



PyroNam

Submitted to: Dirk Ulrich Kaiser
Attention: Dirk Ulrich Kaiser
Farm Waltersshagen 135
Otjozondjupa Region
Namibia

REPORT:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT FOR THE PROPOSED BUSH THINNING ACTIVITIES AND BIOCHAR PRODUCTION ON FARM WALTERSHAGEN 135

PROJECT NUMBER: ECC-137-426-BID-10-A

REPORT VERSION: REV 01

DATE: JULY 2023

Prepared by:



TITLE AND APPROVAL PAGE

Project Name: Background Information Document for the proposed bush
thinning activities and biochar production on Farm
Waltersshagen 135

Client Company Name: Dirk Ulrich Kaiser

Client Name: Dirk Ulrich Kaiser

Ministry Reference: APP-00

Author: Kelly Ochs and Stephan Bezuidenhout

Status of Report: Final for Government Review

Project Number: ECC-137-426-BID-10-A

Date of issue: July 2023

Review Period: N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE CONSULTANCY CONTACT DETAILS:

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



Environmental Compliance Consultancy (Pty) Ltd
PO Box 91193, Klein Windhoek, Namibia
Tel: +264 81 669 7608
Email: info@eccenvironmental.com

DISCLAIMER

The report has been prepared by Environmental Compliance Consultancy (Pty) Ltd (ECC) (Reg. No. 2022/0593) on behalf of the Proponent. Authored by ECC employees with no material interest in the report's outcome, ECC maintains independence from the Proponent and has no financial interest in the Project apart from fair remuneration for professional fees. Payment of fees is not contingent on the report's results or any government decision. ECC members or employees are not, and do not intend to be, employed by the Proponent, nor do they hold any shareholding in the Project. Personal views expressed by the writer may not reflect ECC or its client's views. The environmental report's information is based on the best available data and professional judgment at the time of writing. However, please note that environmental conditions can change rapidly, and the accuracy, completeness, or currency of the information cannot be guaranteed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Background Information Document	5
1.1	Purpose of this document	5
1.2	Description of the proposed project	5
1.3	operational phase	7
1.4	Consideration of Alternatives	7
2	EIA process for bush thinning projects	8
2.1	Screening	9
2.1.1	Draft Generic environmental management plan	10
3	The Way Forward	11

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1- Listed activities triggered by the proposed project	9
--	---

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – Locality map of farm Waltersshagen 135 in the Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia	6
Figure 2 - Flowchart of the bush thinning activities EIA process	9

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
BID	background information document
DEA	Directorate of Environmental Affairs
ECC	Environmental Compliance Consultancy
EIA	environmental impact assessment
EMP	environmental management plan
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GEMP	generic environmental management plan
ha	hectares
I&APs	interested and affected parties
km	kilometres
MEFT	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism
RoD	Record of Decision

1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Mr. Kaiser, owner of farm Waltersshagen 135 is collaborating with PyroNam (collectively referred to as the Proponent) and has engaged the services of Environmental Compliance Consultancy (ECC) to perform an environmental impact assessment. Additionally, ECC is tasked with creating a generic environmental management plan (GEMP) to guide the planned bush thinning operations and biochar production at the Waltersshagen 135 farm, situated in the Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia. These actions align with the provisions of the Environmental Management Act, No. 7 of 2007, and its corresponding regulations from 2012. Consequently, an application for an environmental clearance certificate will be lodged with the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) to receive a Record of Decision (RoD).

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The Proponent plans to harvest encroacher bush species from farm Waltershagen 135 for biochar production, which will potentially be used as a soil supplement to restore and enhance rangeland productivity.

Farm Waltershagen 135 is located approximately 40 km from Otjiwarongo along the C33 in a south-westerly direction in the Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia as seen in Figure 1. The farm covers an area of 5 303.60 ha, however this area will be divided into smaller plots. Bush thinning activities will be applied to a total area of 3 800 ha. Encroacher species found on the farm are as follows: Red-bark Acacia (*Vachellia reficiens*), Sickie bush (*Dichrostachys cinerea*), Blackthorn (*Senegalia mellifera* Subsp. *dentinens*) and Blue-thorn (*Senigallia erubescens*), Kalahari-sand Acacia (*Vachellia luederitzii*), Silver cluster leaves (*Terminalia sericea*), Purple-pod cluster leaves (*Terminalia pruinoidea*), mopane (*Colophospermum mopane*). Proposed activities include manual and semi-mechanised harvesting techniques.

