

## Kruger Selati (Pty) Ltd

# Basic Assessment Report for the development of upmarket tourism accommodation on the Selati Railway Bridge, Skukuza, Kruger National Park

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

February 2018

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT?

The purpose of this document is to:

- ◆ Inform Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) about the proposed project, and to invite them to participate in the Environmental Impact Assessment process;
- ◆ Provide a brief background on the proposed project; and
- ◆ Explain the aims and objectives of the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

### WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND TO THIS DEVELOPMENT?

The South African National Parks identified the opportunity for the utilisation of existing infrastructure associated with the Selati Railway Line and Bridge in and adjacent to the Skukuza Rest Kamp in the Kruger National Park, and invited interested investors/developers to submit proposals and to tender for the opportunity. Sithole Restoration Services (Pty) Ltd. submitted the winning bid and are now in the process of applying for the required environmental authorization to proceed with their development plans under the name of Kruger Selati (Pty) Ltd.

### WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

The proposed development includes a number of interrelated components described as follows:

1. Twelve railway carriages, consistent with the historical heritage significance of the Selati Bridge and associated railway infrastructure, will be refurbished and fitted off-site to provide luxury accommodation with two on suite bedrooms per carriage, thus providing a 48 bed upmarket tourism accommodation facility that will be permanently positioned on the Selati Bridge over the Sabie River, adjacent to the Skukuza Rest Camp in the Kruger National Park (see B in Fig. 1).
2. An additional carriage fitted out as a lounge will be positioned between sleeper carriages four and five (counting from the south).
3. Walkways will be fitted to the western side of the bridge in keeping with the design style of the bridge, to facilitate guest and management access from both the south and north access points of the bridge. This walkway will be wide enough to allow access by an electric golf car.
4. On the eastern side of the lounge carriage a deck extending along the length of the carriage plus a 10m x 10m extension, will be constructed on top of the existing pump house structure and a small plunge pool will be positioned in the middle of the deck with space around and adjacent being used for the servicing of food and beverages to guests.
5. The existing Selati Restaurant footprint will be refurbished and fitted to provide the following facilities (see A in Fig. 1):

- a. Parking for both guests and the general public;
  - b. Guest reception area inclusive of office and luggage and restrooms;
  - c. A fine dining restaurant for guests;
  - d. A family restaurant for the general public from which there will be access to the station area where the refurbished Selati Railway Engine may be viewed and there will be access to interpretative and edutainment areas which will highlight the historical value of the train and the railway line; and a
  - e. Departure/arrival point for overnight guests to be transported to the bridge via the existing pump trolley to a point just south of the sleeper carriages.
6. A stationary box carriage positioned on the existing railway tracks just to the north of the sleeper carriages to serve as storage and backdrop for bush diner functions and the departure/return of game drives (see G in Fig. 1).
  7. The existing Waterkant Guest Houses to be included into the concession and refurbished as upmarket 12 bed guest accommodation in line with the style of the sleeper carriages and the facility as a whole, also to include a lounge and fine dining restaurant for overnight guests, and a wellness and pampering facility (see C in Fig. 1).
  8. A replacement accommodation unit comprising 12 beds to be constructed for SANParks immediately adjacent and to the west of the existing Nyati Guest House (see D in Fig. 1).

Note that items 1 to 4 and 6 to 8 described above are subject to the Application for Environmental Authorisation. The other components fall within an existing development footprint; they may be developed and operated independently and are therefore not subject to this assessment process and application. The complete description is provided to ensure that I&APs are provided with the full picture and are able to see the proposal in context.



**Figure 1: Position of the components making up the Shalati Kruger National Park development proposal.**

## WHERE IS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT?

The proposed development is planned to be located on the Selati Railway Bridge and within existing footprints adjacent to the Bridge and the Selati Railway Line in and adjacent to the Skukuza Rest Camp in the Kruger National Park at central GPS Co-ordinates 24°59'30.81"S and 31°35'49.15"E. The site is within the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, the Ehlanzeni District Municipality and the Mpumalanga Province.



