Hierdie dokument is ook in Afrikaans beskikbaar

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The Background Information Document (BID) introduces all Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) to the proposed vineyard development, dam and water-pumping scheme on the farm Middelburg near Robertson.

All I&APs are invited to participate in the environmental authorization process by commenting on the project, asking questions and raising issues that will be included in the project documents. In addition to this document, the EIA reports will be made available to registered I&APs for comment during various stages of the process.

WHO IS AN I&AP?

Any person, group of persons or organisation interested and/or affected by the proposed development.

To register as an I&AP and ensure all issues regarding the project are accurately documented and addressed, use the attached Registration Form, attend the Open Day and/or submit written comment to BolandEnviro.

OPEN DAY

Tuesday 24 May 2011, 16:00–18:00 at the Cape Lime lime factory (R60 Worcester-Robertson).

All I&APs are invited to come to discuss any consent, issues or questions they may have related to the proposed development with the consultants and planners. A project presentation will be given at 16:00 and 17:00.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Van Loveren PTY (LTD), hereafter referred to as the Applicant, is proposing to develop up to 370 ha of land for cultivation on Middelburg (Vinkrivier) Farm No. 10, Portion 9, Robertson, hereafter referred to as the Property. The farming development will require the clearing of indigenous Robertson Karoo vegetation. In addition, the Applicant intends to construct a dam on the Property for irrigation purposes and will develop associated infrastructure for a water-pumping scheme from the Breede River (in the Eilandia area) across three other properties, to the proposed dam site on the farm Middelburg (Vinkrivier). The dam will initially have a full capacity area of 13 ha. The dam will be increased in phases up to a maximum capacity area of 34.5 ha (by increasing the height of the dam wall).

The proposed water pumping scheme and associated infrastructure will be designed to accommodate the maximum development capacity of approximately 1000 ha irrigated land, within an area that has limited agricultural potential, due mainly to the lack of water for irrigation.

The development will significantly improve the agricultural potential and economic viability of the Property. Additionally, the development will promote intensive agriculture and will unlock further potential agricultural development in the immediate surrounding area. The dam and water-pumping scheme will therefore be utilized, not only by the Applicant for the development of the Property, but also by surrounding properties. Surrounding landowners will facilitate their own water use license applications and environmental authorisations, if required.

Boland Environmental Consultants (BolandEnviro) were appointed to conduct the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed development. The first phase of the EIA will identify all potential environmental impacts (bio-physical, socio-economic and cultural-heritage) through a Scoping Phase, which includes input from stakeholders and I&APs. The second phase (EIA Phase) will assess the potential impacts, and together with specialists, propose suitable mitigation to reduce impacts.

The draft Scoping Report is currently available for a 40 days comment period: 10 May – 18 June 2011. I&APs can view the report at the Robertson Public Library, the BolandEnviro office (74 Stockenstrom St Worcester), www.BolandEnviro.co.za and at the open day.
DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

The proposed agricultural development, dam and water-pumping scheme will require the following infrastructure:

- **Dam**: The proposed dam will be constructed in 3 phases to ensure settling, safety and to prevent leakage. Soil material excavated from the dam basin will be used for the construction of the dam wall.
- **Pumping-station**: A pumping-station will be constructed on Farm 466, Portion 3 (Eilandia), adjacent to the Breede River. The design for the pumping-station is based on a dry well with a submerged pump inlet design. The entire pumping-station will be contained in a 100 m$^2$ pump-house, located approximately 200 from the edge of the river.
- **Pipeline**: A buried pipeline will be constructed to transport the water, from the Breede River, to the dam site. The 7 km pipeline will consist of two sections, a 500 mm rising main (“styglyn”) up to the top of the hills to the north of the pumping-station and the farm Eilandia, where water will be discharged into a pressure-release sump, and a 450 mm gravity-line towards the dam.
- **Power line**: A 1000kV power line will be required to provide electricity to the pump-station.
- The development does not entail the construction of any buildings on the Property. Existing access and internal roads will be utilised by the proposed development.

 ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROJECT

The following potential issues / impacts were identified during the Scoping Phase:

- **Fauna and flora**: The development entails the clearing of an extensive area of natural habitat and may impact on localised plant/animal species. A specialist Botanical Impact Assessment will be conducted during the EIA Phase. Specialised faunal habitats such as water courses and ridges are excluded from the development.
- **Ecological processes**: Some areas targeted for clearing fall within Critical Biodiversity Areas. Ephemeral water courses traverse the Property.
- **Storm water**: Removal of vegetation cover will impact on natural storm water retention and large areas may be exposed to additional run-off during soil preparation.
- **Erosion**: Cleared areas will be exposed during soil preparation. Erosion may be induced by disturbances during the installation of the buried pipeline. Installation of the pump-station may impact on the river bank.
- **Water Resources**: Agricultural development by the Applicant and further development in the surrounding area will require water from the Breede River (Greater-Brandvlei Government Water Scheme).
- **Visual**: The agricultural development and dam wall will be visible from the R60.
- **Dust**: If unmitigated, dust may impact visibility on the R60 during the construction phase.
- **Noise**: The development (dam and proposed vineyard development) will take place within an area that currently comprise undeveloped farmland (no significant noise impact).
- **Heritage Resources**: The project may impact on archaeological remains. An Archaeological Impact Assessment will be conducted during the EIA Phase.
- **Socio-economic**: The development is expected to have an over-all positive socio-economic impact.

Figure 2. Locality map (1: 50 000) of Farm 10/9, Robertson and the surrounding area. The properties which will be crossed by the proposed pipeline (water-pumping scheme) are also shown.

Figure 3. Satellite image showing the Property boundaries and the Applicant’s preferred areas targeted for vegetation clearing and subsequent cultivation (white polygons). The proposed dam (north-western corner of the Property) is also shown.
LEGAL CONTEXT

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2010, promulgated in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA), specify activities that require authorization from the relevant authorities, based on the findings of an environmental assessment, before such activities may commence (Government Notice (GN) No. R. 543 - 547 of 2010). The proposed Agricultural development constitutes activities listed in Schedules 1, 2 and 3 of the EIA Regulations 2010. A full Scoping and EIA Process is therefore required before environmental authorization can be considered.

The proposed development is expected to entail the following listed activities:
- GN R544 No. 9, 11, 18, 41, 55 & 56;
- GN R545 No. 8, 16 & 19;
- GN R546 No. 12 & 13

THE EIA PROCESS

The environmental study is following a three-phased approach consisting of the following phases:
- Phase 1: Application (completed)
- Phase 2: Environmental Scoping Study (currently underway)
- Phase 3: Environmental Impact Assessment (once the Scoping Report and Plan of Study is accepted by the Department of Environmental Affairs & development Planning)

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Public consultation is a crucial part of the EIA process. It is therefore important that relevant stakeholders and Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) are identified and involved in the Public Participation Process (PPP) from the outset of the proposed project.

This process offers you the opportunity to learn about the project, raise issues and concerns and provide input for enhanced project benefits. The inputs received from I&APs form an integral part of the EIA process and will assist the relevant authorities with their decision-making process.

The draft Scoping Report is currently available for comment (40 days). Written comments or objections must be forwarded to BolandEnviro, before 18 June 2011.

Boland Environmental Consultants, PO Box 250, Worcester, 6849
Tel: 023 347 0336 Fax: 023 347 5336, E-mail: comment@bolandenviro.co.za

All issues identified during the Scoping Phase will be assessed during the EIA Phase.

Please note that updates and further documentation regarding the project will only be distributed to registered I&APs.
**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

**INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTY REGISTRATION AND COMMENT FORM**

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**PARTICULARS OF THE INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTY**

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**PLEASE STATE YOUR INTEREST IN THE DEVELOPMENT**

**PLEASE WRITE YOUR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS HERE** (you are welcome to put additional comments and queries on an additional page).

**Number of additional pages:** ______

**WILL YOU ATTEND A PUBLIC MEETING?**

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Please return completed form to:

Mrs. Johlene Krige  
Boland Environmental Consultants  
PO Box 250, Worcester, 6849  
Tel: 023 347 0336 Fax: 023 347 5336  
E-mail: comment@bolandenviro.co.za