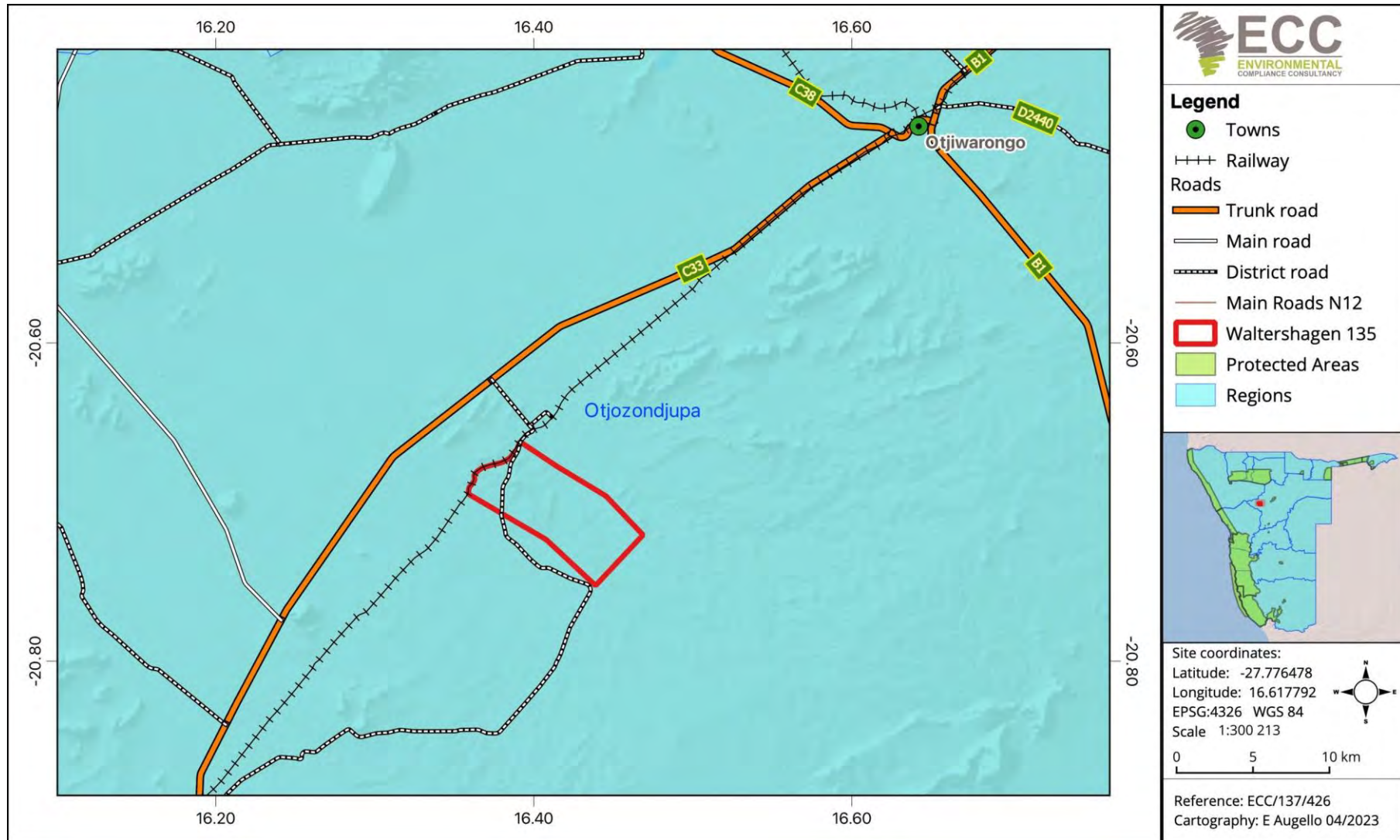


Figure 1 - Locality map of farm Waltersshagen 135 in the Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

1.3 OPERATIONAL PHASE

The following are envisioned during the proposed Project:

- Manual thinning (harvesting) of encroacher bush species on farm Waltersshagen 135.
- Contractors used to conduct the harvesting shall be accommodated on the farm in accordance with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards and
- The production of biochar and associated by-products will be carried out by PyroNam on the farm.

1.4 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

During the assessment, alternatives will be considered in terms of optimisation and using eco-friendly solutions to reduce potential impacts.

2 EIA PROCESS FOR BUSH THINNING PROJECTS

In 2017 MEFT released a publication to streamline and simplify the legal process authorising people to combat bush encroachment in Namibia. This is based on the *Strategic environmental assessment of large-scale bush thinning and value-addition activities in Namibia* (SAIEA, 2015) which distinguishes three categories of thresholds for the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process on bush control activities (Figure 2).

Accordingly:

- No environmental clearance is required for areas smaller than 150 hectares where bush control activities are being conducted;
- A generic environmental management plan (GEMP) is required for an area larger than 150 hectares, but smaller than 5,000 hectares where bush control activities are being conducted; and
- A full EIA and environmental management plan (EMP) are required for an area larger than 5,000 hectares where bush control activities are being conducted.

Bush thinning activities will be applied to a total area of 3 800 ha on the farm. Rotational planning of selected camps will be performed, only manual and semi-mechanised harvesting practices will be used, therefore the impact of bush control measures is expected to be of low intensity. According to this, the farm will then be classified as a medium-sized bush harvesting operation (150 – 5,000 ha), which thus requires a GEMP to be granted an environmental clearance certificate.

