

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the Namibian Invasive Alien Species Working Group

27 February 2023 at 09h00

Klein Windhoek Guest House, Windhoek

Participants

MEFT – Forestry: Esmeralda Strauss (Chairperson)

MEFT – NBRI: David Aiyambo, R Tshikesho, Quanita Daniels

MAWLR – Water Ecology: Selma Kalili

MAWLR – Hydrology: Fillemon Shatipamba

NSA – Agriculture: Paul Amweelo, Joel Kagola

City of Windhoek: Martin Shikongo

NNF: Frances Chase (Deputy Chairperson)

Botanical Society: Diana Thompson

Cactus Clean up: Gunhild Voigts, Aktofel Elago

NCE: Chris Brown (Secretary)

Private: Christelle Tromp, Stephen Carr, Malan Lindeque, Herta Kolberg,

| Agenda item | Actions |
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| <p>1. Welcome & Introductions Esmeralda Strauss, the Chairperson formally appointed by MEFT, welcomes everyone to this 1st meeting of the Namibian Invasive Alien Species Working Group (NIASWG). Everyone introduced themselves.</p> <p>2. Attendance and Apologies The above listed participants were present. The following apologies were received: Coleen Mannheimer (BotSoc), Shirley Bethune (NUST), Vera de Cauwer (NUST).</p> <p>3. Adoption of Agenda The Agenda was adopted with the inclusion of a few additional items under Any Other Business (see below).</p> <p>4. Declaration of Interest No conflicts of interest were declared.</p> <p>5. Announcements No announcements were made.</p> <p>6. Discussion points 6.1 <u>NIASWG Action Plan</u> Francis Chase gave an overview of the need for action on invasive alien species based on international (CBD, SDGs) and national (NBASP2, EMA) commitments and pointed out that Namibia needs to catch up with its obligations, as well as to urgently address negative national conservation and economic impacts. She took the meeting through the key areas of the Action Plan (which is a working document), which has three main operational components and an institutional mechanism, which is this Working Group:</p> | |

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| <p>➤ Prevent the import of potentially invasive alien species into Namibia;</p> <p>➤ Stop the spread of existing invasive alien species within Namibia;</p> <p>➤ Actively manage, control and, where possible, eliminate existing invasive alien species within Namibia; and</p> <p>➤ Establish an inclusive institutional mechanism to collectively implement the above Plan (this Working Group).</p> <p>ECCs are required for all new alien species coming into Namibia and being moved around the country – but this is not being implemented. Some of the priorities identified are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close collaboration with the Phytosanitary Unit in MAWLR to provide expertise on import permits from an invasive alien perspective. • The lists of alien species need to be discussed and finalised to make everyone’s work less complicated. The two most important lists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alien species that can be imported – mainly agricultural and horticultural species that pose no risk of invasion – the Safe List; and ○ Alien species that will never be approved because of their known risk of invasion. No point in doing an EIA for these. This list should include (a) invasive species already in Namibia, and (b) known invasive species not yet in Namibia – the No-go List. <p>All other species will need to undergo an EIA to get an ECC.</p> • Control of entry of species into the country is a problem because border control does not have the necessary expertise. An option is to designate specific border posts through which alien species can be imported (with trained staff), and not through others. • Ongoing training and sharing of information is necessary to keep people up to date, e.g. border control, nurseries. Need to see how other countries with well developed alien management do this. • Good recent publication on invasive aliens (van Wilgen <i>et al.</i> 2020) has been uploaded to the Working Group website and the EIS: http://the-eis.com/elibrary/search/28462. • Look at expanding the invasive alien plant EIS and App to include all invasive alien species, plus extra info on habitat, abundance, etc as per indigenous plants. • For implementation of active control of aliens, need to prioritise and focus on some key species and/or groups and develop bespoke action plans to be effective. This is a priority. • Membership of Working Group was discussed – how to be inclusive but not too large and unmanageable. Agreed to have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Core people on the WG, and | <p>Esmeralda to open comms.</p> <p>Herta, Esmeralda & Francis to do first draft of both lists.</p> <p>Not an immediate priority.</p> <p>Not an immediate priority.</p> <p>Herta & Alice (but keep list realistic).</p> <p>Subcommittee to work on this.</p> |
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- Broader network (e.g. tourism, NamRa, border agency, MAWLR, NSA) on a **Stakeholder Group** which gets together perhaps annually.

Contact list for each group to be set up.

