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ENVIRONMENTAL
COMPLIANCE CONSULTANCY



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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY FOR

PROPOSED MECHANIZED BUSH THINNING OPERATIONS AND CONSTRUCTION OF A BIOMASS PROCESSING (CHARCOAL BURNING RETORT SYSTEM), STORAGE AND PACKAGING PLANT ON FARM GAI KAISA NO. 159 OTJOZONDJUPA REGION, NAMIBIA

PREPARED FOR

RETORT CHARCOAL PRODUCERS (PTY) LTD

NOVEMBER 2020

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

PROPOSED MECHANIZED BUSH THINNING OPERATIONS AND CONSTRUCTION OF A BIOMASS PROCESSING (CHARCOAL BURNING RETORT SYSTEM), STORAGE AND PACKAGING PLANT ON FARM GAI KAISA NO. 159 IN THE OTJOZUNDJUPA REGION, NAMIBIA

1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Non-Technical Summary (NTS) is to provide Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) background to the project.

The purpose of the project is to apply for an environmental clearance certificate on behalf of the proponent for the proposed mechanized bush thinning operations and biomass processing and manufacturing plant on Farm Gai Kaisa No 159 in the Otjozondjupa Region.

By registering for the project, all I&APs will be kept informed throughout the environmental clearance certificate application process, and a platform for participation will be provided to submit comments/recommendations pertaining to the project.

This NTS includes the following information on:

- The necessity of the project, benefits or adverse impacts anticipated;
- The alternatives to the project have been considered and assessed;
- How the ESIA process works;
- The public participation process and how to become involved; and
- Next steps and the way forward.

2 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

2.1 BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Environmental Compliance Consultancy (ECC) has been engaged by the proponent Retort Charcoal Producers (Pty) Ltd to undertake an ESIA and an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) in terms of the Environmental Management Act, No. of 7 of 2007 and its regulations. An environmental clearance application will be submitted to the relevant competent authorities; and the Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism (MEFT).

2.2 LOCATION

The project is located approximately 30 km south east of the Kombat settlement and 130 north-east of Otjiwarongo in the Otjozondjupa region, Namibia. The site location is shown in Figure 1.

2.3 WHY IS THE PROJECT NEEDED

Charcoal production in Namibia presents strategies to combat bush encroachment, supplement farming income, and contribute to employment creation. Retort Charcoal Producers (Pty) Ltd, will be thinning out invader bush for the reclamation of rangeland and selling the biomass, generating income.

The biomass process and manufacturing plant will include retort kilns carbonising the biomass to charcoal, a product in high demand throughout the world. The project will generate long term employment opportunities while promoting sustainable rangeland management to the surrounding area.

2.4 WHAT ARE THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The following activities and infrastructure are associated with the project:

- Bush thinning of encroacher species on farm Gai Kaisa No. 159 using mechanized techniques,
- The construction of 4 retort kilns and associated infrastructure (3000 square meter shed and offices)
- The carbonization of biomass
- The manufacturing of briquettes
- The storage and processing of biomass, briquettes and charcoal
- The transporting biomass, briquettes and charcoal
- Water is abstracted from boreholes for domestic and industrial use;

- Renovation of existing infrastructure and houses on-site;
- Power will be supplied from silenced diesel power generation sets linked up to a central DB between the plant and the retorts. A solar power supply is planned for the future.
- The installation of an onsite weighbridge
- The installation of dust collector and jet cleaning machine to minimise dust emissions.

