

# Basic Environmental Assessments for the upgrade of facilities in the Mopani and Olifants camps, Kruger National Park

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)

August 2007



### Purpose of the document

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to brief interested and affected parties (I&APs) about the two Basic Assessments (BAs) that is being conducted for the upgrade of the Mopani and Olifants Camps in the Kruger National Park.

In addition to supplying information about the proposed upgrades of the facilities in the camps and the Basic Assessments that are conducted, this BID also provides I&APs with the opportunity to:

- register as stakeholders in the public participation process; and
- comment on and make contributions to the proposed project.

### Your comment is important

Your comment will ensure that all relevant issues are evaluated in the Basic Assessments. You are requested to complete the enclosed reply sheet, write a letter or call or email the public participation office in Midrand (see information box for contact details). You will then receive further information about the proposed project and the Basic Assessments.

Please also contact the public participation office if you require a copy of the EIA Regulations, the User Guide to the National Environmental Management Act or any other material that will assist you to comment.

### Public Participation Office and return address for comments:

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## BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

The South African National Parks (SANParks) is embarking on a number of proposed activities to upgrade the existing facilities in the Kruger National Park camps to continue to offer visitors a splendid experience. These proposed upgrades are in line with the Kruger National Park Management Plan and with SANParks vision that National Parks will be the pride and joy of all South Africans and the world. This Background Information document (BID) will describe the proposed upgrade to facilities in the Olifants and Mopani camps.

### Mopani Camp:

The Mopani camp in the Nxanatseni region in the north of the Kruger National Park has been identified as a camp that has the potential to cater for conferences. To ensure that this potential is exploited, facilities need to be upgraded to meet the necessary requirements to host conferences at the camp. The current shop provides the potential to be upgraded for the establishment of a conference facility. As part of the proposed activities, the shop will have to be relocated.

### Olifants Camp:

The Olifants camp also in the Nxanatseni region in the north of the Kruger National Park has been identified for upgrading of the existing restaurant facilities, reception area and for the establishment of a new day visitor site. As part of the project the upgrade of the look-out point, parking facilities and establishment of an outdoor tea garden will be investigated.

Towards the upgrading of these facilities in the Olifants and Mopani camps, a Basic Assessment (BA) must be conducted under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations as per Section 24 (5) of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), (Act No 107 of 1998). This section specifically listed the following activity which directly pertains to this project: 1d) "resorts, lodges, hotels or other tourism or hospitality facilities in a protected area contemplated in Section 42 (1) of the National Environmental Management Protected Areas Act as amended.

In undertaking these proposed activities, the Kruger National Park seeks to conserve ecosystem integrity, apply the SANParks principles (supply more info) and the Design for Decommissioning principle that includes efficient design, product usage and resource consumption.

## SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

For the proposed upgrade of the facilities in the Olifants and Mopani camps, the following activities will have to be conducted:

### Mopani camp:

Redesign of existing structures to establish a conference facility, to include for the:

- Provision of required conference facilities and audio visual equipment
- Alteration of services and structures
- Upgrade of toilet facilities

Relocation of the shop in Mopani camp to include:

- Curio and shop display areas
- Installation of refrigerators

### Olifants camp:

Reconstruction and upgrading of Olifant's camp restaurant and shop facilities, including:

- Re-design the restaurant, cafeteria and shop facilities
- Upgrade kitchen facilities, food-receiving, storage, preparation and services areas

- Upgrade the look-out point, paving and entrance facility

- Establishment of a bauma
- Maintenance and relocation of services
- Landscaping

Establishment of a new day visitors site, including:

- Appropriate site selection to allow for toilet facilities, swimming pool, braai areas and an access road

## PROPOSED SCHEDULING OF THE PROJECT

The upgrading of these facilities will be implemented in a phased manner. The first phase would be to conduct the Basic Assessment in order to obtain environmental authorisation from the National Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

(DEAT) that is required before the project for the upgrading may go ahead. As part of the assessment, an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) and Operational Management Plan (OMP) for construction will also be submitted to DEAT for their approval.

Following this plan will ensure compliance to environmental regulation during the construction phase. The second phase would be to commence with the construction of the facilities in the respective camps. Depending on the outcome of the environmental assessment, SANParks and Kruger National Park may

commence with the construction phase towards the end of 2007.

The steps to be taken in this Basic Assessment are outlined in Figure .

### WHAT IS A BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT?

In terms of the upgrade of the facilities at the Olifants and Mopani camps, a Basic Environmental Assessment must be conducted for the activities at each camp. Environmental assessments are used by planning authorities (in this case DEAT) to obtain an objective view of the potential environmental and social impacts that could arise during the construction, operation and closure of proposed developments. It is a

legislative requirement that a basic assessment be conducted as part of the process to upgrade the camp facilities. This information must provide a sound basis for decision-making by the authorities. The end product of a Basic Assessment is a Basic Assessment Report, which must:

- identify the potential impacts of the proposed development;
  - illustrate the issues, concerns and suggestions raised by I&APs; and
- outline the measures that must be taken to avoid or reduce negative impacts, and enhance positive impacts.

