

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Application for Environmental Clearance for an existing lodge on privately owned land.

Applicant: Mushara Lodge CC for Mushara Lodge



Prepared by
Henriette Potgieter
April 2021

Table of contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1	Background.....	3
2	LOCATION.....	3
3	ACTIVITIES	5
4	INFRASTRUCTURE	6
5	CONCLUSION.....	7

1 Introduction

This is an application for Environmental Clearance (EC) for a high-income/low-impact safari lodge that was built before 2012, when the Environmental Management Act, 2007, came into effect.

It is proposed that EC be awarded on the basis of an EMP, a practice for which there is precedent in the case of existing lodges that are marketed as “eco lodges”. It may be argued that some of the standard requirements for new projects could be waived in the case of a lodge that was built before 2012.

- Scoping report: The EMP addresses all potential impacts the project might have on the physical environment, eliminating the need for a scoping report.
- Consent/support from the relevant authority: MEFT is the relevant authority for lodges outside a municipal area and this application for EC constitutes a request for consent.
- Proof of consultation: The project has been in operation for more than 10 years, and it is located on privately owned land which is surrounded by privately owned land on which similar projects are operated.

1.1 Background

Mushara Lodge CC owns and manages three lodges on the farm Kleinbegin in the Oshikoto Region: Mushara Lodge, Mushara Outpost and Mushara Bushcamp. The three lodges are marketed under the umbrella of Mushara the Collection.

Mushara Lodge opened in 1998 and is aimed at a target market of international tourists who require luxury accommodation while visiting the east side of Etosha National Park. Pricing is in the high-income range.

Kleinbegin farm (2,500 ha) is dedicated to conservation, and eco-tourism is the only commercial activity that takes place on the game-fenced property. It is privately owned.

2 Location

The lodge is located 80 km northwest of Tsumeb and 8 km east of the Von Lindequist gate of Etosha National Park with access from the C38 road (Figure 1).

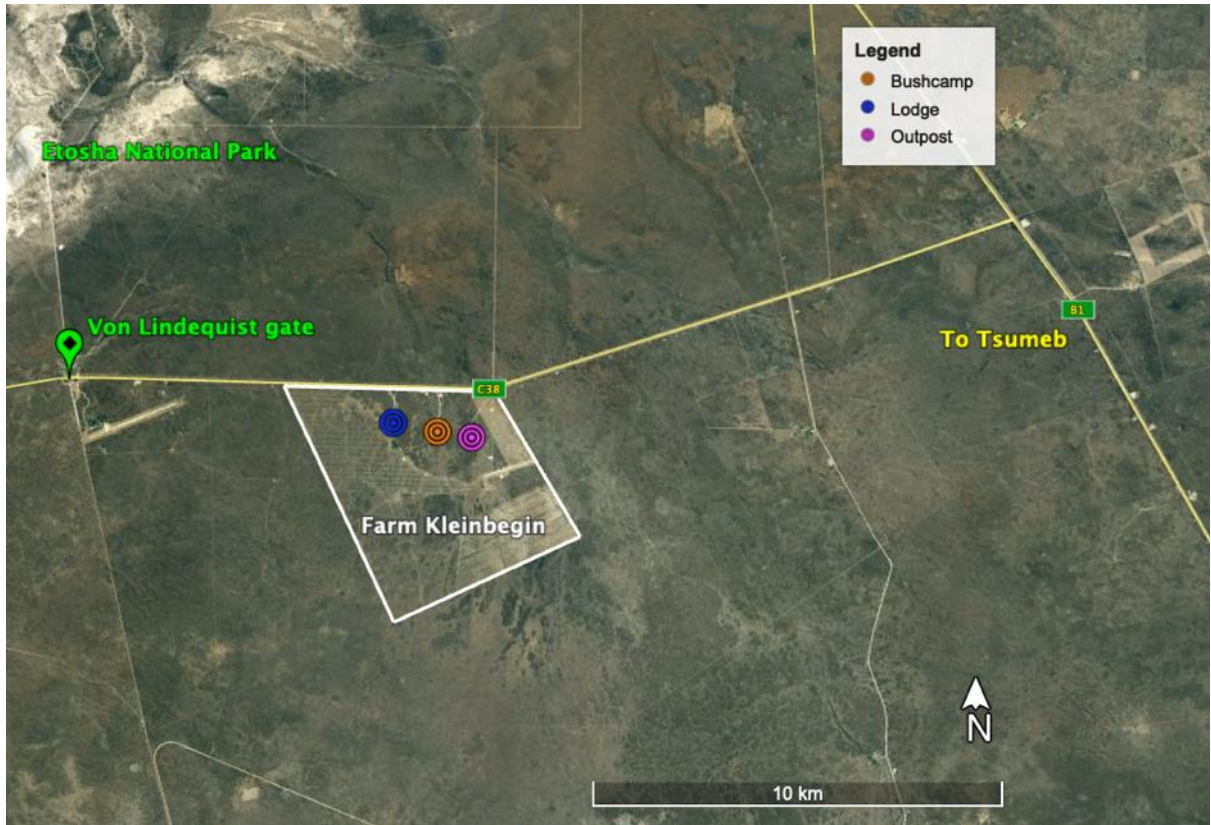


Figure 1. Location of the farm Kleinbegin in the Oshikoto Region.

3 Activities

The following activities are offered by and operated from the lodge.

- Accommodation and meals
- Game drives into Etosha
- Sunset drives on the farm. Offered only in the dry season when the limited road network on the farm is navigable.