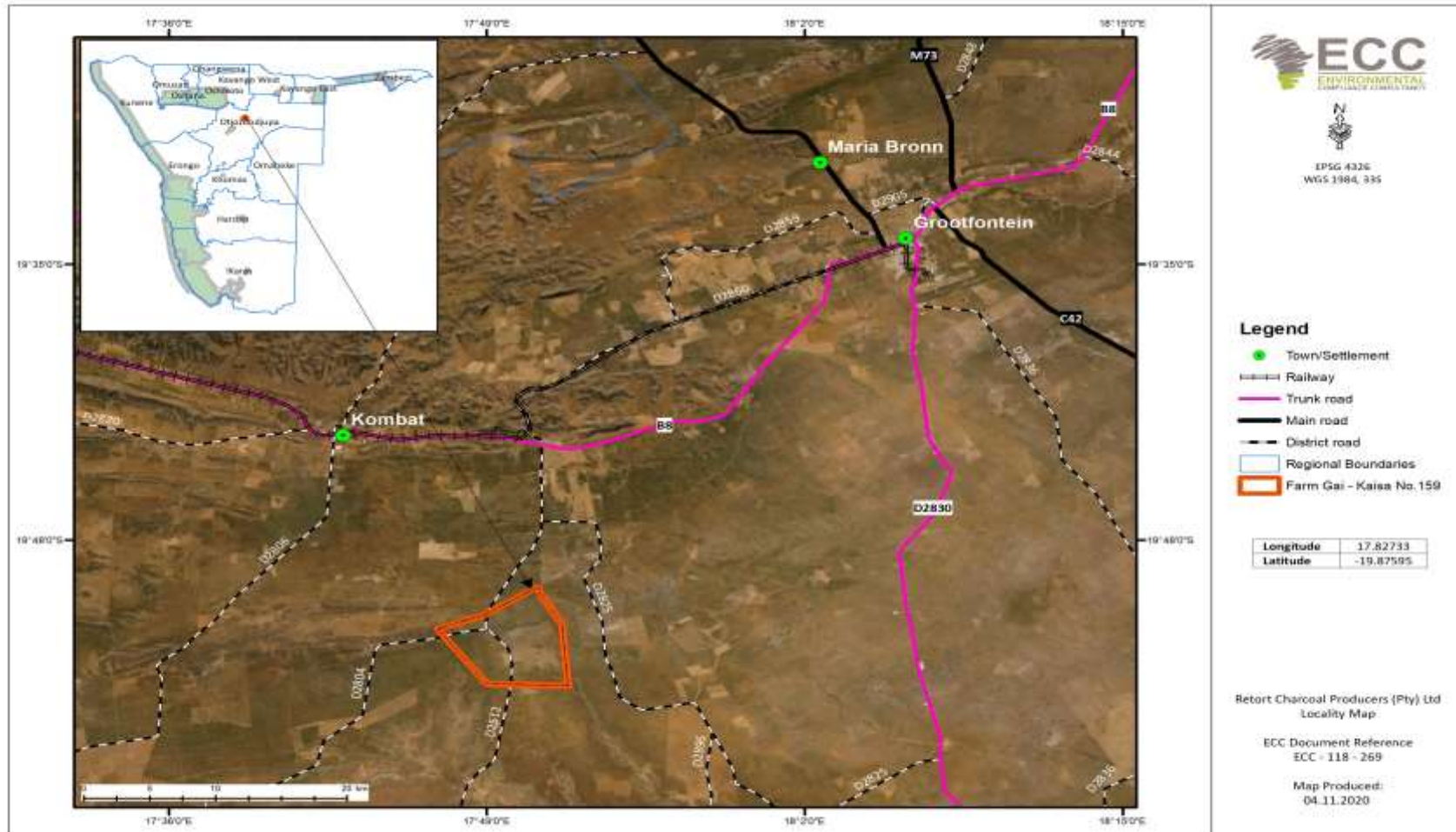


FIGURE 1 – LOCATION OF FARM GAI – KAISA No.159

2.5 POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

2.5.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC

The potential social impacts are anticipated to be of low significance, and those that may transpire shall be confined within the project site: these potential impacts may include the following:

- Potential economic benefits due to increased foreign currency flow, and
- Approximately 50 new jobs will be created as a result of the project.

2.5.2 ENVIRONMENTAL

The potential environmental impacts are anticipated to be of minor significance, and those that may occur shall be contained within the site, these potential impacts may include the following:

- Potential loss of protected and or endangered vegetation during project activities, and
- Generation of noise nuisances from mechanized bush thinning operations such as during transportation.

3 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

Best practice environmental assessment methodology calls for consideration and assessment of alternatives to the project. The project is operating on private farmland.

During the assessment, alternatives will take the form of consideration of optimisation and efficiency to reduce potential effects.

4 THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

This EIA, conducted by ECC, is undertaken in terms of the Environmental Management Act, 2007, and its regulations. The process followed in this EIA is set out in the flowchart in figure 2.

