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BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID):

Environmental Impact Assessment for the construction and operation of the proposed Aquaculture and Fish Farming on PTN 60 (a Portion of Portion 24) of the Farm No 163 Swakopmund, Erongo Region

November 2023

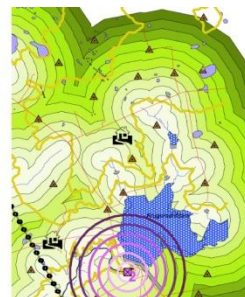
Proponent: Synergy Farms Namibia (Pty) Ltd

GCS Project Number: 23-0989

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER: GCS (PTY) LTD

GCS Water Environmental Engineering (Pty) Ltd (GCS) is a fully integrated water, environmental, and earth science consulting services company based in the Republic of South Africa, with offices in Namibia, Botswana, and the Czech Republic. GCS provides a professional consulting service in the fields of environmental, water and earth sciences. GCS has a team of highly trained staff with considerable experience in the fields of environmental and water science.

GCS will act as the Independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP), as well as the Public Participation Practitioner for this environmental authorisation process.



1 INTRODUCTION

Synergy Farms Namibia (Pty) Ltd (The Proponent) proposes to construct and operate the proposed aquaculture and fish farming on PTN 60 (a Portion of Portion 24) of the Farm No 163 Swakopmund, Erongo Region. The approximate location of the proposed site is depicted in **Figure 1-1**.

GCS Water and Environmental Engineering Namibia (Pty) Ltd (GCS) has been appointed by the proponent to undertake the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) inclusive of public consultation for the proposed development.

Under the Environmental Management Act (2007) and its Regulations (2012), an Environmental Assessment (EA) is required for:

AGRICULTURE AND AQUACULTURE

Activity 7.1 Construction of facilities for aquaculture production, including mariculture and algae farms where the structures are not situated within an aquaculture development zone declared in terms of the Aquaculture Act, 2002.

Activity 7.8 The introduction of alien species into local ecosystems.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Activity 10.1 (a) The construction of oil, water, gas and petrochemical and other bulk supply pipelines

This Background Information Document (BID) has been compiled by GCS with the following aims:

- To introduce the proposed project and related activities to potential Interested and Affected Parties (IAPs);
- To provide information on the Environmental Assessment and related processes;
- To inform IAPs on how to be involved in the Environmental Assessment process;
- To invite all parties to register as IAPs on the Environmental Assessment database; and
- To provide all IAPs with an opportunity to comment on the proposed project and associated process, including biophysical and socio-economic aspects, as well as any other issues of concern.

ABBREVIATIONS	
BID	Background Information Document
CRR	Comments and Response Report
EAP	Environmental Assessment Practitioner
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMA	Environmental Management Act (No 7 of 2007)
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
I&AP	Interested and Affected Party
MEFT: DEAF	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism: Department of Environmental Affairs and Forestry
PPP	Public Participation Process

