with undertaking the necessary authorisation processes, including compiling the necessary reports and undertaking the statutory consultation processes, in support of the proposed project as described herein.

It is anticipated that several listed or regulated activities contained in the following legislation will potentially be triggered by the proposed project:

- National Environmental Management Act- NEMA (Act 107 of 1998- as amended)

The exact enviro-legal requirements and activities will be confirmed during the Authority pre-application meetings and scoping phase of this project.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process will be undertaken in terms of Chapter 6 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (GNR 982) promulgated under the NEMA (as amended). A full EIA process will be followed which involves a scoping phase which is the 'feasibility' and largely desk-top assessment stage of the project, followed by more detailed assessments in the EIA phase.

Aim of the Background Information Document (BID):

The aim of the BID is to:

- Provide an overview of the Environmental Authorisation/Licensing Applications as well as the public participation processes which will be undertaken for the proposed project;
- Allow Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) the opportunity to obtain a broad understanding of the proposed project and to request or share information; and
- Provide details on how I&APs can register their interest with and submit comments on the project. It is important to note that only registered I&APs will receive further communication regarding the project for the duration of the EIA process (i.e. invitation to review and comment on the Scoping and EIA Reports).

LOCATION, SCALE, AND EXTENT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT:

LOCATION

The proposed project and activity are proposed to be undertaken at the following location:

- Property Description: **Middel Plaats South No. 104 (C0370000000010400000)**



- Central Co-ordinates: **approximately -28.785582°S, 24.074790°E**
- Regional Description:
 - District Municipality: **Frances Baard District Municipality**
 - Local Municipality: **Sol Plaatje Local Municipality**
 - Province: **Northern Cape**
- Closest town or point of interest: **Schmidtsdrif**

Please refer to locality map at the end of this BID.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Genade Boerdery wishes to create 8 new cultivation (pivot) areas for the cultivation of potatoes. The development of these pivots will occur in phases over the course of 5 years. The crops will be rotated to prevent blight and allow for conservation of the soil. Once the planting cycle for a pivot area is completed, the area will be reseeded with grazing grasses for cattle. Seven of the new cultivation areas will each cover 60 hectares and one will cover 50 hectares, resulting in a total of ~470 hectares of indigenous vegetation clearance by the end of the five year period.

Irrigation requirements will be met using the applicant’s existing lawful water use which authorizes the taking of water from the Vaal River system for irrigation of up to 60 hectares. No additional water resources will be required as only one crop area will be planted at a time.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The proposed project requires certain authorisations, approvals, permits, and/or licences. The following requirements have specifically been identified:

Relevant Legislation	Listed activities or triggers	Authorisation, Approval, Licence, or Permit requirement:
Chapter 5 of the NEMA	GNR 984 (2014, as amended): Activity 15.	Environmental Authorisation (EA)

As a consequence of triggering the provisions above, there is a requirement to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment Process (EIA). The EIA is to be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the NEMA EIA Regulations (GNR982, 2014 as amended).

IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

An EIA process is a planning and decision-making tool, to describe and assess the physical, biological, social, and economic impacts which a given development or project may have. To be able to inform the decision-making process, it is important for public issues and concerns to be identified timeously, to enable the EIA team to evaluate them.

The EIA process allows for the environmental consequences of a proposed project to be identified up-front, investigated throughout the impact assessment process, and taken into consideration by the decision-making authorities. The EAP and various specialists also identify potential negative and positive impacts that could arise as a result of the proposed project and identify applicable mitigation measures required, to avoid or reduce negative impacts and to enhance positive impacts.

A broad overview of EIA process is provided:



Public Participation

Initial Call to Register:

- Advertisements, site notices, posters, letters to landowners and pre-identified I&APs. The aim of this step is to inform people of the proposed activity and to encourage initial comment and feedback.
- Ongoing Public Participation, incl: dissemination of information by means of public meetings and focus group meetings (where applicable), draft reports (Scoping & EIA), and project updates.

