

**Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the
Namibian Invasive Alien Species Working Group Meeting**

Wednesday 6 December 2023 at 10h00

The Village Garden, Cnr. Liliencron Street & Robert Mugabe Avenue, Windhoek

Participants

MEFT – Forestry: Esmeralda Strauss (Chairperson)
 MEFT – NBRI: Rosalia Tshikesho, Quanita Daniels, Jerome Boys
 MEFT – Permit Office: Riaan Oberholzer
 NUST: Vera de Cauwer, Dr Marius Mutorwa, Prof Habauka Kwaambwa
 City of Windhoek (Parks): Jaco Fourie
 NNF: Frances Chase (Deputy Chairperson)
 Botanical Society: Diana Thompson
 Cactus Clean up: Gunhild Voigts, Aktofel Elago
 NCE: Chris Brown (Secretary)
 Namibia Bird Club: Holger Kolberg
 Private: Christelle Tromp, Herta Kolberg
 Legal Consultant: Emilia Nanyeni

Apologies

Barbara Curtis, Shirley Bethune, David Aiyambo, Malan Lindeque, Coleen Manheimer, Michael Seelig (Kalkfeld Farmer’s Association)

Agenda item	Actions
<p>1. Welcome</p> <p>Chairperson Esmeralda Strauss welcomed everyone to this 3rd meeting of the Invasive Alien Species Working Group (NIASWG). A special welcome was extended to Dr Marius Mutorwa & Prof Habauka Kwaambwa for Agenda point 5c and to Legal Consultant Emilia Nanyeni for Agenda point 5a.</p>	
<p>2. Attendance and apologies</p> <p>The attendance list and apologies are shown above. The attendees briefly introduced themselves.</p>	
<p>3. Adoption of the Agenda</p> <p>The meeting was informed of two changes to Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Under 5b the Kalkfeld Farmer’s Union gave apologies and asked to participate in the next meeting; (ii) An addition as 5d of the No-go List of plants. <p>The Agenda was then adopted.</p>	
<p>4. Minutes of the 2nd NIASWG meeting of 29 May 2023</p> <p>a. Correctness</p>	

<p>Two corrections were made to the Minutes, under 4bix change MAWL to MAWLR; and under 4bx change NIASWEG to NIASWG.</p> <p>The Minutes were then accepted as a true reflection of the meeting. [Note: the corrected Minutes are posted on the WG website]</p> <p>b. Matters arising</p> <p>i. <u>Establishing key subcommittees</u></p> <p>The following four Subcommittees have been established:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List Committee (led by Herta) • Monitoring & Research (led by Vera) • Communications (in interim led by Francis) • Legislation (led by Chris) <p>All Subcommittees to list their members. All Subcommittees to develop concise strategies.</p> <p>ii. <u>Position paper on importing and selling invasive alien plants</u></p> <p>Christine discussed with Carol (Indigenous Trees nursery). Most nurseries import plants from RSA where strict controls are enforced with high penalties re invasive spp. Most nurseries are not a problem (but we need to visit them to inspect). Street vendors and landscaper are a larger problem – collect discarded invasive aliens at waste disposal / landfill sites and propagate. Best addressed via Communications Strategy (see 4iii and 4iv below)</p> <p>Forestry nurseries propagate and sell invasive alien spp, e.g. wonderboom, alien moringa, <i>Dodonaea</i>. Not a good example. This should be addressed immediately with instructions to all DoF nurseries to destroy all invasive alien stock – not give it away. It is OK to propagate and sell exotic non-invasive fruit trees, together with indigenous trees and shrubs.</p> <p>iii. <u>Awareness, education and reference material on invasive aliens for border posts, municipal officials, MEFT staff, etc.</u></p> <p>To be addressed under Communications Strategy by the Subcommittee. Strategy should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of different target groups to understand their level of knowledge of invasive aliens. • How to address landscaping companies / individuals. • How to address nurseries. • How to address street vendors – could include a one-off swop of indigenous for invasive alien plants (propagated by the Herbarium) and a letter forbidding further sale of invasive species. 	<p>Secretary</p> <p>All Subcommittee leaders (Herta, Vera, Francis, Chris) to compile member lists and work with members to develop concise strategies by <u>29 February 2024</u>.</p> <p>Address under Communications Strategy (see below)</p> <p>DoF to instruct nurseries to destroy invasive alien plants in their possession (not give them away), and to check it has been done.</p> <p>Communications Subcommittee</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a list of good trees and shrubs to plant instead of alien spp. See Vera’s list as a good start. • Need to address the issue of permits for non-threatened indigenous plant species. Current approach is counterproductive. <p>iv. <u>Communication Strategy / framework</u> See above points in 4iii and 4iv to be covered in Strategy. Further points - Info on legislation – people are unaware; ID guides for border control, MEFT officials, police, etc – some material on EIS, but could look at AI, photographic recognition. First draft of Communications Strategy to be completed by 14 February 2024 for circulation.</p> <p>v. <u>Developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for priority invasive alien species</u> Francis to request SoP template from Karen Nott. Choose one or two species and prepare drafts for discussion, perhaps <i>Opuntia stricta</i> and Rubber vine. Chris to approach Coleen Mannheimer to work on this together. First draft of SoPs to be completed by 14 February 2024 for circulation.</p> <p>vi. <u>Proposed research project on <i>Opuntia stricta</i> in Zambezi region</u> Delays in project starting.</p> <p>vii. <u>Farmers encouraged to plant spineless prickly pears for drought fodder</u> Will attend next meeting and give presentation / views.</p> <p>viii. <u>ORASECOM looking for a consultant to work on economic opportunities around <i>Prosopis</i> and its eradication</u> Consultant appointed for value addition in target areas along Fish River (Gibeon area). Details of project location, duration, after-care, etc to be provided by Esmeralda – and see if we can get a short presentation on the project at next meeting.</p>	<p>Vera & Chris</p> <p>Work with Legal Subcommittee to address permit issue.</p> <p>Communications Subcommittee</p> <p>Frances</p> <p>Chris & Coleen</p> <p>Esmeralda</p>
<p>5. Topics for discussion</p> <p>a. <u>Legal review of legislation on alien and invasive alien species in Namibia</u> Emilia Nanyeni gave an overview of her legal review on invasive alien species in Namibia. The report was supported by two Annexes, one on existing Namibian legislation with relevance to</p>	

