

Proposed Safari Lodge near Malelane Gate, Kruger National Park
DEA Reference Number: 14/12/16/3/3/1/1280

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

October 2014

In terms of the EIA Regulations published in terms of Section 24(5) of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, Act No. 107 of 1998), Malelane Safari Resort Investment (Pty) Ltd requires authorization from the **National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA)**, for the undertaking of the proposed Safari Lodge near Malelane Gate in the Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga.

In order to obtain authorization, a **Basic Assessment Process** must be undertaken together with independent environmental studies, in accordance with the EIA Regulations. This project has been registered with the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) under the application reference number indicated above.

You have been identified as a potential **Interested and / or Affected Party (I&AP)** to this process, and are hereby invited to participate.

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT TELLS YOU

This Background Information Document (BID), provides you, as a potential I&AP, with **background information** on the proposed project, as well as information regarding the **Basic Assessment (BA) Process** that is currently underway to assess the potential environmental impacts (i.e. positive and negative; as well as direct, indirect, and cumulative) of the proposed project;

It further indicates how you can become involved in the project, receive information and raise issues that may concern and / or interest you. The sharing of information forms an important component of the Public Participation Process and not only provides you with the opportunity to become actively involved, but also to provide information that may be of value for the proposed development.

PROPERTY & PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Malelane Safari Resort Investment (Pty) Ltd is proposing the development of a 240 bed Safari Lodge with a four star rating in the Malelane Region of the Kruger National Park. The main activities to be provided by the safari lodge include the following:

- Accommodation in tented units;
- Main lodge with pool area;
- Restaurant;
- Conference venue;
- Family Centre;

- Wellness Centre / Spa;
- Curio shop;
- Riverside meander, river footbridge and catering deck;

Support services and infrastructure will include the following:

- Potable water supply and purification (abstracted from boreholes @ approximately 36 cubic meters per day);
- Water storage (approximately 350 000 litre off stream reservoir).
- Power supply (off-grid generation via a hybrid system including 300kW solar PV with battery storage and 400kW diesel powered back-up generators);
- Sewage treatment (centralised on site facility with a capacity of 50 000 litres per 24 hours);
- Refuse collection, recycling and off-site disposal;
- On-site storm water management;
- On-site roads and pathways (footpaths and golf cart routes)
- The realignment of approximately 3km of the S114 road (which currently runs through the proposed site) and the rehabilitation of the redundant section of road;
- A new access road to the lodge and service area;
- Laundry, offices, stores and staff facility;
- Vehicle wash bay;
- Irrigation (via purified effluent);
- Communications and data.

In addition to the above, the application includes the development of a 'Park and Ride' facility at the Malelane Gate (south west of the existing staff housing). This will be developed as a partnership between the proposed Safari Lodge and Kruger National Park.

- Components of the facility include an electric fence and gate, offices, reception, vehicle wash bay, ablutions, a kiosk, a waiting area, an outdoor rest area and parking areas.
- Eskom power, potable water and sewage treatment will be linked to the existing systems at the Malelane Gate staff village. These services will need to be upgraded.
- Sewage will be linked to the current system at Malelane Gate
- Storm water Management will be site specific.

Five site alternatives are under consideration, and are all located within the 'Peripheral Development Zone', as per the Kruger National Park's Conservation Development Framework (CDF). The Peripheral Development Zone (PDZ) has a width of 2km from the Kruger National Park (KNP) boundary in this area. This zoning was approved by the Minister of Environmental Affairs in 2013 and allows for the development of tourist accommodation facilities of up to 240 beds.

The study area (including all site alternatives) lies within the Kruger National Park and is thus under the jurisdiction of the South African National Parks (SANParks). The study area extends from the Malelane Gate in the south, along the west bank of the Crocodile River, up to the confluence of the Timfeneni River in the north.