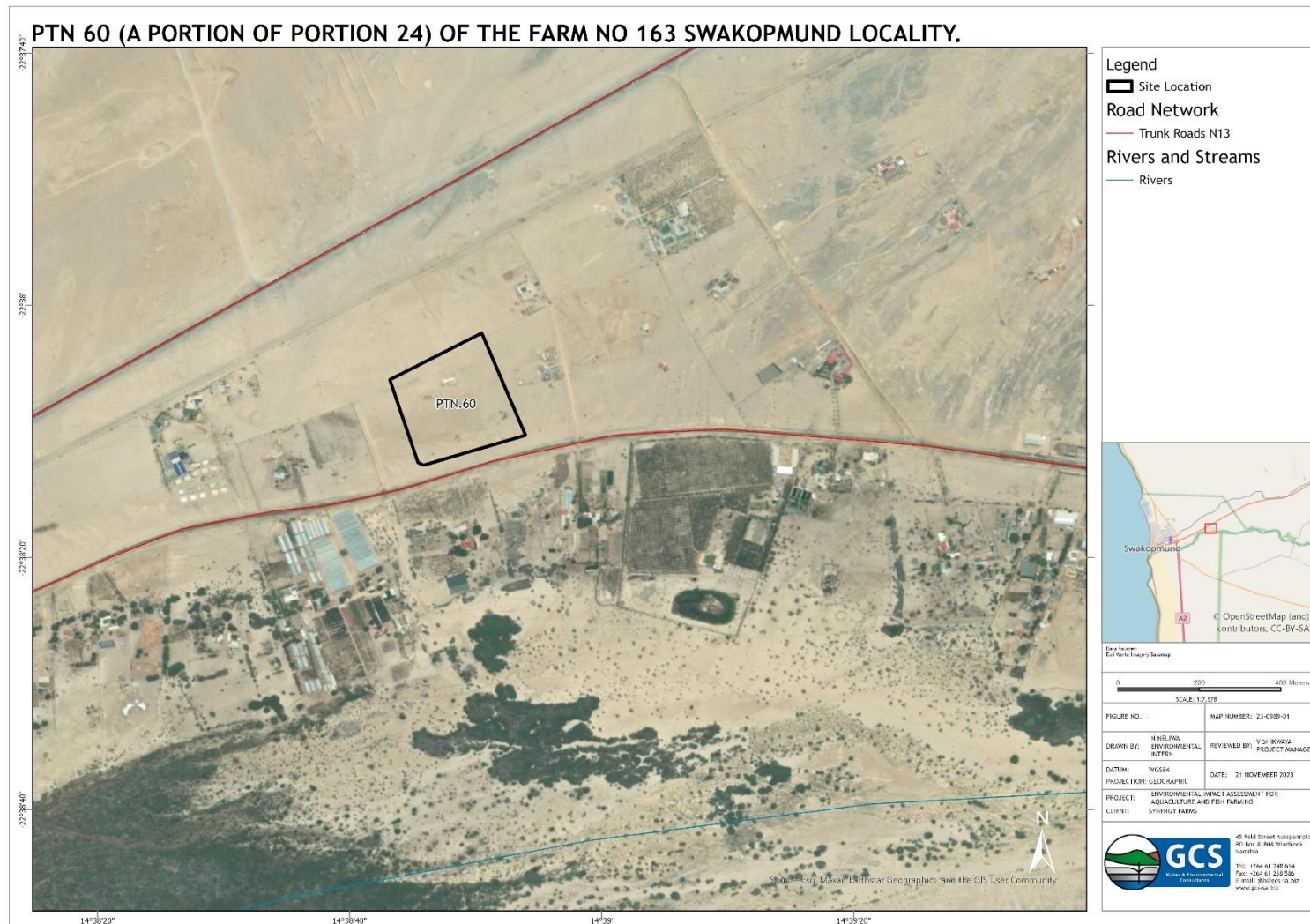


Figure 1-1: Approximate location of proposed site.

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project Background

The Proponent proposes to construct and operate the proposed aquaculture and fish farming on PTN 60 (a Portion of Portion 24) of the Farm No 163 Swakopmund, Erongo Region which is situated approximately 12km east of Swakopmund. Please refer to **Figure 1-1** for the locality of the proposed Aquaculture and Fish farm.

Namibia currently farms four (4) species of freshwater fish which are three spotted tilapia (*Oreochromis andersonii*, Redbreast tilapia (*Tilapia rendalli*), Mozambique tilapia (*Oreochromis mossambicus*) and African catfish (*Clarias gariepinus*). Of the four, the Mozambique tilapia is the only fish not native to Namibian waters (The Namibian, 2017). The Proponent intends to farm with the Namibian tilapia (*Oreochromis andersonii*) for commercial purposes.

