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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

# Environmental Scoping Assessment and Environmental Management Plan for Oceangrown Namibia's Mariculture Activities at Lüderitz

### 1. Introduction

Geo Pollution Technologies (Pty) Ltd (GPT) was appointed to undertake an environmental assessment for the mariculture activities of Oceangrown Namibia CC (the Proponent) at Lüderitz. The ocean water at Lüderitz is ideal for mariculture activities and as such, the local culturing of oysters, abalone and mussels have been ongoing for many years. The Proponent has an existing mariculture license to grow Pacific oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*), Peruvian scallops (*Argopecten purpuratus*), black mussels (*Mytilus galloprovincialis*) in mariculture area 17 and jointly with Lüderitz Mariculture in areas 7, 14 and 20, Lüderitz Harbour (Figure 1). The licence also includes ranching of abalone (*Haliotis midae*) at selected offshore locations south of Lüderitz. Oceangrown is currently not operational and their processing plant in the Lüderitz boatyard is temporarily closed. The environmental assessment will include all future operational activities related to Oceangrown's mariculture undertakings.

An environmental clearance certificate (ECC) for Oceangrown Namibia is required as per the Environmental Management Act No. 7 of 2007 (EMA). A scoping environmental assessment report (SR) and environmental management plan (EMP) are proposed to be submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism's Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) in support of the ECC application.

### 2. The Purpose of this Document

With this background information document (BID), GPT aims to provide information and interact with interested and affected parties (IAPs) and authorities with regard to the project. IAPs are therefore invited to register with GPT in order to:

- ♦ Provide GPT with additional information which should be taken into account in the assessment of impacts;
- ♦ Share any comments, issues or concerns related to the project; and
- ♦ Review and comment on the reports (SR and EMP).

### 3. Project Description

Activities associated with the project have been divided in the following phases: planning, construction, operational and the decommissioning phase. A brief outline of expected activities for each phase is detailed below.

#### Planning Phase

While planning for operations, possible construction and decommissioning of the project, it is the responsibility of the proponent to ensure they are, and remain, compliant to all legal requirements. The proponent must also ensure that all required management measures are in place prior to and during all phases, to ensure potential impacts and risks are minimised. Typical planning activities include:

- ♦ Obtain permits and approvals from local and national authorities including the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources.
- ♦ Appoint a health, safety and environmental coordinator to implement the EMP.
- ♦ Ensure provisions for a fund to cater for environmental incidents risks / pollution and ecological restoration.
- ♦ Ensure all appointed contractors and employees enter into an agreement with the Proponent, which includes the EMP.

- ◆ Establish and / or maintain a reporting system to report on aspects of operations, potential construction and decommissioning as outlined in the EMP.

### **Construction Phase**

Construction activities mainly involve the installation of long lines in the mariculture area. These are long ropes kept afloat by buoys and anchored on the seabed at both ends. Long lines are used to attach grow out baskets, in which oysters or scallops are placed, or ropes on which mussels settle and grow. Onshore, some construction activities are possible, but mainly involves general maintenance. Maintenance include minor repairs to onshore and offshore mariculture infrastructure (e.g. general upkeep of buildings including painting, replacement of floating long lines at sea and servicing of equipment).

### **Operational Phase**

Operational activities are conducted offshore and onshore. Offshore, floating long lines are populated with: 1) baskets containing oyster and scallop spat; or 2) ropes acting as substrate for attachment of mussels. Abalone spat is resettled in the selected areas by divers. Feeding is by filter feeding of naturally occurring plankton in the water. Culturing is staggered to ensure marketable sized oysters, scallops, mussels and abalone can be harvested continuously. Oysters, scallops and mussels are collected and abalone is retrieved by divers, from a small boat. The shellfish are returned to the processing plant for cleaning and sizing. Undersized individuals of oysters, scallops and mussels are returned to the ocean in newly populated baskets while larger ones are processed and packaged for shipment. Spat will be obtained from Beira Aquaculture in Swakopmund or from approved international markets.

### **Decommissioning Phase**

Decommissioning is not foreseen during the validity of the ECC. Decommissioning will however be assessed. Should decommissioning occur at any stage, rehabilitation of the areas may be required. Decommissioning will entail the complete removal of all infrastructure including floating long lines, buildings and underground infrastructure. Any pollution present on the site must be remediated.

## **4. Preliminary Identified Impacts**

During the environmental assessment all components of the environment will be considered, however only those components which are being impacted on significantly, or are deemed to be sensitive, will be assessed.

Impacts include the following:

- ◆ Health and safety risks
- ◆ Surface water pollution
- ◆ Waste and effluent generation and disposal
- ◆ Traffic
- ◆ Visual impact
- ◆ Marine Impacts
- ◆ Terrestrial Impacts
- ◆ Socio-economic contributions

## **5. Getting Involved**

GPT invites all IAPs to register for the project and provide, in writing, any concerns and suggestions regarding the project. This correspondence must include:

- ◆ Name and surname,
- ◆ Organization represented or private interest,
- ◆ Position in the organization,
- ◆ Contact details, and
- ◆ Any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which you may have in the approval or refusal of the application.

