

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) FOR THE PROPOSED UPGRADING OF AN AIRSTRIP TO A PAVED RUNWAY ON FARM AANDSTÊR, HARDAP REGION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)

SEPTEMBER 2022

## 1. BACKGROUND

The NamibRand Nature Reserve intends to upgrade the existing airstrip on Farm Aandstêr, to a paved runway.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is required to obtain Environmental Clearance for the development. Resilient Environmental Solutions cc (RES) is contracted to undertake this EIA process.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

EIAs are regulated by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) in terms of the Environmental Management Act 7 of 2007. An application for Environmental Clearance must first be submitted to the competent authority for their consent. This is the Ministry of Works and Transport.

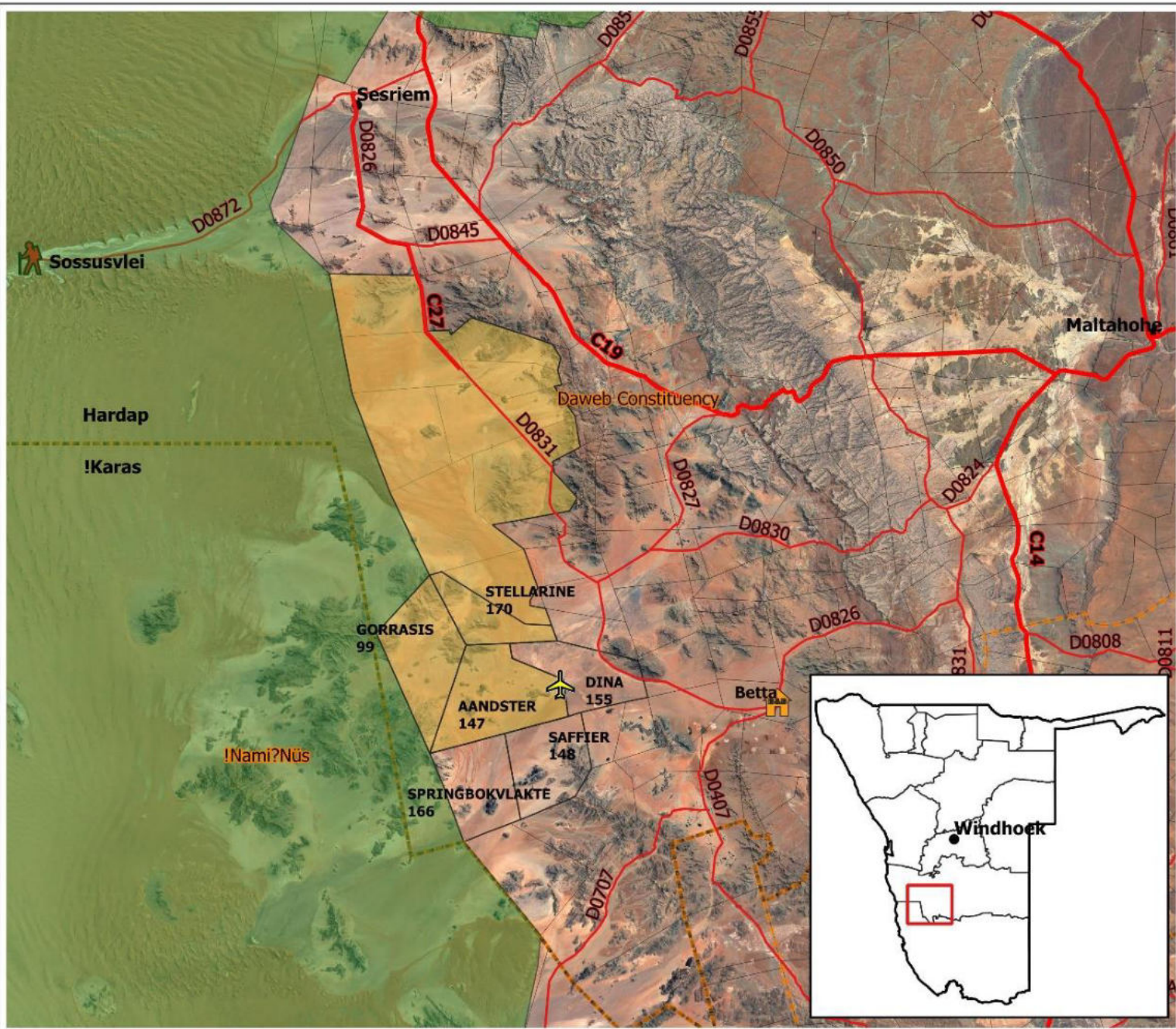
This Background Information Document provides details of the proposal.

Information collected during this process will be written up in a Scoping Report, for submission to the MEFT.

## 3. CONTACT DETAILS

Issues and/or comments to be included in the EIA Report should be forwarded to RES.