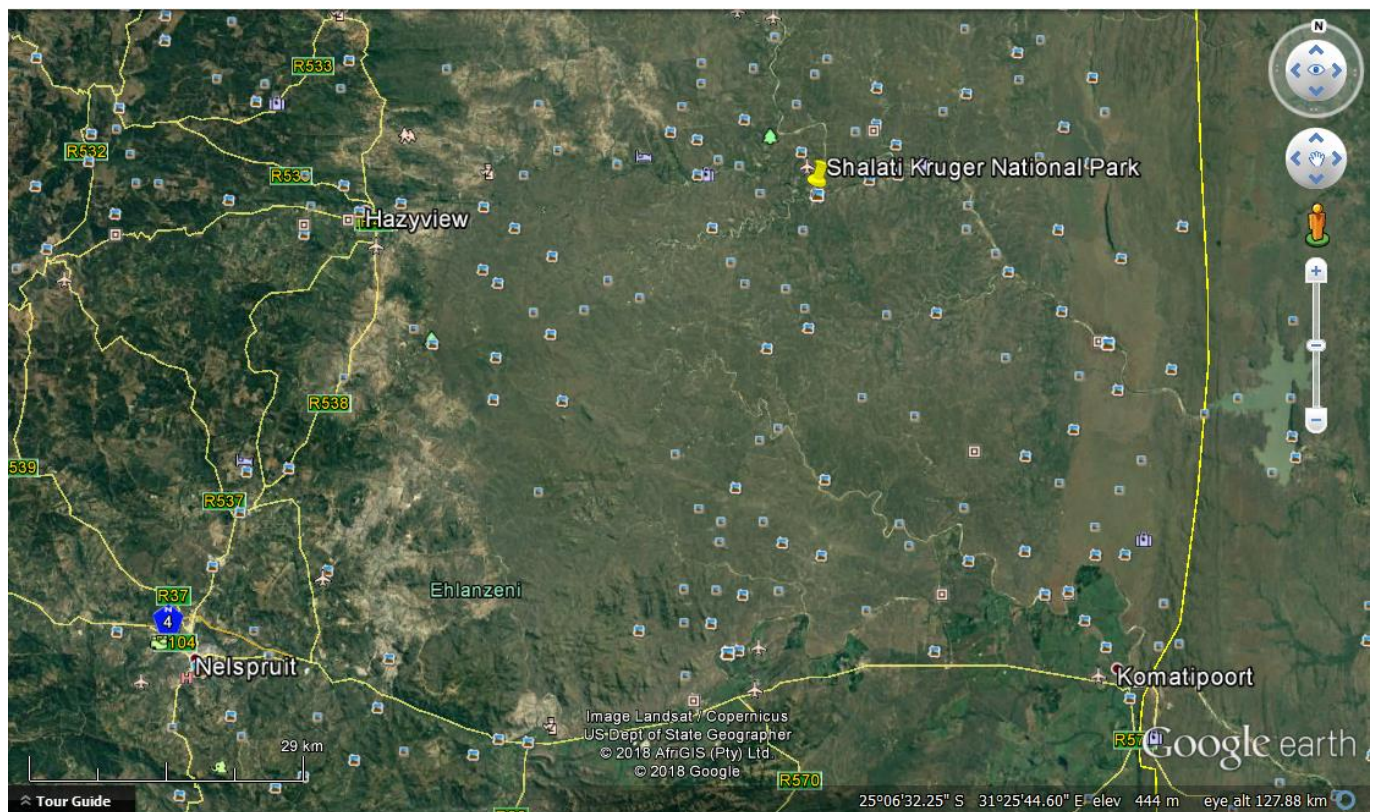


Figure 2: Location of the proposed development on the Selati Railway Bridge in the Skukuza Rest Camp, Kruger National Park.

## WHY IS A BASIC ASSESSMENT NECESSARY?

The development of the proposed upmarket tourism accommodation triggers listed activities 5 and 6 in the EIA Regulations (GNR 324, 7 April 2017, made under section 24(5) of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA), as amended):

5. The development of resorts, lodges, hotels, tourism or hospitality facilities that sleeps 15 people or **less** in Mpumalanga
  - i) Outside urban areas and in:
    - (aa) A protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA, excluding conservancies; and
    - (hh) Areas within a watercourse or wetland, or within 100 metres of a watercourse or wetland.
6. The development of resorts, lodges, hotels, tourism or hospitality facilities that sleeps 15 people or **more** in Mpumalanga
  - i) Outside urban areas and in:
    - (aa) A protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA, excluding conservancies; and
    - (hh) Areas within a watercourse or wetland, or within 100 metres of a watercourse or wetland.