Land uses on the eastern bank of the Crocodile River (i.e. beyond the boundary of the Kruger National Park) include the Leopard Creek Golf Estate, the Pestana Kuger Lodge, irrigated croplands and scattered urban settlements. Refer to attached locality map.

PROJECT MOTIVATION

Since the Malelane Sun burnt down in 2007, the need to provide a similar type of product in the KNP has been identified. Not only will the Safari Lodge fill that gap, it will also tap into new markets.

One such market is the growing black middle class, who has a combined spending power of 34% of all consumers. Market research shows that the majority of South Africa's black middle class wants full service lodge-type accommodation, which the proposed Safari Lodge will cater for.

Attracting more middle-class black tourists is one of SANParks' three focus market areas for the Kruger National Park. The others are the existing, traditional, largely white, domestic market (who are more attracted to self-catering accommodation) and the international market.

THE BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

NuLeaf Planning and Environmental Pty Ltd was appointed by Malelane Safari Resort Investment (Pty) Ltd to undertake the Basic Assessment (BA) Process for the proposed activities. The BA Process works as follows:

- When an applicant proposes to undertake a listed activity (i.e. those listed in Government Notice No 544, 545 and / or 546 of 18 June 2010), an Application must be made for Environmental Authorization. Depending on the scale and nature of the activity, either a Basic Assessment or a Full Scoping and EIA Procedure must be followed.
- The development as proposed triggers the following activities, and as such requires that a Basic Assessment Process be undertaken.

<p>GN R. 544 Item 9 (i) &(ii) <i>The construction of facilities or infrastructure exceeding 1000 meters in length for the bulk transportation of water, sewage or storm water with an internal diameter of 0,36 meters or more; or with a peak throughput of 120 litres per second or more.</i></p>	<p>Potable water and sewage reticulation infrastructure will most likely exceed 1000m in length and storm water infrastructure may exceed 1000m in length and may have an internal diameter of 0,36m, depending on the final stormwater design.</p>
<p>GN R. 544 Item 10 (i) <i>The construction of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity outside urban areas with a capacity of more than 33kV, but less than 275 kV.</i></p>	<p>Electricity will be generated on site via a hybrid system including 300kW solar PV with battery storage and 400kW diesel powered back-up generators. Distribution of generated electricity will be on site only.</p>
<p>GN R. 544 Item 11 (iii), (vi), (x) & (xi) <i>The construction of bridges, bulk storm water outlets and buildings and infrastructure covering 50 square metres or more where such construction occurs within 32m of a watercourse.</i></p>	<p>The main lodge, the wellness centre, the family centre, the conference centre and some of the tented units will lie within 32m of one or both rivers. In addition, the riverside meander, footbridge and catering deck will occur very close to one or both rivers. The realigned S114 (option S1) will require a new drift crossing over the Timfenene River. Lastly, depending on the stormwater design, outlets may be developed within 32m of one or both rivers.</p>
<p>GN R. 544 Item 18 (i) <i>The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 5 cubic metres of material into or from a watercourse</i></p>	<p>The realigned S114 (option S1) will require a new drift crossing over the Timfenene River. The construction of this crossing will trigger this activity during construction.</p>

