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BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)

**Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the Offshore
Prospecting and Exploration activities on Exclusive Prospecting
Licence (EPL) No. 10009 Located near Lüderitz, //Kharas Region**

Proponent: Pointe Noire Investments CC

Environmental Consultant: Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd

1 INTRODUCTION

Pointe Noire Investments CC (The Proponent) applied for an Exclusive Prospecting License (EPL) No.10009 from the Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy (MIME) on 03 April 2024. The covered area is prospective for Precious Stones, upon which detailed prospecting and exploration activities will be conducted.

The tenement is situated near Lüderitz, approximately 85 km south-west of Lüderitz in the //Kharas Region (**Figure 1**). The EPL area is located within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and lies within water depths of about 140 mbsl to 300 mbsl with a lateral extent of 99747.61 Hectares (ha) (**Figure 2**).

The Proponent intends to conduct offshore mineral exploration activities leading to the estimation of delineation of the target resource. As a request for approval for mineral exploration activity on EPL 10009, The Proponent is required to submit an Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) and draft Environmental Management Plan (EMP) to the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT), Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy (MIME), and Ministry of Fisheries Marine Resources (MFMR) for decision-making.

Exploration and all mining-related activities are among the listed activities that may not be undertaken without an ECC under the Environmental Management Act (EMA) (2007) and its 2012 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. The relevant listed activities as per EIA regulations are:

- *3.1 The construction of facilities for any process or activities which requires a license, right of other forms of authorization, and the renewal of a license, right or other forms of authorization, in terms of the Minerals (Prospecting and Mining Act, 1992).*
- *3.2 other forms of mining or extraction of any natural resources whether regulated by law or not.*
- *3.3 Resource extraction, manipulation, conservation, and related activities.*

The Proponent is, therefore, required to obtain an ECC for the approval of the EPL before the commencement of works on the EPL. To fulfill the legal requirements, the Proponent has appointed Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd (Environmental Consultant), to conduct the required Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) process and submit the ECC application to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Forestry (DEAF) at the Ministry of Environment, Forestry & Tourism (MEFT).