The Tilapia fish species has a natural distribution from the Orange River System northwards to the Kunene, Hardap Dam, Okavango River, and Zambezi River Systems (Fish Species on the Orange River, n.d.). These fish species are however alien to the Namibian coastal town of Swakopmund and have the potential to support a lucrative export market and ensure that the demand for freshwater fish is maintained through an aquaculture operation.

Aquaculture, also known as (aquafarming), is the future way to go in which Tilapia farming can be operated in a sustainable way. Synergy Farms Namibia (Pty) Ltd will be constructing and operating an aquaculture farm in Nonidas east of Swakopmund, which will cover an area initially of 0.018 ha with a possible extension for future expansion. Tilapia are hardy and grow rapidly under crowded conditions, but their tropical nature is a major drawback for producers in temperate climates. Various species and strains of tilapia differ in cold tolerance, but growth is generally limited at water temperatures below 22 degrees Celsius. Many producers throughout the world avoid this constraint by growing tilapia in indoor recirculating tank systems (Lutz, 2023).

The Proponent hereby seeks approval for the activity of putting up a Tank-based Tilapia Production in Swakopmund to farm with one (1) indigenous fish species.

The direct benefits and related spin offs of this initiative at this coastal town of Swakopmund by the Proponent include:

- quality tilapia fish of high protein for the export market which will contribute to the GDP of Namibia
- provision of job opportunities from both the skilled and unskilled labour force
- revival of small business related to the fishery sector that had stagnated over the past decade.

2.2 Engineering services

The subject site will be connected to the internal reticulation network of the Municipality of Swakopmund in terms of water and electricity.

Access to Portion 60 (a Portion of Portion 24) of the Farm No 163 is obtained via the B2 road east from Swakopmund.

3 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

The following potential impacts have been identified from the proposed activity so far:

- **Temporary job creation** through the hiring of workers to be involved during the construction of the fish farm.
- **Impact on vegetation and fauna:** some vegetation may need to be removed to during site clearance. This may also lead to habitat destruction for some fauna.
- **Environmental degradation** through different types of waste generated on the site.
- **Waste** will be produced during the construction and operation at the factory. This waste must be disposed of in an appropriate manner.
- **Soils and water contamination** from construction materials being used during construction.
- **Noise and dust** generated during construction activities.
- **Health and safety risks** which may result to workers during construction and operation activities.
- **Archaeological and Heritage Impacts** if these sites are located close to or within the planned area.

PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Environmental Management Act, 2007 (Act No. 7 of 2007), and supporting Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulation of 18 January 2012, prescribes the processes to be followed when conducting the Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) Application and associated Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.

In broad terms, the purpose of the EIA process is to assess the current environment (including the socio-economic and cultural setting) in which a proposed activity will take place and assess all potential impacts.

The process aims to ensure that all relevant factors are considered when evaluating the potential impacts of a project, as well as developing appropriate environmental management measures (in the form of an Environmental Management Plan – EMP) to mitigate these impacts.

The EMP describes the goals and objectives for impact management to minimise or eliminate potential negative impacts; the action plans to bring effect to those goals and objectives; the procedures to be implemented to ensure integration of environmental management into the daily operations; as well as a plan to raise awareness of employees and the surrounding community with regards to environmental management.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

4.1 Environmental Management Act No. 7 of 2007

The Environmental Management Act (EMA) provides a list of activities, the development or execution of which require an Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) from the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism: Department of Environmental Affairs and Forestry (MEFT: DEAF) prior to construction. Due to the nature of the proposed project, an ECC will be required prior to project commencement. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process as per the requirements of EMA: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (18 January 2012) must be conducted to inform the ECC decision.

4.2 Environmental Impact Assessment

The EMA defines EIA as a process of identifying, predicting, and evaluating the significant effects of activities on the environment, the risks and consequences of activities, alternatives to these activities and options for mitigation of such activities. This is done with a view of minimising negative impacts, maximising benefits, and promoting compliance with the principles of environmental management.