<p>GN R. 544 Item 23 (ii) <i>The transformation of undeveloped, vacant or derelict land to residential, retail, commercial, recreational, industrial or institutional use, outside an urban area and where the total area to be transformed is bigger than 1 hectare but less than 20 hectares.</i></p>	<p>Although the proposed safari lodge is a tourism facility, it is also a business, including components such a wellness centre, restaurant, curio shop and conference venue. In addition, recreational activities will be provided on the site. The total footprint area of the lodge, realigned road and Park and Ride measures just over 19 Ha.</p>
<p>GN R. 544 Item 24 <i>The transformation of land bigger than 1000 square metres in size to residential, retail, commercial, recreational, industrial or institutional use, where zoning is open space, conservation or equivalent.</i></p>	<p>Although the proposed safari lodge is a tourism facility, it is also a business, including components such a wellness centre, restaurant, curio shop and conference venue. In addition, recreational activities will be provided on the site. The total footprint area of the lodge will exceed 1000m².</p>
<p>GN R 544 Item 37 (b) <i>The expansion of facilities for the bulk transportation of water, sewage or storm water where the infrastructure throughput capacity will be increased by more than 10%.</i></p>	<p>The existing infrastructure at Malelane Gate (i.e. potable water, sewage and storm water) will be expanded to service the propose Park and Ride facility. Depending on the final design, this may represent more than a 10% increase of current capacity.</p>
<p>GN R. 546 Item 2 (ii) <i>The construction of reservoirs for the bulk water supply with a capacity of more than 250 cubic metres within a protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA.</i></p>	<p>Water storage for the proposed lodge will be in an off-stream reservoir with a capacity of approximately 350 m³.</p>
<p>GN R. 546 Item 3 (a) & (b) (ii) (aa) <i>The construction of masts or towers for telecommunication broadcasting or radio transmission where the mast is placed on a site not previously used for this proposed and / or where it will exceed 15m in height within a protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA.</i></p>	<p>Telecommunications masts may be positioned on top of buildings or on the ground, depending on the design and technical specifications. These may exceed 15m in height, again depending on design and technical specifications.</p>
<p>GN R. 546 Item 4 (a) (ii) (aa) <i>The construction of a road wider than 4m with a reserve less than 13,5m within a protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA.</i></p>	<p>The realigned S114 (option S1) may exceed 4m in width.</p>
<p>GN R. 546 Item 6 (a) (ii) (aa) <i>The construction of resorts, lodges, or other tourism accommodation facilities that sleep 15 people or more within a protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA.</i></p>	<p>The proposed safari lodge will have 240 tourist beds.</p>
<p>GN R. 546 Item 10 (a) (ii) (aa) <i>The construction of facilities or infrastructure for the storage and handling of a dangerous good with a capacity between 30 and 80 cubic metres within a protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA.</i></p>	<p>Diesel storage on site for backup generators and refuelling of game drive vehicles may exceed this threshold, depending on the final design capacity.</p>
<p>GN R. 546 Item 13 (c) (ii) (aa) <i>The clearance of an area of 1 ha or more of vegetation where 75% or more of the vegetation constitutes indigenous vegetation, within a protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA.</i></p>	<p>The total footprint area of the lodge, including the Park and Ride and realigned S114 (option S1) will exceed 1 ha. Clearing of vegetation will be required, and will exceed the threshold.</p>
<p>GN R. 546 Item 14 (a) (i) <i>The clearance of an area of 5 hectares or more of vegetation where 75% or more of the vegetative cover constitutes indigenous vegetation in all areas outside urban areas.</i></p>	<p>The total footprint area of the lodge, including the Park and Ride and realigned S114 (option S1) will exceed 5 ha. Clearing of vegetation will be required, and will exceed the threshold.</p>
<p>GN R. 546 Item 16 (iii) &(iv): (a) (ii) (aa) <i>The construction buildings and infrastructure covering 10 square metres or more within a protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA, where such construction occurs within 32m of a watercourse.</i></p>	<p>The main lodge, the wellness centre, the family centre, the conference centre and some of the tented accommodation units will lie within 32m of one or both rivers. In addition, the riverside meander, footbridge and catering deck will occur very close to one or both rivers. The realigned S114 (option S1) will require a new drift crossing over the Timfenene</p>