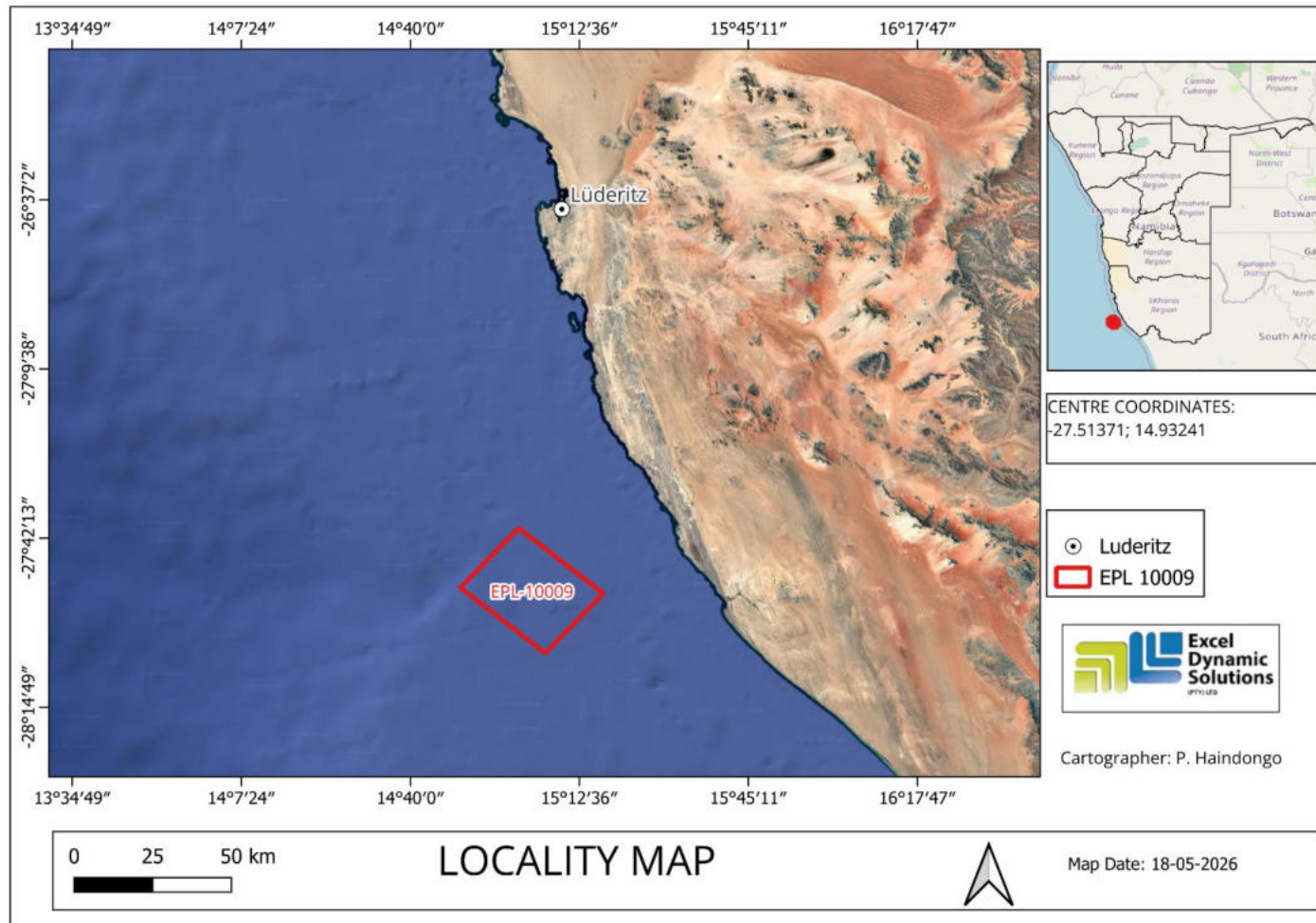


Figure 1: Locality map of EPL No. 10009, //Kharas Region, Namibia

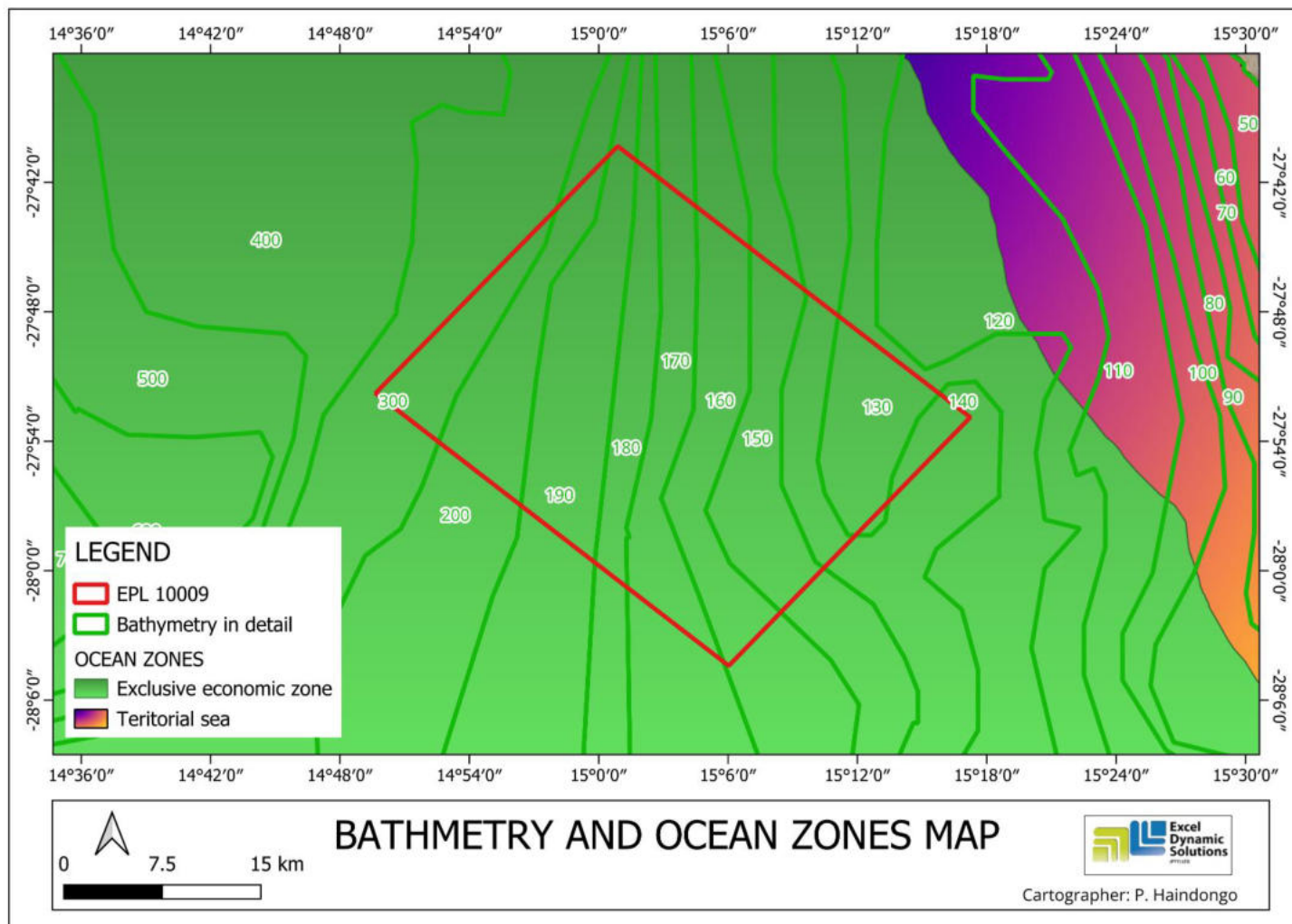


Figure 2: The bathymetry and Ocean Zones of the project area

2. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

It should be noted that the Background Information Document (BID) is a non-technical document of the ESIA (not an ESIA Report). The BID aims to briefly introduce the proposed project and related activities to Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs), and provide them with an opportunity to raise issues, and concerns and submit comments about the proposed project.

