

# BASIC ASSESSMENT

ESTABLISHMENT OF CONFERENCE FACILITIES AND GUEST ACCOMMODATION - IRENE

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

### INVITATION TO REGISTER AND COMMENT

GDACE PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER: GAUT 002/10-11/N0031

#### PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to register as interested and affected parties in the Basic Assessment Process and to obtain their initial comments on the proposed establishment of conference facilities and guest accommodation for (UNISA) on property known as UNISA Park in Irene, Pretoria.

The purpose of the Basic Assessment is to identify and evaluate feasible alternatives and potential impacts, and to recommend measures to avoid or reduce negative impacts and enhance positive impacts. The decision-making authority is the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD) in accordance with the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) as amended and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2006 (Version 1).

**Please register yourself as an interested and affected party and submit your comments on the proposed project by 25 June 2010.**

Either complete a Response Form, write a letter, call or e-mail the public participation office.

#### Public Participation office

Natanya Whitehorn  
Aurecon South Africa (Pty) Ltd  
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#### Background

Aurecon South Africa (Pty) Ltd was appointed by the University of South Africa (UNISA) to provide engineering services for the Environmental Assessment of the proposed construction of conference facilities and guest accommodation, which also include paved parkings, on a property known as UNISA Park in Irene.

#### Legal requirements

Regulation 386, promulgated in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) as amended, lists activities identified in terms of Section 24(2)(a) and (d) of the Act, which may not commence without environmental authorisation from the competent authority and in respect of which the investigation, assessment and communication of potential impact of activities must follow the procedure as described in

#### Who is doing the Basic Assessment?

**University of South Africa (UNISA) has, in line with the EIA guidelines, appointed Aurecon South Africa (Pty) Ltd as independent consultants to conduct the Basic Assessment. Aurecon South Africa (Pty) Ltd is familiar with the project area, and is known for their proven independency in assessment of impacts and assisting stakeholders to contribute to the Basic Assessment.**

Regulations 22 to 26 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2006, Promulgated in terms of Section 24(5) of the Act.

With reference to the schedules:  
*"The construction of facilities or infrastructure, including associated structures or infrastructure for any purpose in the one in ten year flood line of a river or stream or within 32 metres from the bank of a river or a stream where the floodline is unknown, excluding purposes associated with existing residential use, but including canals, channels, bridges, dams and weirs"; and*

*“The transformation of undeveloped, vacant or derelict land for residential, mixed, retail, commercial, industrial or institutional use where such development does not constitute infill and where the total area to be transformed is bigger than 1 hectare” are such listed activities.*

**What is a Basic Assessment?**

A Basic Assessment (BA) is a planning and decision-making tool used to identify potential negative and positive consequences of a proposed project, and recommends ways to enhance positive impacts and to avoid or reduce negative impacts.

The BA will look at the following aspects:

- Public Consultation;
- Technical Consultation;
- Authority Consultation;
- Identification of Specialist Study requirements;
- Authority and Stakeholder comment incorporation into Documentation; and
- Authority decision making process as well as public appeal opportunity.

**The Proposed Project**

The UNISA Park is a 7ha portion of land on the Farm Doornkloof 391 JR, situated at the southern perimeter of Irene, south of Irene Country Club, adjacent to the public road M18 (Glen Avenue) connecting Pretoria and Olifantsfontein. Existing structures on site include a training center and a lapa covering an area of approximately 550 square meters. The proposed new

conference facilities will be approximately 3500 square meters. A total of 8000 square meters buildings for conference facilities and guest overnight rooms will be constructed. Three types of guests units will be included in a double storey building. The total area for guest units will be approximately 2000 square meters.

**Please note that project details may change as investigations proceed.**

**Process to be followed**

The BA process as per the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2006, is to be undertaken for this project.

**Stakeholder Engagement:**

During this phase (which is currently running), it is usual to consult with:

- Relevant Authorities at various levels;
- Relevant stakeholders;
- The Proponent; and
- The Public at large.

The Stakeholder Engagement Process is designed to illicit a joint effort by stakeholders to produce better decisions than if they had acted independently. The primary aim of such a process is to facilitate better decision-making.

The following activities will be utilised to achieve the aforementioned objectives:

- Advertising: On-site and in Local Newspaper (Pretoria News and The Beeld); and
- Supplying all affected parties with the opportunity to comment and register.

## **Basic Assessment of Current Site Conditions**

The assessment of current conditions will include a description of the property on which the activity is to be undertaken and the location of the activity on the property.

## **A Description of the Proposed Activity**

This will include a description of the activity that is to be undertaken, the exact location of the activity on the property and the development footprint of the activity.

## **Description of the Environment which may be Affected**

This description will include an assessment of the manner in which the geological, physical, biological, social, economic and cultural aspects of the environment may be affected by the proposed activity.

## **Description of Need and Desirability of the Proposed Activity and Identification of Alternatives**

This section will discuss the need and desirability of the proposed activities and any identified alternatives to the proposed activities that are feasible and reasonable. It will include identification of the advantages and disadvantages which the proposed activity or alternatives will have on the environment and on the community that may be affected by the activities.

## **Description and Assessment of the Significance of Environmental Impacts**

This section will include a description and assessment of the significance of any environmental impacts, which may occur as a result of the undertaking of the activity or identified alternatives.

The Basic Assessment Report (BAR) will be handed to the authorities for decision-making. Their decision will be provided in a written authorisation. Once the authorisation has been received, letters will be sent out, notifying the registered Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) of the authorisation and where it will be available to view.