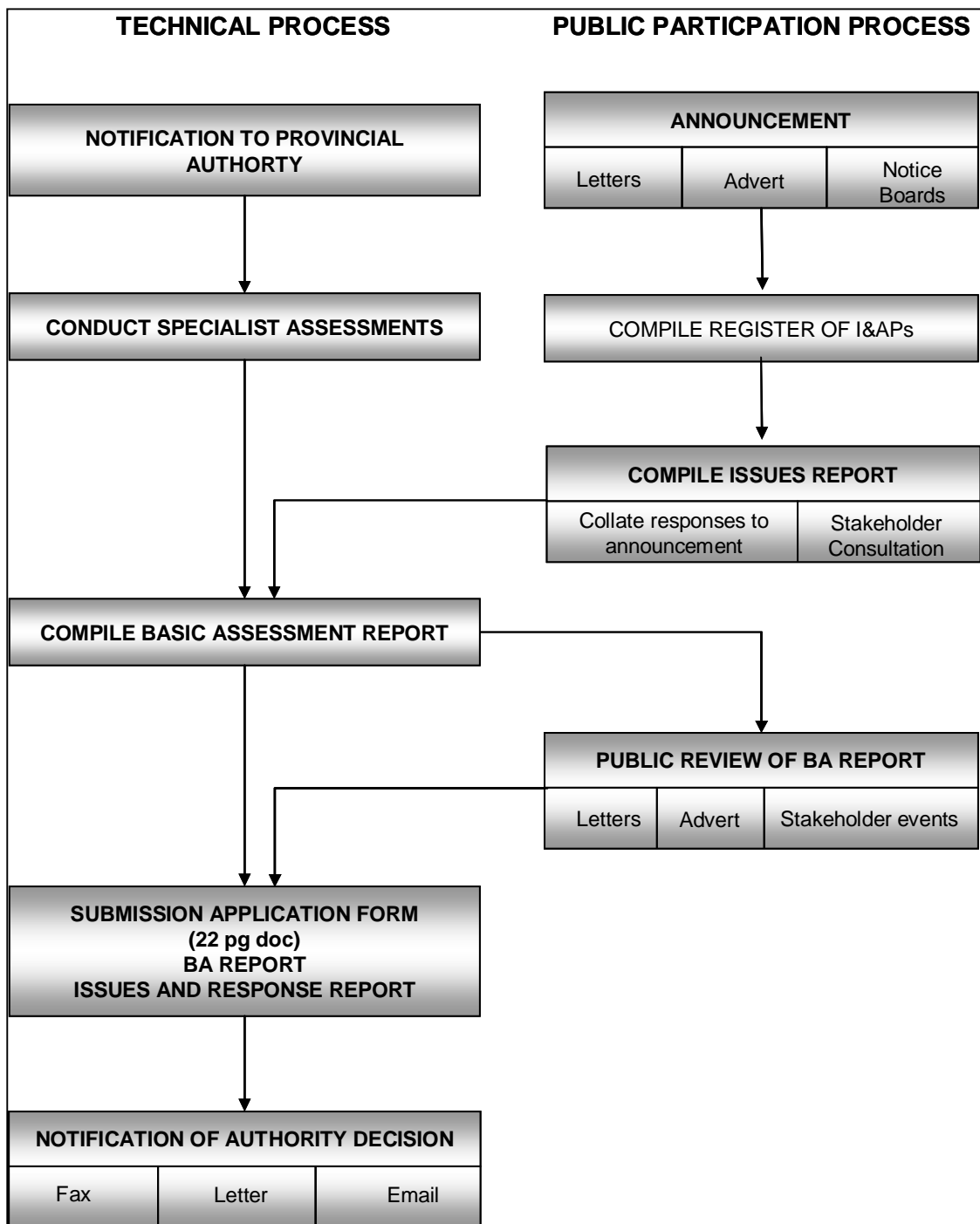


Figure 1 : The Technical and Public Participation Process for conducting the Basic Assessments for the upgrading of facilities in the Mopani and Olifants camps

## THE TECHNICAL PROCESS

After consultation with the client and a visit to the Mopani and Olifant's Camps in the Kruger National Park, an assessment is conducted to investigate the potential impacts that the proposed project might have on the environment. A Basic Assessment Report (BAR) for each camp will be prepared on the information gathered and issues identified during the assessment. A draft copy of the reports will be made available to I&APs for their comments.