<p>invasive alien species, the second on the legislation of three countries with good (best practice) invasive alien legislation – New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. The documents had been circulated ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>Written comments on the report should be submitted to Emilia (emilia.nanyeni@gmail.com) and cced to Chris by latest 12 January 2024. This is important – please review and give input.</p> <p>Emilia then to finalise document.</p> <p>Our current legislation is badly fragmented and incomplete. Best approach would be to produce a comprehensive piece of legislation as Regulations under the Environmental Management Act (EMA). This should be based on international best practice and include a standardised risk assessment process.</p> <p>This approach to be discussed with senior management in MEFT. Esmerialda to give some background to senior management and set up a meeting.</p> <p>Also, worth noting that Municipal / Local Authority bylaws can be passed within about 3 months – a quick approach. Jaco Fourie of City of Windhoek is currently drafting revisions to the Park Regulations: Local Authorities Act, 1992. This provides the opportunity to include a list of plant species that need to be eradicated in Windhoek. Jaco to circulate his draft revisions to the group for possible input.</p> <p>List committee (Herta) to prepare and circulate short list of key invasive alien species that must be eradicated for revised Local Authorities Regulations.</p> <p>Need to consider how to extend this to other towns, Swakopmund, Mariental, Keetmanshoop, etc.</p> <p>b. <u>Kalkfeld Farmer’s Union/NAU – growing spineless <i>Opuntia</i></u> Will attend our next meeting on Wednesday 10 April 2024 Jerome met with Directorate of Agricultural Production, Extension and Engineering Services (DAPEES) to discuss invasive aliens, biocontrol and the objectives of this Working Group. Constructive meeting with discussion on bringing in biocontrol from South Africa where the control agent has been cleared. Need to approach the Office of the Environmental Commissioner (OEC) to get waiver of EIA process for biocontrol agents approved in RSA. Esmerialda to set up meeting with the Environmental Commissioner.</p> <p>c. DebMarine/NUST biodiesel pilot study Dr Marius Mutorwa presented on a project looking at cultivating <i>Jatropha</i> and alien <i>Moringa</i> for biofuel and fodder, the former for DebMarine vessels to lower their carbon footprint, with target of 90% reduction. The following comments were offered:</p>	<p>All – by 12 January 2024</p> <p>Emilia finalise doc.</p> <p>Esmerialda</p> <p>Jaco</p> <p>Herta</p> <p>Kalkfeld Farmers Union please take note of date of next meeting.</p> <p>Esmerialda</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A project aimed at mitigating climate change and reducing NamDeb’s carbon footprint, there should be no negative collateral damage to biodiversity and natural ecosystems. Global biodiversity loss and climate change are the two greatest environmental threats facing the planet and addressing one should never be at the expense of the other. ii. Good opportunity to explore the use and comparative effectiveness of indigenous species. Jatropha is known to battle under Namibian conditions. iii. The degree of invasiveness of Jatropha in different parts of the country is unknown. This could be looked at. iv. The question of whether the alien moringa hybridises with the indigenous (and near endemic) moringa should be considered. v. Impacts on ground water and soil moisture. vi. What will happen to plantations after life of project? <p>On a related issue, alien plant species are regularly brought into Namibia without an environmental clearance certificate and in contravention of the EMA. Some of these may be invasive. The Office of the Environmental Commissioner needs to be alerted to this, to investigate and prosecute so that a precedent is set.</p> <p>d. <u>No-go list</u></p> <p>Herta prepared a list of “no-go” plant species, being those that are already in the country and are invasive, and those not known to be in Namibia which are highly likely to be invasive. Anyone attempting to bring these species into Namibia, or sell them within Namibia, would simply be told “no” by all agencies. The list is on the Working Group website under “Species”: https://n-c-e.org/namibian-invasive-alien-species-working-group/species</p> <p>Please look at the list and send comments to Herta by latest 12 January 2024.</p> <p>Guy Preston forwarded a list of all species with biological control agents approved and under investigation in South Africa. This list is also on the Working Group website on the above link.</p>	<p>For attention of Dr Marius Mutorwa and Prof Habauka Kwaambwa</p> <p>All – by 12 January 2024</p>
<p>6. Any other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Forestry Research Strategy Review</u> A review of the Forestry Research Strategy in underway. Please participate in the online survey. The survey can be accessed [HERE]. b. <u>CBD Decade of Restoration</u> Calling for suitable restoration projects – perhaps Windhoek invasive alien plant eradication may qualify; also alien plant eradication in national parks? 	

<p>c. Namibian Organic Association (NOA) Asking for advice and guidance on invasive alien plant species.</p>	
<p>7. Closing and date of next meeting The next meeting is scheduled for 10h00-13h00 on Wednesday 10 April 2024 There being no further matters, the Chairperson thanked all participants and closed the meeting at 13h05.</p>	<p>All to diarise</p>