	River. Lastly, depending on the stormwater design, outlets may be developed within 32m of one or both rivers.
GN R. 546 Item 18 (a) (ii) (aa) <i>The expansion of a tourism facility where the development footprint will be expanded within a protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA.</i>	The Park and Ride facility is essentially an expansion of the existing Malelane Gate. The footprint will be expanded to include this new facility.
GN R. 546 Item 19 (a) (ii) (aa) & (ii) <i>The widening of a road by more than 4 meters, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometer outside urban areas within a protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA and areas on the watercourse side of the development setback line or within 100 meters from the edge of a watercourse where no such setback line has been determined.</i>	The realigned stretch of the S114 (option S1) will be longer than the original road section, and as such will constitute a lengthening of this road. The threshold may be exceeded.
GN R. 546 Item 24 (c)& (d): (a) (ii) (aa) <i>The expansion of buildings and infrastructure by 10 square meters or more outside urban areas where such construction occurs within a watercourse or within 32 meters of a watercourse within a protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA</i>	Depending on the final layout of infrastructure and services, which will be an expansion of existing services at the Malelane Gate, some construction activity may be required within 32m of the Park and Ride Facility. This will be determined during the services layout design for this component.

- An independent **Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP)** must be appointed to undertake the process on behalf of the applicant to ensure objectivity.
- The first step is to submit an **Application** to the Competent Authority, in this case the National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA).
- Upon acknowledgement of the Application and the issue of a Reference Number, the EAP must undertake a **public participation process**, and afford any and all persons interested and / or affected by the proposed development to register and participate in the process. A **30 day registration period** is allowed for, as well as, opportunity to ask questions, submit concerns etc.
- The EAP must then produce a **Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR)**, which describes both the project and the environment, assesses the anticipated impact of the project on the environment, and makes recommendations in terms of mitigation and management.
- Once complete, this Draft Basic Assessment Report is circulated to all registered interested and affected parties who would like to deliver comment. A **30 day comment period** is allowed for.
- Once all comments from registered interested and affected parties have been addressed, the EAP will submit the **Final Basic Assessment Report** to the Competent Authority (DEA) for consideration.
- The competent authority is then required to make a decision on the application (i.e. either positive or negative). This is called a **Record of Decision (RoD)**.
- Once this decision has been made, the EAP must communicate the outcome of the **RoD** to all Interested and Affected Parties who registered during the public participation process.
- I&AP's have the right to **Appeal** against the decision should they feel the need to do so, in which case the Competent Authority will review the application and based on the submissions supplied, decide whether to **overturn or uphold** the decision. .

ROLE OF INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES

You have been identified as a potential Stakeholder or Interested and Affected Party, and are hereby invited to participate in this EIA Process. If you would like to be consulted during the process described above, comment on draft reports, provide input, raise concerns, or

simply remain informed of the project process, please register as a Stakeholder via a return email, fax or post.

REGISTRATION OF INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES

Registration as a Stakeholder or Interested and Affected Party must reach the Environmental Assessment Practitioner listed below by no later than FRIDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2014