These comments will be considered and a copy of the reports will be submitted to DEAT for inputs and comments. Upon comments from DEAT, further investigations will be conducted, if necessary, and the reports will be amended and final Basic Assessment Reports (FBAR) will be made available for public review and to DEAT. Together with the FBARs a draft construction Environmental Management Plan (EMP) will be submitted. This plan will provide SANParks/Kruger National Park and their contractors with guidelines for environmental management during construction.

DEAT will consider the Final Basic Assessment Reports and EMPs in taking a decision whether the project may go ahead. DEAT will issue an environmental authorisation that will be communicated to SANParks and I&APs.

In line with the Kruger National Park's Operational Management Plan, an Operational Management Plan will be compiled to ensure that the new proposed facilities are daily operated in line with the Kruger Parks Operational and Tourism Plan.

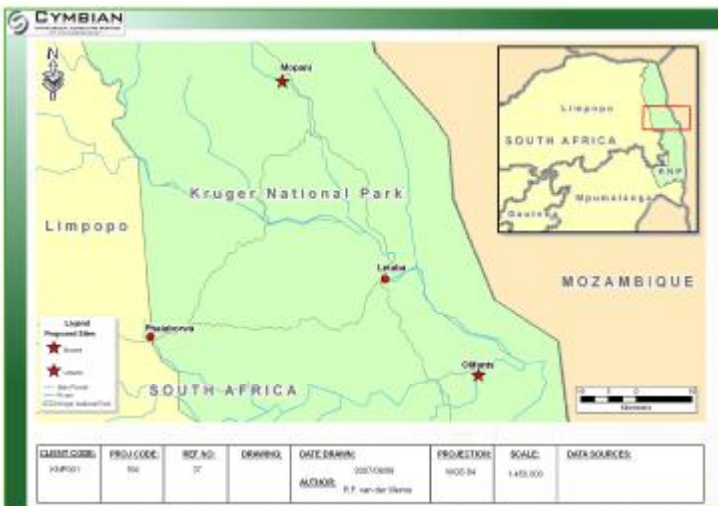


Figure 2 : Map indicating the location of the study areas



## THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

In addition to undertaking the Basic Assessments for the proposed upgrading of the facilities in the Mopani and Olifants camps, Zitholele Consulting will conduct the public participation process – a combined process for both Basic Assessments. This process will enable stakeholders to influence the course of the investigations and to review the findings of the independent studies that are to be undertaken.

The steps of the public participation process that will take place during the Basic Assessments are outlined below.

### ANNOUNCING THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

During August 2007, stakeholders will be informed about the Basic Assessments and the proposed project by means of letters, newspaper advertisements and on-site notices. This Background Information Document, along with an invitation to participate in the process, will also be placed at selected public places that are easily accessible to stakeholders. During August to middle September, stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment and raise potential issues of concern. The issues raised will be captured in an Issues and Response Report.

### DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORTS

The Draft Basic Assessment Reports (one for Mopani camp and one for Olifants camp), together with the Issues and Response Reports will be made available for comment by I&APs during October 2007. These reports will contain a preliminary description of the proposed projects, its potential impacts and a record of all of issues raised by I&APs. The comment period will be three weeks. The DBARs will also be submitted to the authorities. After the comment period, Final Basic Assessment Reports will be prepared, incorporating any inputs received during the comment period.

### PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE DRAFT EMPs

The Draft EMPs will be made available for public review during October 2007, and I&APs will have three weeks to review the report, to verify that the issues they have raised are adequately addressed, and to submit any further comments. Any additional issues raised by I&APs will be captured in the Final EMPs, which will be submitted to the authorities.

### FINAL NOTIFICATIONS

Once the authorities have issued the environmental authorisations, stakeholders will be notified of the authorities' decisions and of the procedure to follow should they wish to appeal the environmental authorisations.



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Olifants camps, Kruger National Park

**REGISTRATION AND COMMENT SHEET**

August 2007

Please complete and return to the address below by 5 September 2007:

Anelle Odendaal / Wilhemina Mosupye

Public Participation Office

Zitholele Consulting

P O Box 6002

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<b>TITLE</b>		<b>FIRST NAME</b>			
<b>INITIALS</b>		<b>SURNAME</b>			
<b>ORGANISATION (No abbreviations please)</b>					
<b>ADDRESS</b>					
	<b>POSTAL CODE</b>			<b>CELL NO</b>	
<b>TEL NO</b>		<b>FAX NO</b>		<b>E-MAIL</b>	

**COMMENTS** (please use separate sheets if you wish)

1. The following environmental, social and economic issues must be addressed in the Basic Environmental Assessment:

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2. My comment on the public participation and technical processes is as follows:

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3. I suggest that the following of my colleagues and/or friends also be contacted for their comments, issues and/or concerns:

Name: ..... Organisation: .....

Telephone and address: .....

4. Any other comments: .....

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION & TIME