

iSimangaliso Wetland Park

Integrated Management Plan (2022 – 2031)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)

INVITATION TO VIEW AND COMMENT ON THE ISIMANGALISO WETLAND PARK DRAFT INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN (IMP)

This Background Information Document (BID) is provided to:

- Communicate relevant information about the IMP with stakeholders and Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs);
- Facilitate an opportunity to provide, in writing, their comments.

1. INTRODUCTION

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park is South Africa's third largest park, extending from the South African/Mozambican border in the north to the lighthouse at Maphelane in the south. Its eastern boundary is the Indian Ocean and its western boundary incorporates the entire Kosi, Sibaya and St Lucia lake systems, as well as the Mkhuze Nature Reserve (Map 1). The Park contains four RAMSAR sites (wetlands of international importance) and comprises some 90% of South Africa's protected estuaries, 15 ecosystems and a number of notable and diverse landscapes.

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park was proclaimed a World Heritage site in December 1999 in terms of the World Heritage Convention Act, 1999 (Act 49 of 1999), an Act that was incorporated into the South African National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (NEMPAA), 2003 (Act 57 of 2003). One of the requirements of the legislation is that the Park Authority compile an Integrated Management Plan (IMP) in order to ensure the protection and management of the World Heritage Site in a manner that is consistent with the objectives and principles of the Act. The IMP is a management plan for decision-making that provides guidance for the conservation and protection of the world heritage values and the integration of conservation, tourism development and the local economic development of historically disadvantaged communities in and adjacent to the iSimangaliso Wetland Park. It provides the integrated management tools for iSimangaliso, including spatial planning measures that incorporate Park zonation and an implementation plan. This IMP builds upon the previous 2017 – 2021 IMP and seeks to update and review it to provide a revised 10-year strategic management plan for the period 2022 – 2031.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

According to the relevant legislation, the IMP is subject to a public participation process which must include consultation with:

- (a) surrounding communities on, or immediately adjacent to, the World Heritage Site;
- (b) owners of private land in, or immediately adjacent to, the World Heritage Site;
- (c) claimants in terms of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994, with claims over World Heritage Sites or land affecting World Heritage Sites;
- (d) Municipalities and other organs of State; and
- (e) other affected parties which have an interest in the area.

As such, Interested and Affected Parties (I&AP's) are invited to provide comment on the draft IMP and to express opinion on how the Park will be managed over the next 10 years, before finalisation and presentation of the document to the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries for approval. A registration and comment sheet is provided at the end of this document. The closing date to submit comments is **31 October 2020**.

The full draft IMP report is available *via*:

- (1) the iSimangaliso website: <https://isimangaliso.com/all-downloads/integrated-management-plans/>
- (2) <https://indaloenhle.co.za/> under the "Our Projects", 'iSimangaliso Integrated Management Plan' link.

3. THE ISIMANGALISO WETLAND PARK DRAFT INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN (2022-2031)

3.1 Context and Conservation Significance

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park is located in an area known as Maputaland, within the uMkhanyakude District Municipality, northern KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa (Map 1); the southern boundary of the Park borders the Umfolozi Local Municipality, within the King Cetswayo District Municipality.

iSimangaliso was awarded World Heritage status based on **three criteria**, viz:

Criterion vii: to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

Criterion ix: to be an outstanding example representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems, and communities of plants and animals.

Criterion x: to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

The four Ramsar sites that are recognised for the ecological functions of wetlands and for their economic, cultural, scientific and recreational value include: the St Lucia Lake System, the Turtle Beaches and Coral Reefs, the Kosi Bay Lake System and Lake Sibaya.

A significant change from the previous (2017-2021) IMP was the proclamation in May 2019 of the iSimangaliso Marine Protected Area (MPA), which provides for an expanded MPA (Government Notice R. 772 of Notice 42478, 23 May 2019) from approximately 82 500 ha to 1 072 965 ha. In terms of Regulation 11, the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority is formally designated as the management authority for the iSimangaliso MPA.

3.2 Management Structure and Principles

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority is the nationally appointed Management Authority of the Park, entitled to make conservation and management decisions thereto. The Executive Staff Component, headed by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), is responsible for the operations of the iSimangaliso Authority whilst, by agreement, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW) is the appointed conservation manager, whose function includes law enforcement and compliance and co-operate in meeting Park management objectives.

