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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT:**

### **BASIC ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED PONGOLA TOWNSHIP DEVELOPMENT ON PORTION 419 OF THE FARM NO. 61, PONGOLA, KWAZULU-NATAL**

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

The purpose of this document is to:

- Inform Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) about the proposed project, and to invite them to participate;
- Provide a brief background on the proposed project; and
- Explain the aims and objectives of the Basic Assessment.

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

An application will be submitted to the KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs on behalf of uPhongolo Local Municipality, Environmental Authorisation for a proposed township development within uPhongolo Local Municipality. The site is 19 hectares in area and is approximately 7 km (by road) from Pongola town.

The township development will be comprised of:

- High density housing (280 units)
- Public open spaces;
- A creche;
- A place of worship (church);
- A business center;
- Associated infrastructure (roads, stormwater, sanitation, electricity)

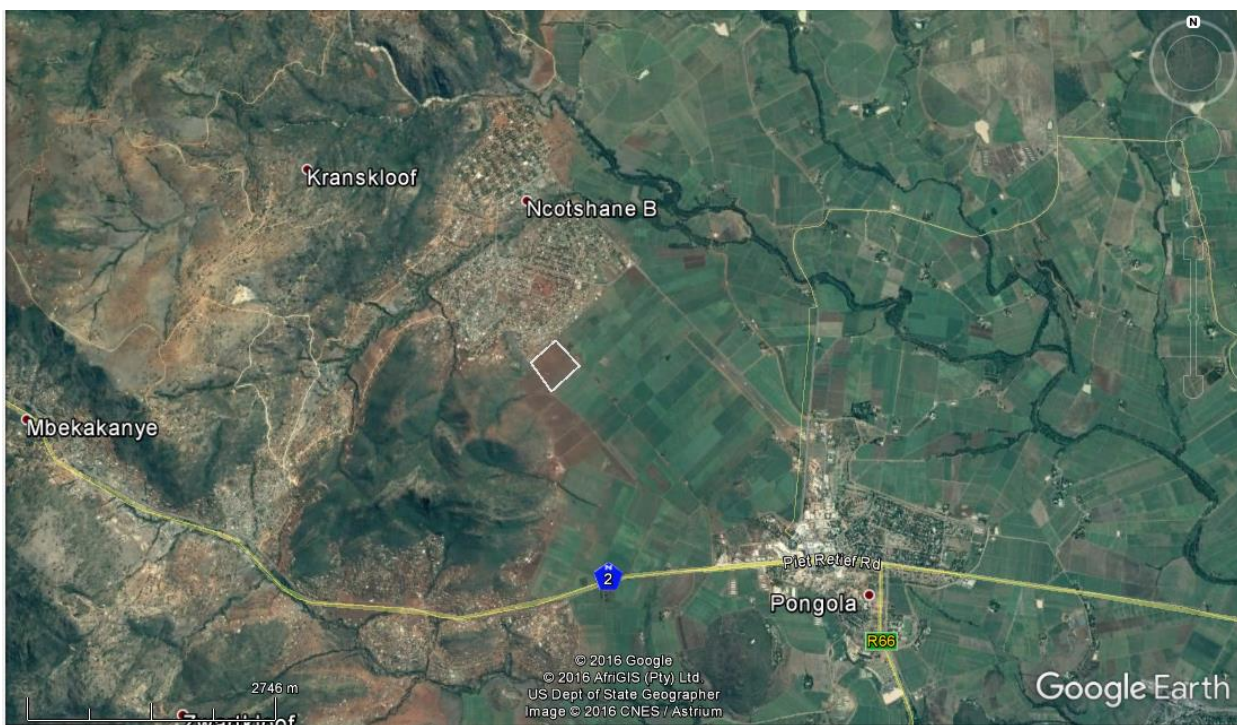
In terms of Listing Notice 1 (GNR R983) promulgated in 2014 under The National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998), EIA Regulations 2014, listed activities will be triggered by this development and therefore requires a Basic Assessment report to be submitted to KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

The listed activities triggered by the proposed development are as follows:

- Listing Notice 1: Activity 28; Residential, mixed, retail, commercial, industrial or institutional developments where such land was used for agriculture or afforestation on or after 01 April 1998 and where such development: (ii) will occur outside an urban area, where the total land to be developed is bigger than 1 hectare;
- Listing Notice 1. Activity 24; The development of; (ii) a road with a reserve wider than 13,5 meters, or where no reserve exists where the road is wider than 8 metres;

## WHERE WILL THIS TAKE PLACE?

The township development will be located approximately 4 km (straight line distance) northwest of Pongola town, with coordinates 27°21'34.3"S 31°35'00.7"E. The site is currently undeveloped with the exception of 2 kraals. The site is bound to the north-west by an existing township and to the east, west and south by sugar cane plantations.



**Figure 1: Location of the proposed development (outlined in white).**

## WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE BASIC ASSESSMENT?

The Basic Assessment process aims to:

- Inform and involve all potentially interested and affected parties (I&APs) of the proposed development;
- Identify the potential impacts (positive and negative) that the proposed development may have on the ecological and socio-economic environment;
- Provide recommendations based on the identified impacts and conduct further specialist studies where necessary;
- Provide the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs with sufficient information to make an informed and transparent decision

regarding the proposed development.

## WHAT IS INVOLVED IN EIA PROCESS FOR A BASIC ASSESSMENT?

### 1. **Public Participation:**

The public and relevant Authorities will be notified of the proposed development through adverts, site posters and direct consultation.

### 2. **Identification of Impacts and Alternatives**

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

### 3. **Impact Evaluation**

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

### 4. **Mitigation and Management Measures**

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

### 5. **Environmental Reporting**

The Draft Basic Assessment Report will be made available for review and comment by all I&APs and relevant authorities. A Final Basic Assessment Report will be compiled and will include comments received on the draft Basic Assessment Report.

### 6. **Authority Decision**

The final Basic Assessment Report will be used as the basis for the decision, by the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, on whether the project should be approved or not. The Department can refuse permission, grant unconditional permission, or grant permission with conditions.

## WHAT POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN IDENTIFIED?

The potential environmental impacts of this proposed development are expected to be relatively low, as the site is already highly disturbed, and development will therefore involve minimal clearing of vegetation.

The following risks have been identified

- Impacts on protected plant species (one *Sclerocarya birrea* (Marula) tree was encountered onsite)
- Erosion risk due to the nature of the soil
- Impacts associated with operation of earth moving equipment, including, dust, noise and waste management
- Socio-economic impacts (positive and negative)

## WHAT SPECIALIST STUDIES HAVE BEEN DONE?

- A geotechnical investigation has been completed
- A Stormwater Management Plan has been drafted

## HOW CAN INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES (I&APs) COMMENT ON THIS DEVELOPMENT?

The need for public input and involvement is of critical importance. All I&APs (neighbours, interested individuals, authorities, organisations etc.) are invited to comment on the proposed development. Comments can be communicated to us by post, telephone or email (contact details are provided below). In order to register as an I&AP please send us your contact details. All relevant documentation can be downloaded at [www.etc-africa.co.za/public-documents](http://www.etc-africa.co.za/public-documents)

Comments and concerns can be addressed to

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(Copies of all documentation will be available on our website throughout the application process)

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