The authority responsible for administering and implementation of the above legislation in this case is the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD).

### **How you can get involved**

Public participation is a key component of this BA process and will take place at various stages throughout the project.

Should you wish to raise any issues or concerns regarding the proposed project, or if you wish to register as an I&AP, please contact the Public Participation Office.

### **YOUR COMMENT IS IMPORTANT**

Your comment on any aspect of the proposed project, the EIA, its public participation process and issues that need to be investigated, will help focus the process and assist the authorities in their decision making.

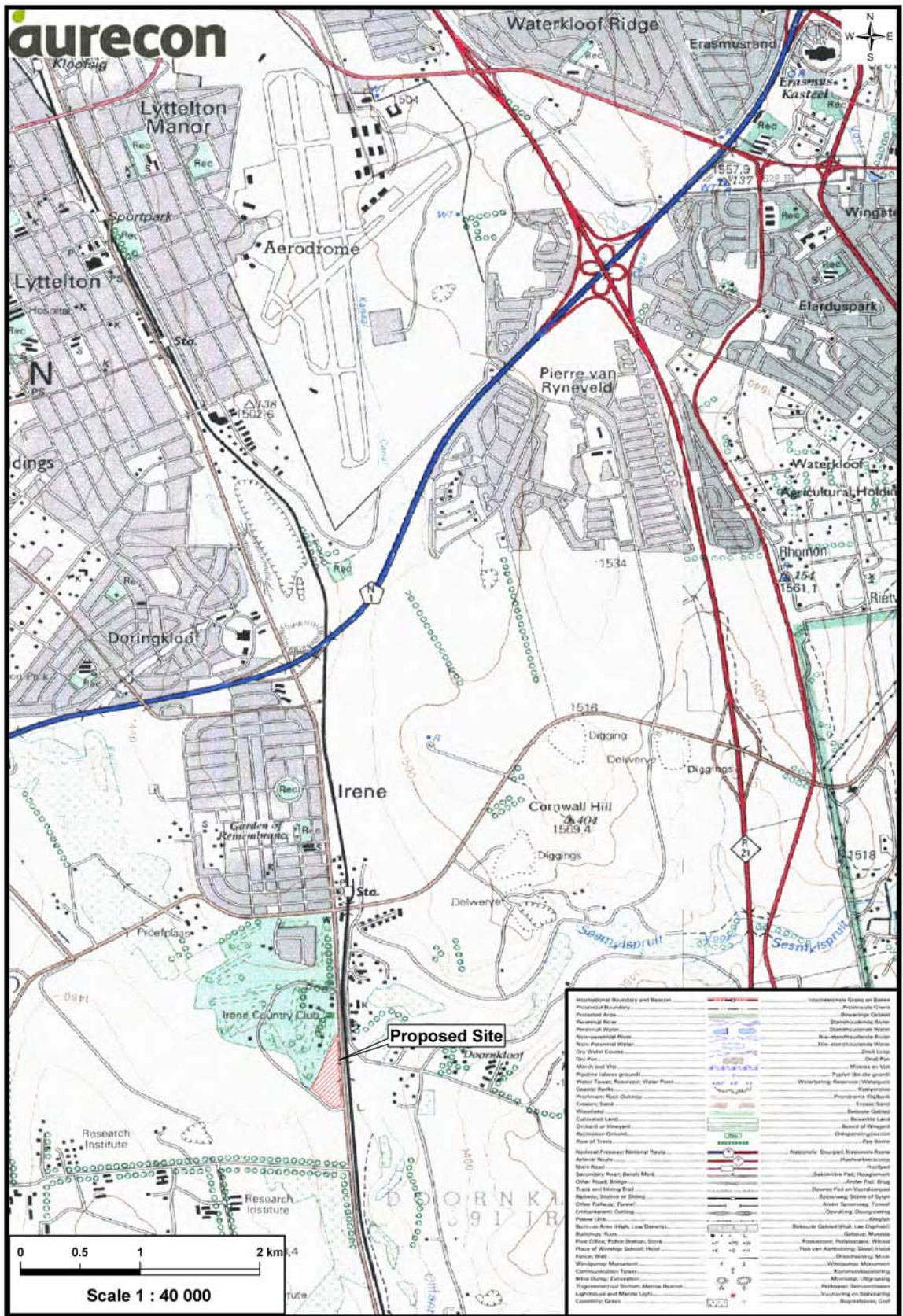


Figure 1: General Locality Map for the proposed establishment of conference and guest facilities

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF CONFERENCE FACILITIES AND GUEST ACCOMMODATION - IRENE  
INVITATION TO REGISTER AND COMMENT, May 2010**

Please complete and return to Aurecon by **25 June 2010**:

PO Box 905 Pretoria 0001

Tel: (012) 427 2000

Fax: (012) 427 2010

E-mail:

natanya.whitehorn@af.aurecongroup.com

TITLE		FIRST NAME	
INITIALS		SURNAME	
ORGANISATION			
POSTAL ADDRESS			
		POSTAL CODE	
TEL NUMBER		FAX NUMBER	
CELL NUMBER			
E-MAIL			

Yes, I would like to participate in this Basic Assessment  YES

No, I am not interested  NO

**COMMENTS:** (please use separate sheets if you wish)

1. The following issues must be considered in the Basic Assessment Process:

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 .....  
 .....  
 .....

2. Please add the following colleagues/friends to your mailing list:

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**We thank you for your participation**