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park's vision is to create a world-renowned World Heritage Park. The IMP sets out the strategic direction and drivers for this goal over the next 10 years, 2022-2031. Our conservation strategy continues to be one of the 'rewilding' of iSimangaliso, which powerfully links conservation to the development and empowerment of local communities. The management principles, as per iSimangaliso's Corporate Strategy, are:

1. *Vision*: A renowned World Heritage Park where conservation, sustainable tourism and benefit sharing prevails.
2. *Mission*: To protect, preserve and present its World Heritage Values for current and future generations whilst benefiting communities living in and adjacent to the Park by facilitating optimal tourism and related development.
3. *Values*: iSimangaliso subscribes to the Batho Pele Principles and subscribes to the following core values: Integrity, Honesty, Transparency, Accountability, Performance, and Professionalism.

3.3 IMP Chapters

The IMP contains five chapters and three appendices as follows:

❖ **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter explains the purpose, structure and focus of the IMP and gives a brief overview of the listing of iSimangaliso as a World Heritage site and the resultant legal framework governing the iSimangaliso Wetland Park.

❖ **Chapter 2: Overview of iSimangaliso Wetland Park**

This chapter provides a brief situational overview of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park and the surrounding region in terms of biophysical, socio-economic, infrastructural, historical, tourism characteristics and context, and addresses land restitution.

❖ **Chapter 3: Strategic Analysis (2022 – 2031)**

Chapter 3 discusses the conservation, cultural heritage and economic significance of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park. It also presents the various challenges and threats currently facing the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, in particular threats to the natural values, constraints to poverty alleviation and empowerment, and constraints to tourism development.

❖ **Chapter 4: Strategic Plan**

This chapter discusses the strategic plan for the iSimangaliso Wetland Park. This includes the vision, guiding principles, management goals, the planning cycle and reporting requirements. Lastly, the implementation plan for the 2022 – 2031 period is presented.

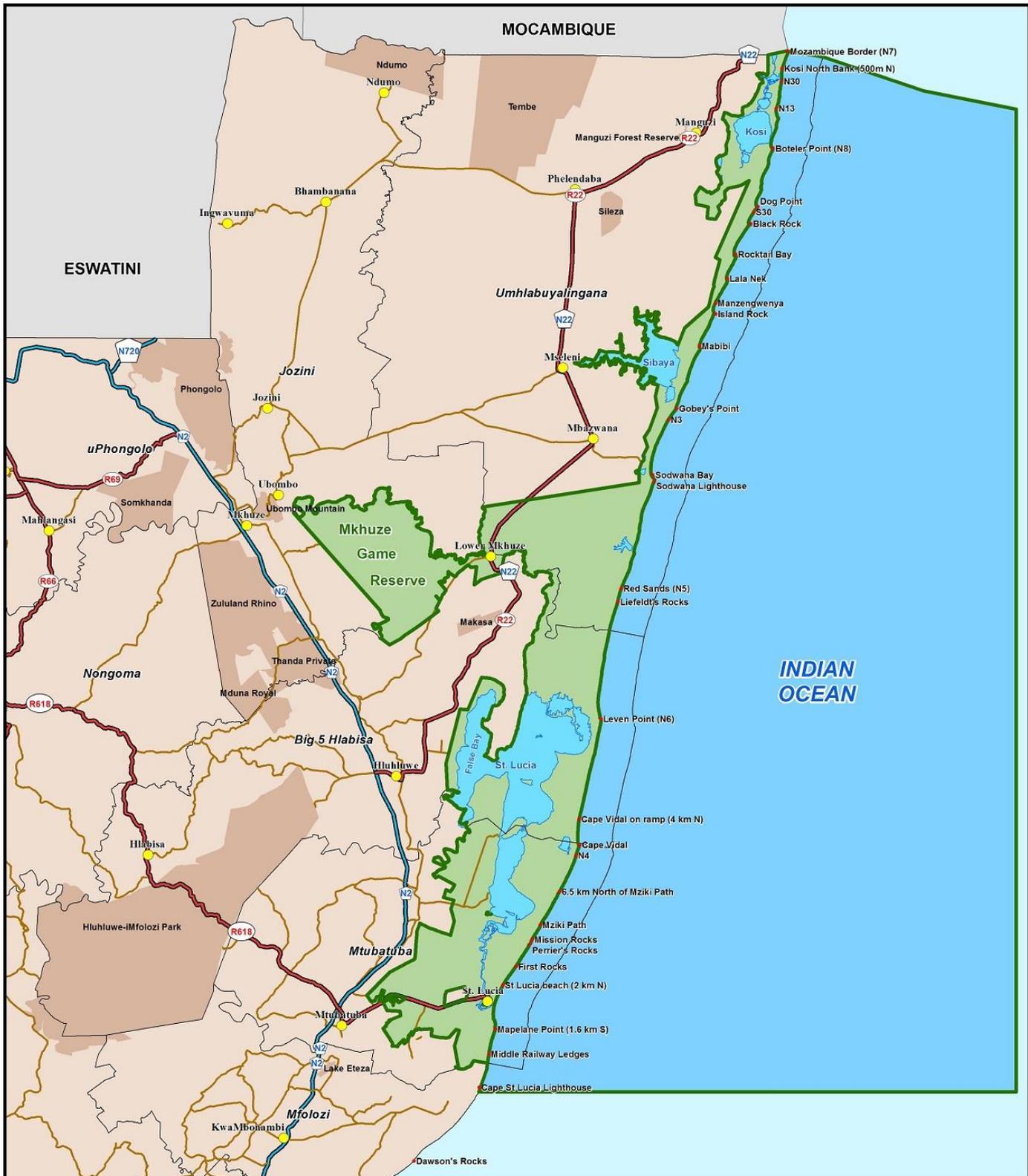
❖ **Chapter 5: iSimangaliso's Environmental Management Framework (Tools for Integrated Environmental Management)**