An EMP aims to meet the requirements as legislated in Section 8 (j) of the regulations of the Environmental Management Act, No. 7 of 2007 and includes information about the identified environmental impacts, the management, mitigation, protection or remedial measures to be undertaken to address the impacts associated with the proposed operations. The GEMP may be amended as new information is made available.

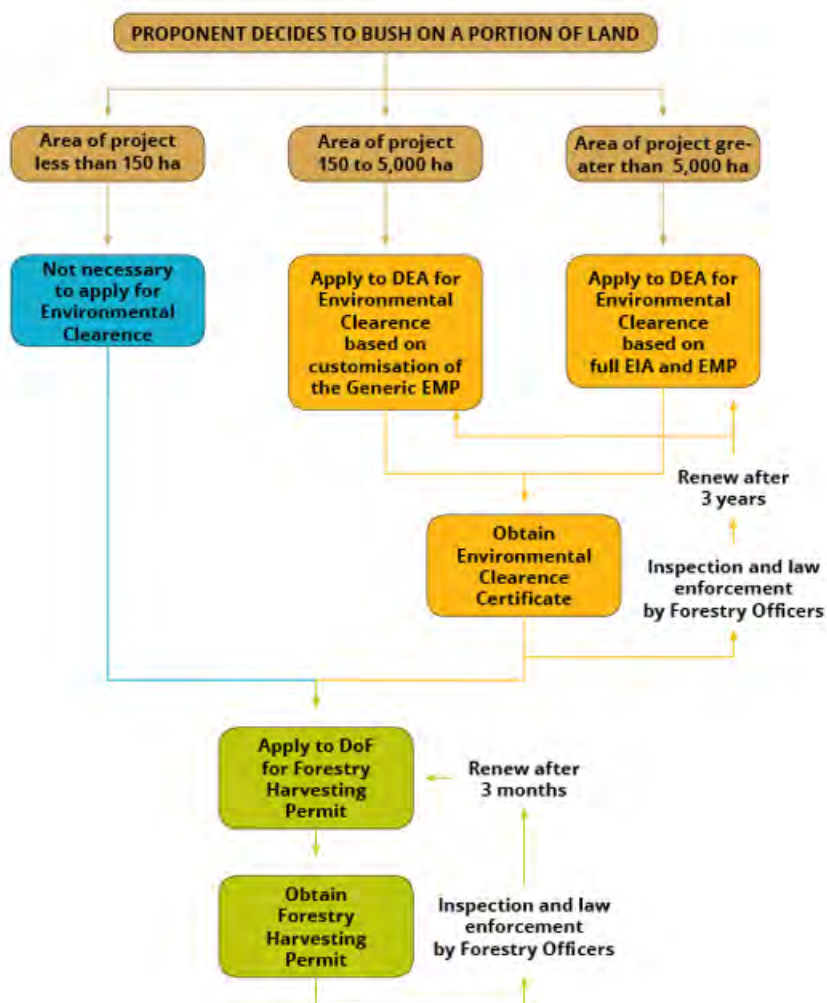


Figure 2 - Flowchart of the bush thinning activities EIA process

2.1 SCREENING

The listed activities triggered by the proposed project are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1- Listed activities triggered by the proposed project

LISTED ACTIVITY	EIA SCREENING FINDING
FORESTRY ACTIVITIES (4) The clearance of forest areas, 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.	- Cutting (harvesting) of encroacher tree species. Bush control activities will stay within the boundaries of the farm which will be divided into smaller camps. The total area dedicated to bush thinning activities will cover 3 800 ha.

2.1.1 DRAFT GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

A generic environmental management plan (GEMP) will be crafted for the proposed project, detailing auditable actions to ensure that the project's activities are managed sustainably and with due care for the local environment and community. Upon its approval and the subsequent issuance of the environmental clearance certificate, the GEMP becomes a legally binding commitment. These environmental clearance certificates have a validity period of three years. Renewal is contingent on compliance with the terms and stipulations outlined in the environmental clearance certificate.

3 THE WAY FORWARD

At this phase ECC will perform the following:

- Prepare and submit the application for the environmental clearance certificate in the prescribed manner.
- Identify neighbours of the farm and inform them of the project.
- Add the project to ECCs website to enable I&APs to download the BID (this document).
- Submit the final GEMP to the Environmental Commissioner of MEFT for a record of decision.

Your request for registration as an I&AP as well as any comments on the BID or Project must be submitted in writing and can be emailed using the details in the contact us section below. Registration as an I&AP for the project can be completed online on ECCs website on the projects page, or by using this link: <https://eccenvironmental.com/download/pyronam-biochar-group-scheme-management/>

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

Environmental Compliance Consultancy (ECC)

info@eccenvironmental.com

Tel: +264 816 697 608

www.eccenvironmental.com

At ECC we make sure all information is easily accessible to the public.

Follow our social platforms online to be kept up to date.