





ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Subject:	EIA for the Harvesting and Management of Prosopis at Gibeon Pilot Site.
Venue:	Gibeon Village Council Hall
Date:	27 January 2023
Time:	14h00
Attendees:	Olavi Makuti & Wycliffe Naabasa (Nevunduko Consulting Services) and Intested
	& Affected Parties (see attached register)

1. Introduction

The team from Nevunduko introduced themselves and welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Mr. Naabasa gave an overview about the purpose of the meeting and the previous work that Nevunduko has undertaken in Gibeon regarding this project. he also gave information on how the meeting will be conducted and that English will be the language used in the presentation but translation into Afrikaans will be available should it be required by the attendees.

2. Overview of Proposed Project

Nevunduko team indicated that the project will be a five-year initiative that will be financially and technically supported by The Orange- Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM). ORASECOM, with support from United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), managed to secure further financial support from Global Environmental Facility (GEF) to implement the project.

Activities for the five-year project at the sites will include the sustainable harvesting of Prosopis species, together with revegetation of the sites with preferred indigenous plants. Furthermore, the project will also advocate for the economic utilization of the harvested Prosopis. Details about the specific project activities are as follow:

• Prosopis Harvesting

All Prosopis plants, including saplings, in the demarcated compartment will be removed. The pilot areas will be demarcated into compartments (operational land units) with wellcleared cutlines. The cutlines will be 15m wide and will serve as access roads within the pilot site for transportation of harvested biomass, equipment and personnel. It is planned that the site will be demarcated into blocks or compartments of 500m x 300m that will translate to 15 ha per compartment.

- *Harvesting methods:* mechanical method combined with labour and chemical applications will be used in the harvesting of Prosopis. However, the use of chemicals will be assessed and verified by this EIA process.
- *Harvesting Groups:* Local companies will be recruited to do the harvesting.
- *Harvesting Practices:* Harvesting will be done at less than 30cm above the ground. The de-bushing of Prosopis should be done before the flowering period or well-timed before the seeds become ripe enough for germination. The de-bushing operation will start from the compartments outside the river line towards the river line to avoid the debris from chocking the waterway.

• Revegetation with indigenous species

With the support of the Directorate of Forestry, a nursery will be established at the pilot site to supply indigenous seedlings that will be planted to replace the harvested Prosopis plants. The planted seedlings will be fenced off individually to protect the planted seedlings from stray animals and humans. The areas revegetated will be protected from fire during fire-danger seasons through the maintenance of fire cutlines as described in the previous section above. The planted seeds will have to be watered for at least 4 years during the dry periods of the year. The use of seeds for broadcasting in the field is discouraged because of the low survival rate. Planting will be preceded by training provided by the Directorate of Forestry to the planting teams.

3. Issues Identified

Mr. Makuti then described some of the potential impacts associated with the proposed activity to the audience. The following potential impacts were listed:

Positive:

- Replenishment of the aquifer.
- Economic benefits from selling the harvested biomass.
- Restoration of indigenous vegetation in the area.
- Facilitation of water flow in the river course.

Negative:

- **Ecological impacts:** Prosopis trees currently serves as a habitat and source of food to many wildlife species. The removal of Prosopis massively might affect the ecological integrity of surrounding ecosystems.
- The use of chemicals for killing Prosopis stumps in the river basin may have unprecedented negative impact on fauna and flora.

• Soil erosion: The removal of Prosopis vegetation along the riverbanks may cause soil erosion and land degradation especially in areas where it is the dominant vegetation species.

4. Questions and Comments

After the presentation by the project team, the meeting participants were given an opportunity to ask questions and raise any issues of concern. The table below provides a summary of the questions asked and responses provided by the project team.

ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE FROM EIA CONSULTANTS			
 <u>Purpose and scope of the project:</u> What is the reason for the removal of <i>Prosopis</i>? 	• Prosopis causes many detrimental impacts such as the depletion of water resources, outcompete indigenous vegetation, blocks water flow and many other impacts.			
• A poster should be developed by the project team to inform the residents about the Prosopis and how it is bad for the environment.	• Noted and will be recommended to the project implementation team.			
• What area will be covered by the project?	• The site at Gibeon covers an area of 400 ha.			
 Socio-economic: A similar project was undertaken by another organization at Gibeon a few years ago that provided job opportunities for the youth. Why was this project stopped? 	• There was a project that assisted the Prosopis Firewood business, a Gibeon community group. The project was implemented with support from the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia.			
• Prosopis provides fodder to livestock especially during the drought. If Prosopis is removed from the environment, what are the alternative sources of fodder for the local farmers?	• The scoping report will address this issue and various mitigation measures will be recommended.			
• No Chinese nationals should be allowed to participate in the project as they abuse Namibian workers.	• It will be recorded in the report as such.			
• Messages should be send to the participants through the contact details provided in the attendance register when the project commences. This is because the	• Noted. Efforts will be made to communicate to the participants.			

political leadership in the area do not communicate information on time.	
• Before the project commences there should be a series of stakeholder sensitization workshops to allow all members of the community to comprehend the project.	• It will be recommended as such.
 Members of the community who attended the meeting should be allowed to benefit from project opportunities first. 	• Noted and will be recommended as such.
• Owners of surrounding farmland must be informed about the project as they might prevent the project from accessing the <i>Prosopis</i> located in their farms.	• Noted and will be recommended as such.

5. Conclusion

Mr. Naabasa thanked the participants for making time to attend the meeting and promised that the Nevunduko team will do its best to ensure that all issues raised in the meeting will be addressed and recorded as such in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. He also indicated that once the Draft Scoping Report is ready it would be circulated to all that have register as Interested and Affected Parties for their inputs. He then officially closed the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 16h00

Meeting attendance Register:









ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Type of Activity: Consultation Date: Pilot Area:

Stakeholder Consultation 27/01/2023 Glbeon

ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Fist Name	Surname	Institution	Contact	Email	Signature
Olavi Makuti	Naturti	Consultant	081140533		Altering
Christina	Certie	resident	0818066804		Cerentre
Granciskus	Gertze	Resident	081 8066904		Florte
Raysed	Booynes	Resident	\$818066804		BOOYDER
for	haspo	Resident	0873360652	grobbie grobler 20 grnail.com,	
HRIS GROBLER Wycliffe	GROBLER Naabasa	GENSBOK WINKEL, Consulfant	08/3289766 081 20563	40	FA