Scoping Phase

Collation of initial comments, concerns, objections and specialist investigations, into a concise report (Scoping Report) which provides feedback on the following:

- Nature of the activity;
- Description of the receiving environment;
- Identification of potential feasible alternatives;
- Identification of potential positive and negative impacts; and
- Identification of knowledge gaps.

Impact Assessment Phase

Aim of this phase is to investigate and comparatively assess the identified alternatives and make a recommendation of the most preferred alternative. In addition the identified impacts are assessed and relevant management and mitigation measures listed for inclusion in an EMPr. The EIA culminates in the compilation of an EIA Report.

Once the relevant processes have been completed and the final documentation submitted to the competent authority, the competent authority reviews the application and makes an informed decision. The I&APs will be informed of the decision and their right to appeal in the event that they disagree with the decision.

PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

One of the key drivers to a successful EIA is to ensure that potential impacts (both positive and negative) are identified and investigated. Additional impacts may be identified during the Scoping phase and relevant specialists will be included into the EIA team in order to accurately and objectively assess these potential impacts. A number of potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project have been identified. Preliminary identified potential impacts to be assessed in this EIA process include amongst others:

- **Habitat fragmentation and loss of indigenous vegetation;**
- **Alien species invasion;**
- **Loss of species of conservation concern;**
- **Anthropogenic disturbance, intentional and/or accidental killing and removal of fauna;**
- **Hydrocarbon spillages;**
- **Littering;**
- **Erosion;**
- **Dust;**
- **Loss of potential heritage and/or palaeontological resources.**

The above-mentioned impacts should not be construed as the only impacts that will be identified during the course of the EIA. Based on public consultation, specialist input and further detailed assessments, additional impacts will likely be identified and assessed.

All potential impacts will be identified and assessed following an impact assessment methodology guided by the requirements of the NEMA EIA Regulations. The broad approach to the significance rating methodology is to determine the environmental risk (ER) by considering the consequence (C) of each impact (comprising Nature, Extent, Duration, Magnitude, and Reversibility) and relate this to the probability/likelihood (P) of the impact occurring. This determines the environmental risk. In addition,



other factors including cumulative impacts, public concern, and potential for irreplaceable loss of resources, are used to determine a prioritisation factor (PF) which is applied to the ER to determine the overall significance (S).

Furthermore, based on the identified impacts and their ratings, mitigation and management measures are recommended for the applicant and these are included in an Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) towards ensuring that any negative impacts that cannot be avoided are minimised and managed, and positive impacts maximised.

Specialist studies may be utilised to guide and inform the assessment of the potential impacts. The specialist studies identified to be included in this assessment include:

- **Biodiversity (Aquatic and Terrestrial Ecology);**
- **Heritage;**
- **Palaeontology.**

The need for further specialist studies may be identified through the scoping process.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Should you feel that you may be interested in, or affected by, this project, it is essential that you register as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) in which case you will be kept informed regarding the project and afforded an opportunity to participate in the process. Please note that only registered I&APs will be included in future correspondence regarding the project and associated updates. You may register and/or comment as an I&AP in any of the following ways:

- Complete the I&AP registration form and questionnaire and return it to EIMS via email, fax or post;
- Submit written comments, registrations, or requests to EIMS via email, fax or post; and/or
- Via telephone call.

It is important to note that the EIA process is guided by legally stipulated timeframes and as such, in order to ensure your continued and valuable involvement in the project, we request that your registration requests and any preliminary comments are submitted to EIMS (contact details provided below).

Please note that further to the above, all registered I&APs will also be notified in due course of further participation opportunities, as well as the availability of the Scoping Report and Environmental Impact Report upon which comments will be solicited.

Environmental Impact Management Services (Pty) Ltd (EIMS)

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Further information will be available at www.eims.co.za/public-participation/. Please note that in the event that you are unable to access the website due to data constraints please contact EIMS for alternative arrangements.