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# Proposed Upgrade of Aandster Airstrip

## Location map

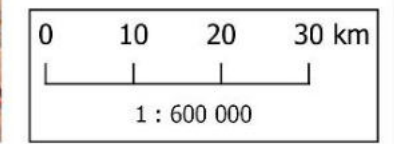
**Legend**

- Namib-Naukluft Park
- Sossusvlei
- Aandster airstrip
- District road
- Main road
- Constituency
- Towns/ settlement
- Region
- NamibRand Reserve
- Farm

Drawn by:  
S Husselmann

Date:  
September 2022

Prepared for:  
NamibRand Nature Reserve



## 4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### 4.1 SITUATION

Geographic coordinates of the development: 25.358056 S, 16.102488 E.

The existing airstrip is situated on Farm Aandstêr in the NamibRand Nature Reserve. This is approximately 100 km south of Sesriem, and about 8 km west of the C27 gravel road running from Sesriem to Betta. It is situated on an open plain close to the Aandstêr homestead.

NamibRand Nature Reserve is a private nature reserve that shares a border with the Namib-Naukluft National Park to the west.

### 4.2 CONSTRUCTION

The airstrip already exists, with a substrate of compacted gravel. It is 1,450 m long and 12 m wide. At the south-western end there is an enlarged area about 30 x 30 m for turning and parking of aircraft. The upgrading will comprise laying of interlock bricks over this entire surface, with concrete edging. The interlock bricks will be procured and transported from Windhoek, while the sub-surface sand will be excavated locally from dune sand. The only water requirement will be for mixing of concrete; there will be no electricity requirements for the construction.

The construction period is expected to last 8-10 weeks, with a team of 5 people from the area. They will be accommodated in a small temporary construction camp near the Aandstêr homestead.

### 4.3 OPERATION

Current flying activity at the airstrip is rather low, less than 10 incoming/outgoing flights per month. There may be a small increase in the

amount of air traffic that uses the airfield, but this will still be at a low rate.

Future maintenance of the brick paving surface will not involve any further traffic or earth-moving.

## 5. MAIN ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS

Potential environmental and social issues associated with the upgrading of the airstrip include:

### 5.1 Increase in road traffic

Materials will be transported to site on the gravel roads from Maltahöhe. This will be a negligibly small increase in truck traffic.

### 5.2 Disturbance from construction team

The construction team will be small and there will be very little mechanical noise, only for a short time, associated with preparation and compaction of the surface.

The construction camp will be temporary. Cooking fuel will be provided in the form of gas stoves to prevent the need for local collection of firewood, as this is prohibited in the Reserve and is very scarce anyway. For those instances when firewood is necessary or desired, the construction team will get wood from approved sources such as local Prosopis trees, purposely cleared to get rid of this alien invasive plant in the reserve, or sourced from the local provider, probably in Maltahöhe.

The nearest homesteads, apart from Aandstêr itself, are located on the eastern side of the C27 road, more than 8 km away. The noise impact is expected to be negligible. The small size of the team, and the fact that they will mostly be people from the local area, reduces the likelihood of



social disturbance to other local residents, and the likelihood of illegal activities such as poaching.

Disturbance to the local social setting is therefore predicted to be negligible.

### **5.3 Disturbance from increase in air traffic**

The upgrade will create a preferred landing strip for aircraft coming in to NamibRand, although there is no predicted significant increase in air traffic in future. It is possible, over time, that this airstrip will become more known and will attract higher numbers of aircraft, with their associated effect of noise and disturbance to local people and wildlife (e.g. Ludwig's Bustard). This is an impact with low significance.

### **5.3 Disturbance to local wildlife**

There will be very little interference with animals in the surroundings. Small burrowing animals such as ground squirrels are likely to attempt to burrow under the hard surface of the airstrip. Reserve staff will have to be vigilant for this, and will need to manually block any burrows as soon as they begin, so that the surface stays intact.

### **5.4 Earthmoving and surface disturbance**

Construction will involve very little disturbance to the soil surface; the only earth-moving will be excavation of up to 500 m<sup>3</sup> of dune sand for the sub-surface layer. This will be done from a nearby bare site with little or no disturbance to vegetation. Rehabilitation of the excavation site will occur naturally with infilling of wind-blown sand, making the removal of sand undetectable after about one year.

### **5.5 Positive socio-economic impact**

The project will allow faster and more modern aircraft to use the Aandstêr facility. This will also improve turnaround time for emergency evacuations from the Reserve. These factors are favourable for tourism and the NRNR staff. The use of local labour for the construction will create a small benefit for local employment.

## **6. INFORMATION-SHARING MEETING**

An information-sharing meeting with local Interested and Affected Parties (IAPs) is scheduled as follows:

**Friday 9 September 2022, 3:00 – 5:00 pm**  
**Farm Aandster**

IAPs will be given an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns, and inputs from them will be used to inform the Scoping Report.