## WHAT IS THE AIM OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)?

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process aims to:

- ◆ Inform and involve all potentially interested and affected parties (I&APs) of the proposed development;
- ◆ Identify the potential impacts (positive and negative) that the proposed development may have on the ecological and socio-economic environment;
- ◆ Provide recommendations based on the identified impacts and conduct further specialist studies if necessary; and
- ◆ Provide the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) with enough information to make an informed decision regarding the proposed development.

## WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE EIA PROCESS FOR A BASIC ASSESSMENT?

The EIA Basic Assessment process can be described as follows:

1. Submission of Notice of Intent to submit a Basic Assessment Report:  
A "Notice of Intent to submit a Basic Assessment Report" is required to be completed and signed by the applicant and Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) and submitted to the DEA.
2. Application Form:  
An official Application Form is required to be completed and circulated with the Basic Assessment Report to a number of authorities including Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the Local & District Municipalities, etc. It provides information on the property, a description of the proposed development and lists the relevant listed activities which are triggered by this proposed development.
3. Public Participation:  
The general public and relevant Authorities are notified of the proposed development through newspaper adverts (which appeared in the Mpumalanga News on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018, the Lowvelder on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2018, on the SANParks website on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2018 and the Hoedspruit Herald on 2 February 2018), a site notice (notices placed at Phabeni and Paul Kruger Gates, Skukuza Reception, Skukuza Shop and Conference Centre, and Skukuza Day Visitor Facility) and through direct consultation. This Background information Document will be circulated to neighbouring landowners, relevant authorities and any other persons registered as I&APs following the advert and site notice.
4. Identification of Impacts and Alternatives  
Environmental issues, concerns, development constraints and possible development alternatives will be identified using professional judgement, project information, experience of similar projects, a review of available literature, site visits, and consultation with authorities and the public.
5. Impact Evaluation  
The significance of environmental issues will be evaluated in terms of their expected extent, intensity, duration and probability of occurrence.
6. Mitigation and Management Measures  
Measures to manage and minimise impacts to within acceptable levels, as well as measures to maximise the socio-economic benefits associated with the development, will be identified and recorded in the Basic Assessment Report.
7. Reporting  
The draft Basic Assessment Report and any other Specialist Reports, such as a Heritage Impact Assessment, will be made available for review and comment by all I&APs and relevant authorities. A Final Basic Assessment Report will be compiled and will include comments received on the circulated draft Basic Assessment Report.
8. Authority Decision  
The Final Basic Assessment Report will be used by DAEARD as the basis for the decision on whether the proposed development should be approved or not.

## WHAT POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS HAVE INITIALLY BEEN IDENTIFIED?

The following issues have been identified as potentially problematic and will, amongst other issues, be investigated during the Basic Assessment Process:

- ◆ No significant impacts during the planning phase;
- ◆ During construction: noise and disturbance; dust and visual intrusion of the viewshed from various points within the Skukuza Rest Camp looking east down and towards the Sabie River, as well as looking west up the Sabie River from the low-level bridge on the Skukuza – Tshokwane Road.
- ◆ Negative impacts during the operation phase: visual intrusion as describe above.

## HOW CAN I&APs COMMENT ON THIS DEVELOPMENT?

The need for the involvement of interested and affected parties (I&APs) is of critical importance. All I&APs (neighbours, authorities, organisations etc.) are invited to comment on the proposed development. Comments can be communicated to the EAP by post, telephone, fax or email (contact details are provided below).

In order to ensure that your comments are addressed and incorporated into the draft Basic Assessment Report, please ensure that you register and we have received your comments by the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018. Please use the structure below to guide your inputs into this process. You will be notified when other related reports are available for review and comment as well as to other steps in the process.



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Organisation:		Designation:	
Address:			
Postal Code:			
Tel No:		Cell No:	
Fax No:		E-mail:	

**COMMENTS:**

1. The following issues must be addressed in the basic assessment of the proposed development:

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2. Please add the following persons to your list of interested and affected parties:

Name:	Organisation:
Telephone:	
Address:	
Name:	Organisation:
Telephone:	
Address:	

3. Any other comments:

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***Thank you for your participation.***