The planned project activities will only commence once the Proponent has been issued with an ECC, and obtained all required permits.

3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The following phases will be addressed in the EA and subsequently in the EMP:

- **Operation and Maintenance phase-** This is the phase during which the Proponent is exploring for Precious Stones on the EPL and undertaking related activities. The level and magnitude of planned work is not clear at this stage. However, the Proponent has highlighted that both invasive and non-invasive activities are expected to take place upon issuance of an ECC. A 6 – 9 months exploration period is predicted.

Geophysical surveying is non-invasive and will have minimal impact on the environment, while marine sampling will involve extraction of sediment samples from the seabed and will have a localized impact on marine biota. However, it is envisaged that sampling will be short-term, and focused on limited sampling points as part of a grid survey to determine the viability of the resource. The benthic communities surrounding the sampling sites will be able to repopulate and renourish the affected sampling areas. The impacts of mining, should the resources prove viable, will be subject to a more detailed impact assessment, along with mitigation measures.

The selection of the potential mineralization model and exploration targets will be done based on the geology mapping, and assay results of the samples collected.

- **The decommissioning phase** of the exploration operations may be considered due to various reasons beyond the scope of this BID. During the operational phase and before decommissioning, the Proponent will need to put rehabilitation measures in place.

The Environmental Assessment process will identify sensitive environmental features that might be affected by the proposed offshore exploration and mining activities.

3.2 Human Resources, Services, and infrastructure

The following services and infrastructure as outlined below will be required for the project activities:

Human Resources: Around 5-15 people will be employed for the project, and will be accommodated in Lüderitz.

Water Supply: Portable water for use on board the exploration vessel will be sourced from Lüderitz Port and will be carried in tanks on the vessel. Purification of water through a desalination process on board will also be used to produce additional potable water. Detailed water usage will be determined in the ESIA Report.

Fuel Supply: The marine exploration vessel will use Marine Gas Oil as fuel for operation. Marine Gas Oil will also be used for offshore generators to supply power for operating the equipment for exploration.

Machinery and Equipment: Marine geophysical surveying will be conducted using a chartered vessel with an approximate length of 50m using the Dynamic Positioning (DP) system. This method allows the resultant sonographic mosaic charts and seismic profiles to be produced with reasonable accuracy. In addition, equipment that will be used during the geophysical survey include the following:

- Multibeam echo sounder (MBES) and swath bathymetry systems,
- Side-scan sonar equipment,
- High frequency seismic profiling system (low energy <12Hz)
- Magnetometer Systems
- Direct visual observation using underwater video systems usually mounted on Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROV).

Accessibility: The EPL is located south-west of Lüderitz within the Atlantic Ocean, and is accessible by use of vessel(s) from the Port of Lüderitz.

3.3. Waste Management

Sufficient waste bins (containers) will be made available on the vessel, the principle to avoid waste dump in the ocean will apply during the operational phase. They will be disposed later at the nearest approved waste facility onshore.

Health and Safety: Adequate and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided to exploration personnel on the vessel.

Potential Accidental Fire Outbreaks: Fire extinguishers will be readily available on the vessel.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This EA process is conducted in accordance with the provisions of the EMA (Act No 7 of 2007) and its 2012 EIA Regulations. The primary objective of the EA is to identify potential negative impacts associated with the project and assess them. Practical and effective mitigation measures will be recommended for implementation.

The main objectives of this EA are to:

- Identify potential impacts associated with the proposed Activity.
- Inform I&APs and relevant authorities about the project and provide them with an opportunity to participate during the EA process.
- Assess the significance of issues and concerns raised.
- Compile a report addressing all identified issues and potential impacts.
- Compile a Draft Environmental Management Plan (EMP) which includes impacts management and mitigation measures.

5.1 Pre-Identified Potential Impacts

The following potential impacts have been identified:

5.1.1 Positive:

- Creation of jobs to the locals (primary, secondary and tertiary employment)
- Local Economic Growth
- Open up other investment opportunities
- Contribution to regional economic development

5.1.2 Negative Impacts:

- Pollution resulting from possible accidents or emergencies at sea
- Possible destruction of faunal and flora habitats as well as removal of nutrients
- Impact on marine fisheries resources
- Potential health and safety risks associated with mishandling of handheld exploration equipment.

The potential impacts listed above are pre-identified. More potential impacts will be identified as the EA process progresses i.e. upon public consultation with the public. All impacts and public concerns/comments will be incorporated and addressed in the ESIA Report.

5.2 Public Consultation Registration

Public consultation is an important part of the EA process. During the consultation process, I&APs are allowed to raise any issues or concerns pertaining to the project activities.

To comment or receive further information on the project, **please register with Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd** (contact details herein) as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP).

Furthermore, the Consultation Meeting details will be communicated with registered I&APs.

For comments and/or further information requests, please contact EDS Consultant on the details provided below:

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