4.3 Competent Authority

The competent authority administering the EIA process and deciding on the issue of an ECC is the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism’s Department of Environmental Affairs and Forestry. As such, application for an ECC and all reports and documentation associated with the EIA process will be submitted to the MEFT: DEAF.

Phases of EIA
APPLICATION PHASE
Review of project against EMA listed activities to determine the need for an EIA Process
Compile and submit an ECC application to DEA
SCOPING PHASE WE ARE HERE
Identify and consult with Interested and Affected Parties (IAPs) and conduct baseline studies to determine the sensitivity of the receiving environment and population to the proposed project
Identify potential environmental and social impacts based on the baseline studies and consultation with IAPs
Determine the Terms of Reference for further study during EIA/EMP (If required).
Compile Draft Scoping Report and Draft EMP detailing the above process and outcomes, and circulate to IAPs for review and comment.
Finalise Scoping Report and Draft EMP with IAP review outcomes and submit to DEA for adjudication.

5 REGISTRATION OF I&APS AND THEIR COMMENTS/CONCERNS

Public involvement is an essential part of any EIA process. Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) include any person or organisation that will be directly or indirectly involved and/or affected by the project.

You have been identified as a potential I&AP who may want to receive information regarding the above-mentioned project and/or provide input into the EIA process. To be recognised as an I&AP and to be kept informed of the proposed project and EIA process going forward, one must register with GCS to be added to the Stakeholder Database for the project. You may communicate via fax, email, or telephone to obtain further information or comment on the proposed project.

Registered I&APs will be kept informed of the Public Participation Process throughout the EIA process, will be given the opportunity to review and comment on the EIA reports and documents, will receive feedback on how comments have been taken into account, and will be informed of the outcome of the assessment. All comments will be recorded and presented to the project team and competent authority by means of the Project Comments and Responses Register (CRR).

Attached to this BID is a comment form which you can complete and record any comments you may have with respect to the proposed activity. The contact details of the EAP to whom the comments can be addressed are outlined below.

The general public as well as any I&APs are hereby invited to attend the public meeting during which the potential environmental and social impacts of the project will be presented for comments and inputs from the public. The meeting is scheduled to take place as follows:


Date: 07 December 2023

Time: 17h30

Venue: Gecko Ridge, Swakopmund

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - CONTACT DETAILS
<p>Contact Person: Victoria Shikwaya Tel: +264 61 248 614 Fax: +264 61 238 586 Email: victorias@gcs-na.biz Postal Address: PO Box 81808, Windhoek</p>

6 COMMENT FORM

		Environmental Impact Assessment for the Construction and operation of the proposed Aquaculture and Fish Farming on PTN 60 (a Portion of Portion 24) of the Farm No 163 Swakopmund, Erongo Region <u>I&AP Comments Form</u>					
Name:		Surname:					
Organisation / interest:							
Postal / Residential address							
		Area:		Code:			
Contact details		Tel:	()				
		Fax:	()				
		Mobile:	()				
		Email:					
Please mark with an X to indicate whether you would like to participate in the process:							
Yes, I would like to participate in this process and receive periodical updates					<input type="checkbox"/>		
No, I am not interested in participating and do not wish to receive further information					<input type="checkbox"/>		
Preferred method of communication		Email	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fax	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date commented		(DD / MM / YYYY)					
Please indicate any issues, comments and concerns with regards to the proposed project (feel free to use the additional space or attach additional pages, as required)							
Please indicate in which aspects you would require more information							
Please indicate the contact details of any IAPs whom you think should be contacted							
Name:			Surname:				
Tel:	()		Fax:	()			
Mobile:	()						
Email:							
<p>In order to be registered as an IAP for this project, fax, mail, or e-mail the completed registration form before or on Wednesday 13 December 2023 to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Contact Person: Victoria Shikwaya Tel: +264 61 248 614 Fax: +264 61 238 586 Email: victorias@gcs-na.biz</p>							

Postal Address: PO Box 81808, Windhoek