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER

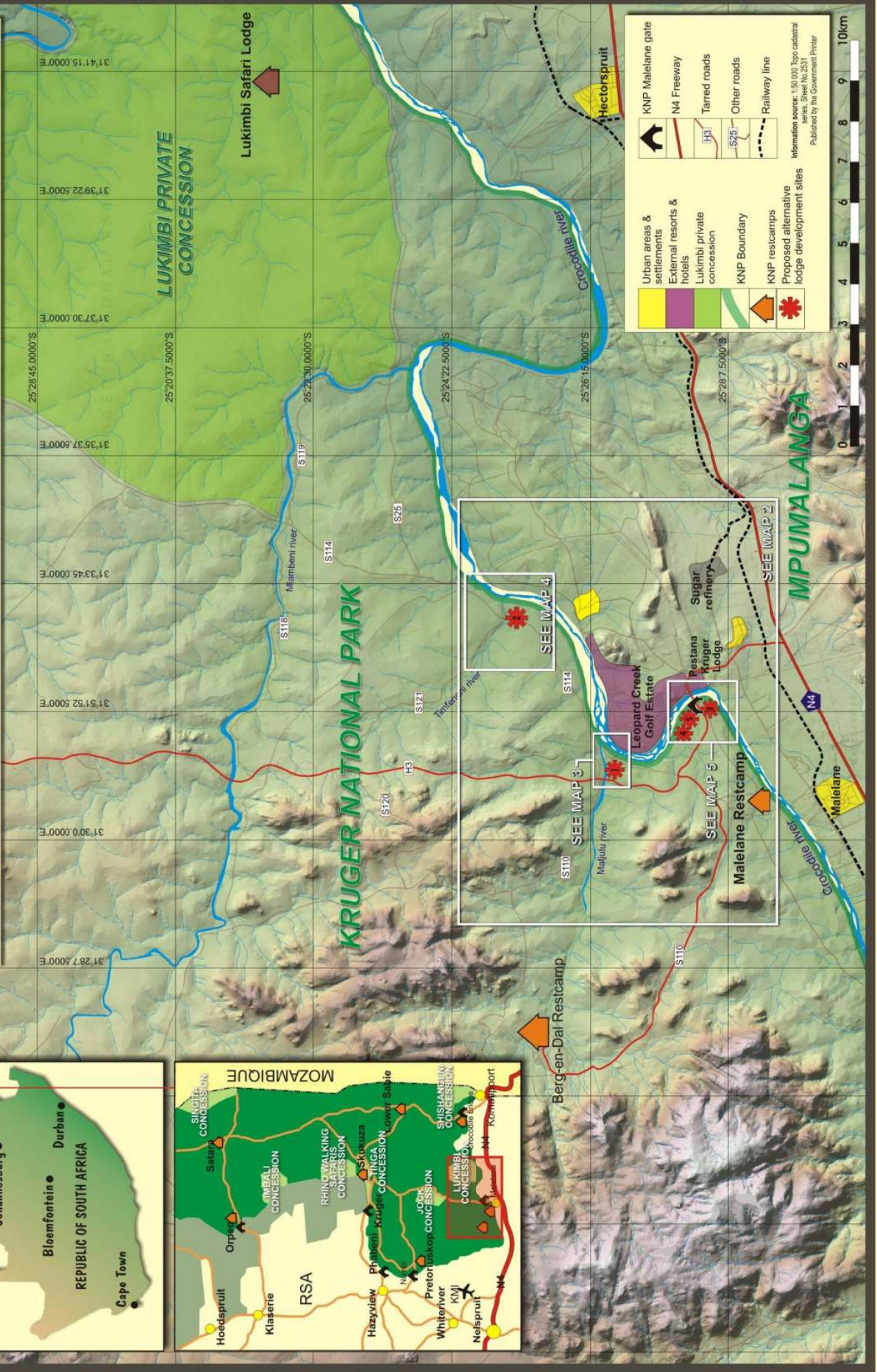
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The EAP may also be contacted directly should you have any questions regarding the process or the proposed development.

**AN OPEN DAY WILL BE HELD AT SANPARKS IN PRETORIA ON 18 OCTOBER 2014
AND AT MALELANE GATE ON 25 OCTOBER FROM 10AM TO 3PM.**

**THE PROJECT CONSULTANT WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT
THE BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

MALELANE AREA KRUGER NATIONAL PARK Map 1: Regional Orientation



Information source: 1:50,000 Topo cadastral series, Sheet No.2531
Published by the Government Printer

MALELANE AREA KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

Map 2: Local Orientation

EXTERNAL LAND USE

- A** Urban areas, settlements & degraded areas
- B** External resorts & hotels
- C** Irrigated / cultivated lands (primarily sugar cane)
- D** Largely undisturbed land
- E** Industrial, including sugar refinery and airfields

- Alternative sites
- KNP Boundary
- KNP restcamps
- KNP Malelane gate
- N4 Freeway
- Tarred roads
- Other roads
- Railway line
- OH Powerline
- 5m contours
- Seasonal rivers/drainage lines
- Perennial river

Information source: 1:50 000 Topo cadastral series, Sheet No.2531
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