



# BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT: EXPANSION OF SINGITA SWENI LODGE

*Singita*

LEBOMBO & SWENI LODGES  
Kruger National Park • South Africa

**PROJECT:**

The expansion of Singita Sweni Lodge,  
N'wanetsi Private Concession, Kruger National  
Park

**CONSULTANT:**

EMROSS Consulting (Pty) Ltd.  
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**APPLICANT:**

Singita Lebombo (Pty) Ltd.  
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**PROPERTY:**

N'wanetsi Private concession  
Kruger National Park

August 2016.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Singita Sweni Lodge is situated in the N'wanetsi private concession, within the Kruger National Park. The lodge attracts a number of tourists on an annual basis which facilitates and promotes the protected area sustainability through ecotourism. The desire to continue to offer tourists a world-class experience requires the lodge to undertake various developmental upgrades and refurbishments.

These developmental activities are scheduled to proceed under environmentally sound practices and principles, ensuring that the tourism operation continues to operate in an environmentally sound manner whereby the impacted footprint of the facility and its operations are minimized.

Singita Lebombo (Pty) Ltd has contracted EMROSS Consulting (Pty) Ltd as independent environmental assessment practitioners, to undertake the required actions to apply for environmental authorisation from the National Department of Environmental Affairs, for the expansion of a double room to a family unit and the relocation of a swimming pool, within 32m of a watercourse.

Government notices no. R 983-985 stipulates activities which require authorisation, in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998). Government notice 982 prescribes the manner in which the application must be undertaken.

## 2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Singita Sweni Lodge is located in the N'wanetsi private concession, within the Kruger National Park. A protected area is proclaimed in terms of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act. The proposed refurbishment and expansion activities are within the lodge development footprint and mostly on existing infrastructure footprint. As the activities are highly linked to existing infrastructure, alternative sites cannot be considered. Alternatives relating to the proposals will be. The following activities are those planned in the refurbishment which will require environmental authorisation;

### **2.1 Expansion of unit 1, to family unit**

The existing unit one, is proposed expanded to a family unit. The unit currently sleeps two people and will be expanded to accommodate four people. This will increase the capacity of the lodge from the current 12 people to 14 people.

### **2.2 Relocation of Existing Pool**

The existing swimming pool is proposed relocated to the front of the lodge. This location is, like the previous, within 32m of a watercourse.



Figure 1: Singita Sweni Lodge (Source: Google Earth 2016).

### 3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

In terms of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), the activities proposed are regarded as listed activities under schedule of activities as follows:

**GNR 985 – LN3 (Basic Assessment in certain geographical areas):**

**Activity #14:** “The development of (xii) infrastructure with a physical footprint of 10m<sup>2</sup> or more; (a) within 32m of a watercourse (a) in Mpumalanga ii. Outside urban areas, in: (aa) A protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA...” and

**Activity #17:** “The expansion of a ..., lodge, ... where the development footprint will be expanded. (a) in Mpumalanga ii. Outside urban areas, in (aa) A protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA.”

A basic environmental assessment is thus required to be conducted in order to obtain environmental authorization.

The proposed developments may also be subject to regulations contained in other legislation, such as the:

- National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999, Section 38);
- Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (No 43 of 1983);
- National Water Act (No 36 of 1998);
- National Environmental Management Act (No 107 of 1998);
- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996);
- Promotion of Access to Information Act (No 2 of 2000); and
- Mpumalanga Nature Conservation Act (No 10 of 1989).

These legislative components will be incorporated into the report where they are applicable.

## 4. THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The legislation calls for a basic assessment to establish potential environmental and social impacts of the proposed developments. The assessment will look at avoiding or minimising potential environmental damage and promote sustainable development.

The assessment process commences with a planning stage. During this stage:

- A pre-application meeting is held with the decision making authority, in this case the National Department of Environmental Affairs;
- Site visits by specialists may be required, if deemed necessary, to assess the site and potential impacts that could be caused by the proposed developments;
- Potential interested and affected parties to the development are identified and
- Notices and advertisements are publicised and identified interested and affected parties are consulted.

The planning stage is followed by a reporting stage. During this stage:

- Property information and public comment, along with various assessments and specialist inputs, are incorporated into a report which assesses the proposed development in context of the site.

The reporting stage is followed by Public Participation, where:

- The compiled report is made available for comment; and
- The application form and report is submitted to the competent authority.

The final stage is the decision making stage. During this stage:

- The authority reviews the report and public comments for decision making.
- Once the decision is made, this is circulated to the applicant and to the public. There will be an opportunity to appeal the decision at this point.

## 5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, it is the right of persons to have the environment in which they live protected in a responsible and sustainable manner. Every person also has the right of access to information and should be informed of any proposed scheduled activities.

Therefore, an important aspect of the Environmental Impact Assessment process is to identify potential Interested and Affected Parties and to provide them with accessible information, to which they may raise comments or voice any concerns associated with the proposed developments.

This is done by contacting special interest groups and park management, by advertising the process in a local newspaper, by erecting a notice at the Satara Day visitors camp.

Registered Interested and Affected Parties have the right to comment on reports regarding the developments, which are to be submitted to the department by the consultant.

In return the registered Interested and Affected Party is expected to:

- Submit all comments in writing to the consultant;
- Adhere to time frames given for commenting or submit a written motivation for why a longer commenting period is needed; and
- Disclose any direct business, financial, personal or other interest in the development and/or approval or refusal of the development.

## 6. WHO TO CONTACT

Should you wish to register as an interested and affected party to this process and should you have any special concerns that you wish to be addressed during the assessment process, please send your name and contact details and issues to be addressed to:

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Interested and Affected Parties have **30 days to register**. We will, however, be accepting comments throughout the process. In order for issues to be fully assessed, it would be preferable to receive these at the start of this process.

The whole assessment process is expected to last approximately 6 months.