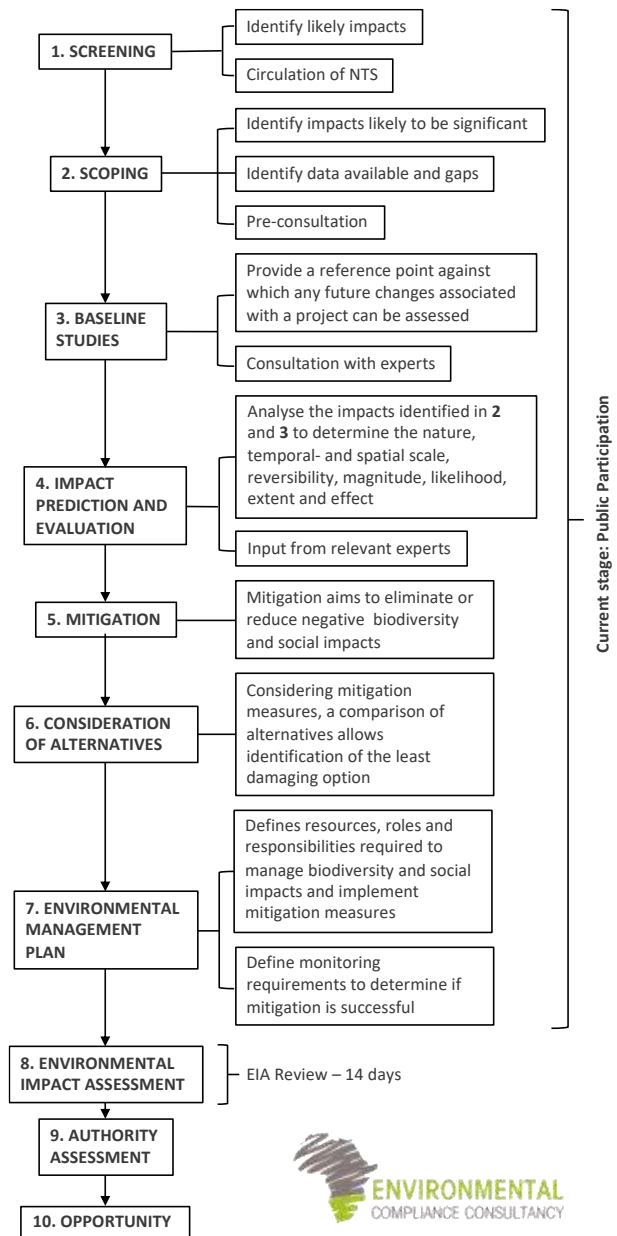


FIGURE 2 - FLOWCHART OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

4.1 SCREENING

A review of the project screening findings against the listed activities was conducted; the findings of which are summarised below:

ENERGY GENERATION, TRANSMISSION AND STORAGE ACTIVITIES

1 The construction of facilities for –

- (a) The generation of electricity
 - The project will generate of electricity through silenced generators.

WASTE MANAGEMENT, TREATMENT, HANDLING AND DISPOSAL ACTIVITIES

2.2 Any activity entailing a scheduled process referred to in the Atmospheric Pollution Prevention Ordinance, 1976.

- The project will generate dust due to the operation of machinery for bush thinning, transporting of biomass and sieving of charcoal. The installation of dust collector and jet cleaning machine to minimise dust emissions.
- Minimum smoke pollution it is envisaged into the atmosphere, due to all gases released during the carbonisation process which will be fed into the system as fuel (advantaged of retort kilns).
- Waste generated during construction, which shall be collected and removed from the site for re-use, recycling, or final disposal at permitted landfill facility. Waste disposal and handling shall comply with waste management specifications as detailed in the Environmental Management Plan.

FORESTRY ACTIVITIES

4 The clearance of forest area, deforestation, afforestation, timber harvesting or any other related activity that requires authorisation in terms of the Forest Act, 2001 (Act No.12 of 2001) or any other law

- The potential exists for vegetation clearing to construct the facility.

WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENTS

8.1 The abstraction of groundwater or surface water for industrial or commercial purposes.

- Due to the nature of the project, there would be groundwater abstraction from an existing borehole. Approximately 2000 cubic meters of water during construction over a 5-month period and approximately 200 cubic per month during the operation phase.

8.6 Construction of industrial and domestic wastewater treatment plants and related pipeline systems.

- There are existing ablution facilities currently on site (French drain system).

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES TREATMENT, HANDLING, AND STORAGE

9.1 The manufacturing, storage, handling, or processing of a hazardous substance defined in the Hazardous Substance Ordinance, 1974.

- It is planned that 14000 liters of diesel will be stored on site.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES TREATMENT, HANDLING, AND STORAGE

9.1 The manufacturing, storage, handling, or processing of a hazardous substance defined in the Hazardous Substance Ordinance, 1974.

- Potential risk of storing hazardous substances such as 14000 liters of diesel fuel on site per week.

The potential environmental and social effects are anticipated to be of minor significance, and those that may occur shall be contained on the project site.

4.2 BASELINE STUDIES

For the project, baseline information will be obtained through desk-based studies and possible site verification process by focusing on the environmental receptors that could be affected by the project. ECC will also engage with stakeholders, I&APs and the proponents to seek input into the assessment.

4.3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Impacts will be assessed using the ECC EIA methodology. The EIA will be conducted in terms of the Environmental Management Act, No. 7 of 2007 and its regulations. ECC's methodology for impact assessments was developed using IFC standards in particular Performance Standard 1 'Assessment and management of environmental and social risks and impacts' (IFC 2012, 2017) and Namibian Draft Procedures and Guidance for EIA and EMP (GRN, 2008) including international and national best practice with over 25 years of combined EIA experience.

4.4 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

An EMP shall be developed for the project, setting out auditable management actions for the project to ensure careful and sustainable management measures are implemented for their activities in respect to the surrounding environment and community.

4.5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ADVERTISING

Public participation is an important part of the EIA process; it allows the public and other stakeholders to raise concerns or provide valuable local environmental knowledge that can benefit the assessment, in addition it can aid the design process. This project is currently at the scoping phase and the public participation phase.

At this phase ECC will perform the following:

- Identify key stakeholders, authorities, municipalities, environmental groups and interested or affected members of the public, hereafter referred to as I&APs
- Distribute the NTS for the project (this document)
- Advertise the environmental application in two national newspapers over a two-week period
- Place notices on-site at or near the boundary

- If required host a public meeting to encourage stakeholder participation and engagement, and provide details of issues identified by the environmental practitioner, stakeholders and I&APs
- Record all comments of I&APs and present such comments, as well as responses provided by ECC, in the comments and responses report, which will be included in the scoping report that shall be submitted with the application, and
- Circulate I&AP comments to the project team for consideration of project design.

Comments must be submitted in writing and can be emailed using the details in the contact us section below.

CONTACT US

We welcome any enquiries regarding this document and its content. Please contact:

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