This chapter provides a breakdown of iSimangaliso's Environmental Management Framework, particularly the 'Spatial Planning Measures and Controls', 'Policies, Strategies and Plans' and 'General Planning Tools and Controls'. The primary spatial planning measure is the zonation plan. This forms the basis for the activities plan, and the setting of nodal types and carrying capacities for each block, sub-zone, facility and activity. Together, these tools determine the setting of limits and form the basis for the enhancement of iSimangaliso's core values. This chapter also addresses the Park Buffer, a requirement in terms of the World Heritage Convention Act and Protected Areas Act.

The relevant **references** used to source information added to the 2022-2033 IMP are provided in a citation list.

The **Appendices** include:

1. Legal and Institutional Framework
2. Detailed maps
3. A brief history of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park by Gavin Anderson (2020)



Towns/Settlements	External Conservation Areas
iSimangaliso Wetland Park Boundary	Lakes
Major Routes	iSimangaliso Wetland Park (Terrestrial)
National Roads	iSimangaliso Wetland Park (Marine)
Provincial Roads	
Local Municipalities	

Map 1: iSimangaliso Wetland Park: Locality Map

ISIMANGALISO WETLAND PARK INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN (2022 - 2031)

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Map 1: Location of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park terrestrial and marine components

4. I&AP REGISTRATION AND COMMENT FORMS

We urge you to register as an I&AP before the end of October 2020; please note that the commenting period closes on 31 October 2020.

Title:	First name:	Surname:	Initials:
Organisation:		Designation:	
Postal Address:			
Postal Code:			
Tel No:		Cell No:	
Fax No:		E-mail:	

I, the interested and affected party/ registered owner / representative of the organisation / property known as:

Hereby verify that information on the iSimangaliso IMP has been circulated to me and would like to be registered as an Interested and Affected Party for the abovementioned project. Please address the concerns expressed by me in the below text (feel free to add additional text on a separate page). To ensure your submission is as effective as possible, please ensure that inputs are clear and concise, and that you list your points according to the subject sections and page numbers in the IMP. Briefly describe each subject or issue you wish to comment on. Additional space for comments (if required) is provided overleaf.

Please provide more information regarding the project (Specify):

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

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

Signed at _____ this ____ day of _____ 2020

Signature _____

PLEASE SEND THIS REGISTRATION FORM AND ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS TO:

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iSimangaliso
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