**Your rights as an IAP according to the Environmental Management Act, No7 of 2007, Government Notice No 30 (Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations):**

*Section 23.*

*(1) A registered interested or affected party is entitled to comment in writing, on all written submissions made to the Environmental Commissioner by the applicant responsible for the application, and to bring to the attention of the Environmental Commissioner any issues which that party, believes may be of significance to the consideration of the application, as long as -*

*(a) comments are submitted within 7 days of notification of an application or receiving access to a scoping report or an assessment report;*

*(b) the interested and affected party discloses any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which that party may have in the approval or refusal of the application.*

*(2) Before the applicant submits a report compiled in terms of these regulations to the Environmental Commissioner, the applicant must give registered interested and affected parties access to, and an opportunity to comment in writing on the report.*

*(3) Reports referred to in sub regulation (2) include-*

*(a) scoping reports;*

*(b) scoping reports amended and resubmitted;*

*(c) assessment reports; and*

*(d) assessment reports amended and resubmitted.*

*(4) Any written comments received by the applicant from a registered interested or affected party must accompany the report when the report is submitted to the Environmental Commissioner.*

*(5) A registered interested or affected party may comment on any final report that is submitted by a specialist reviewer for the purposes of these regulations where the report contains substantive information which has not previously been made available to a registered interested or affected party.*

*Section 24:*

*The applicant responsible for an application must ensure that the comments of interested and affected parties are recorded in reports submitted to the Environmental Commissioner in terms of these regulations, and comments by interested and affected parties on a report which is to be submitted to the Environmental Commissioner may be attached to the report without recording those comments in the report itself.*

All contributions become public knowledge and will be circulated along with the reports as per the EMA requirements. The comments, inputs and suggestions will also be submitted to the DEA along with how any issues have been addressed in the SR. The public participation process will remain ongoing during the environmental assessment. However, registration and all comments and concerns should be provided to GPT by 23 March 2020 to ensure incorporation into the final report. The project team may be reached at the contact details below.



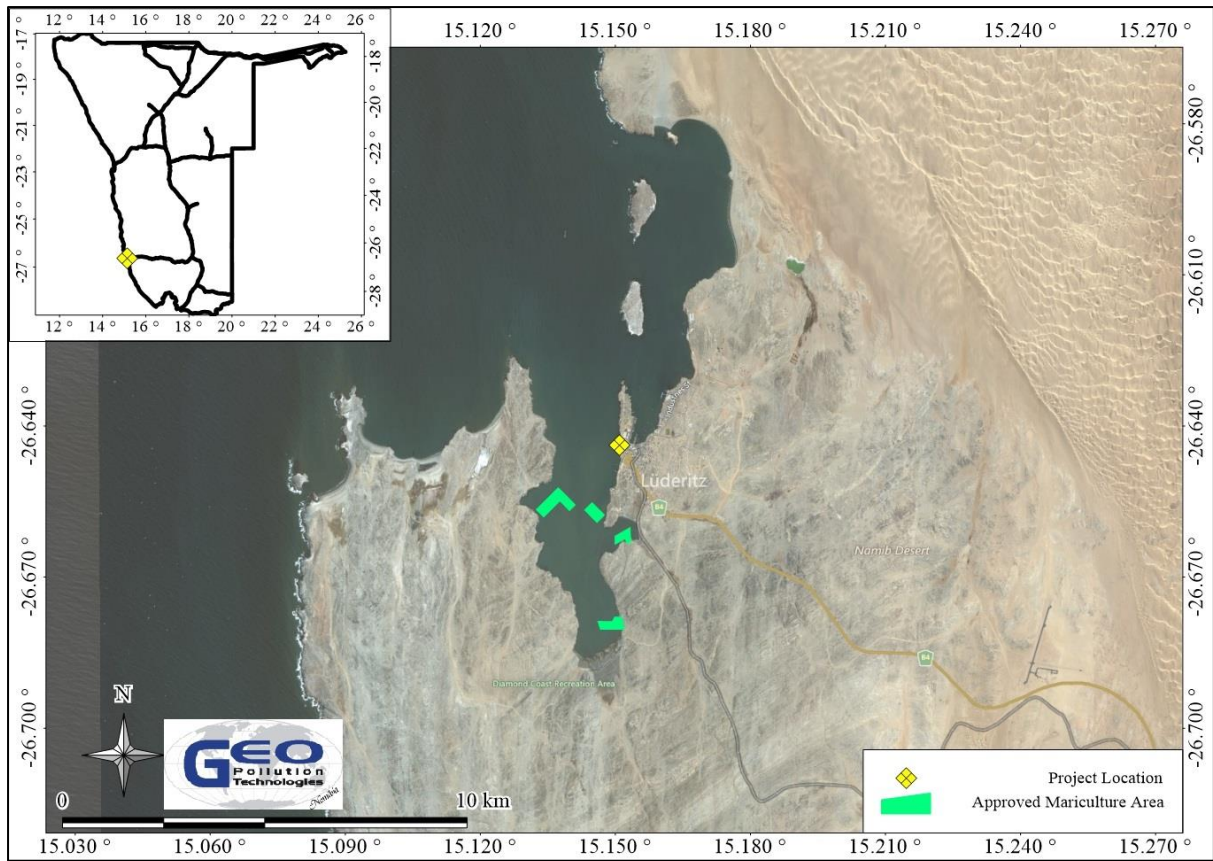


Figure 1. Project location