The lodge can accommodate a total of 36 guests in en suite rooms. The rooms are of a variety of style and luxury. Meals, snacks and a full bar service are offered in the main building.

Game drives take place in converted 4x4 vehicles that are licensed and conform to the standards set by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT), Etosha National Park, NaTis and the Namibia Tourism Board.

The farm is surrounded by game fencing and contains general savanna game such as zebra, giraffe, eland, kudu, oryx, red hartebeest, impala, dik-dik and grey duiker. Lions may occasionally move through the property from neighbouring farms and leopards are present but seldom seen.

4 Infrastructure

Total footprint of the lodge and its support structures is approximately 5 ha. The layout of infrastructure is given on a Google Earth map in Figure 2.

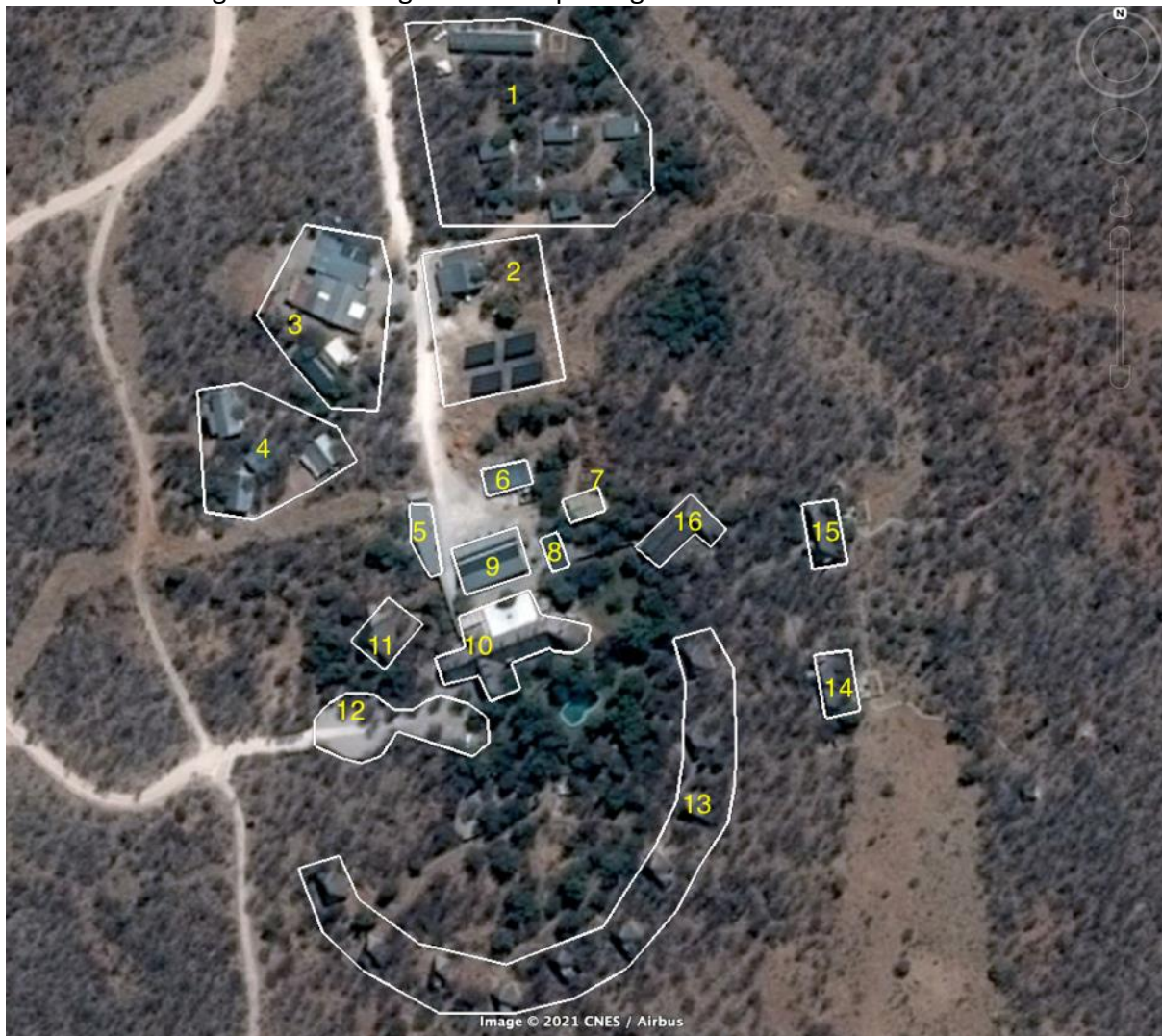


Figure 2. Google Earth map showing the infrastructure layout.

- 1 Staff village
- 2 Workshop and 4 solar panels
- 3 Game drive complex (rented out)
- 4 Management accommodation
- 5 Parking x8
- 6 Parking x6
- 7 Water tanks
- 8 Laundry and canteen
- 9 Storage shed
- 10 Main building
- 11 Family house (2 bedrooms)
- 12 Guest parking
- 13 Guest rooms (ten separate, free-standing units)
- 14, 15 Villa 1 and 2
- 16 Guest room complex (six rooms under one roof)

5 Conclusion

Mushara Lodge has been running for 22 years in a highly competitive eco-lodge market. The lodge is managed according to high standards of sustainability, using the latest available technologies and information to prevent and minimise negative impacts on the environment.

During a site visit of several days, the practitioner observed the operation and became convinced of a commitment to sustainable development and management on the part of the owner and his management team. The farm is surrounded by similar lodge operations on privately owned land. It is proposed that MEFT grant Environmental Clearance based on an Environmental Management Plan.