6.2 Priorities and Champions

A technical follow-up meeting will be held to develop operational details of the priority actions to take place. A quick brainstorming session was held to get some consensus by dividing into 4 groups and addressing Focal Areas, Activities, Champions and Support:

| Group | Focal areas | Activities | Champions | Support |
|-------|------------------------|--|---|---|
| 1 | Plants Aquatic spp. | ID priority problem spp. ID areas where these spp are most problematic Develop species specific approaches | ID most appropriate Champion per species | ID individuals and organisations best placed to provide support per species |
| 2 | Plants | Site familiarisation Funding Training and awareness | MEFT (all components) CoW Local authorities | Local residents Work seekers |
| 3 | Invertebrates | Mapping List of non-plants Legislation Public awareness Working for water type work Fundraising | Agronomic Board Phytosanitary Entomologists Vet Services (Lab) | Look at replicating W for W type projects Write funding proposals |
| 4 | Plants Aquatic spp. | Legislation Data & information Awareness Funding | NBRI Phytosanitary Inland fisheries BotSoc NEWS | MEFT MAWLR ALAN TAs |

To implement the prioritised activities, the meeting suggested that the following subcommittees be set up:

- Information sharing, awareness and communications
- Funding and fund raising
- Taxa – lists and priority species to be tackled
- Legal issues and how to strengthen and use the legislation
- Monitoring and research

The NCE's Bursary Programme could support two students per year at MSc level on priority projects identified by the Working Group.

6.3 Link Working Group website to new MEFT website

This was agreed. Should also link all the other Working Group websites to the new MEFT website, as well as the EIS (www.the-eis.com) and the Conservation Namibia website (<https://conservationnamibia.com/>).

Subcommittee

Subcommittee to develop a focused action plan of a few, manageable and achievable initiatives.

Esmeralda to inform MEFT's website people.

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| <p>6.4 <u>Support to Cactus Clean-up</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New coordinator needed as Gunhild is retiring. • Need to do a Windhoek area site visit to problem areas. Try and get a minibus so everyone can travel together. Date to be set by Chair & Vice-chair with Gunhild. • Need to prioritise species to be physically cleared. • Need for ongoing funding. <p>6.5 <u>Request for import permits: Eco Green Indo Agroforestry Namibia (PTY)</u> Application for alien tree species and crops, with target on Uhlenhorst area – southern Kalahari. While location seems inappropriate (for reasons of soils, water, temperature), from the perspective of this Working Group, our advice should focus on the prevention of potentially invasive species entering the country and being spread around the country. Our advice is that any species on the “No-go List” should not be allowed, and any remaining species not on the “Safe List” should be subject to an EIA as per the EMA. Only once found to be of no or low risk should an ECC be issued.</p> <p>A Contact Group of specialists needs to be set up covering different taxa for the Phytosanitary Unit, Permit Office of other regulators to contact.</p> <p>6.6 <u>Awareness creation and funding opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Subcommittee comprising a chairperson from the Working Group and: GRN, local authorities, border agent, nurseries, NAU-NNFU and others as necessary. • Start preparing general materials on the Working Group (brochure) and on invasive alien species to share with GRN offices, nurseries, schools, the media, etc. • Focus on social media – short video clip on invasive aliens, their negative significance and what needs to be done. Then run a video competition, e.g. on TikTok with prizes for (a) the best video, and (b) the video with the best circulation. • Plan an Alien Bashing day. <p>6.7 <u>Reporting to national and international initiatives</u> Important that the work of this Working Group is mainstreamed into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national reporting and planning – NBSAP2 reporting and NBSAP 3 planning; and • international reporting – CBD reporting via MEFT and SDG reporting via NPC. <p>6.8 <u>Legislation on alien species – ToR</u> ToR were circulated for comment. Everyone was happy. Sent to UNAM Law Faculty to find a good senior student / post-grad to work as an Intern</p> <p>Suggestion made to do an economics study to understand the costs of invasive aliens at local and national levels.</p> <p>Also understand the Working for Water initiative in RSA, the economics involved and its effectiveness in clearing alien vegetation.</p> | <p>Esmerialda & Francis</p> <p>Esmerialda to inform Permit Office and Office of the Environmental Commissioner</p> <p>Subcommittee to contact specialists to serve on Group, as well as to inform regulators.</p> <p>Subcommittee</p> <p>Subcommittee</p> <p>Esmerialda and MEFT colleagues to ensure linking up.</p> <p>Chris to commission this legal work</p> <p>Chris to contact Dr Guy Preston, founder of WfW</p> |
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7. Any other business

7.1 Meetings

Working Group: quarterly – every 3 months

Stakeholder Group – informal, but at least annually – but with formal invitations

7.2 Nurseries, street vendors and private properties with and selling invasive alien plants

Discuss during city tour (pt 6.4)

There are fewer than 10 nurseries in Namibia – should be fairly easy with joint institutional Working Group member clout to get them to cooperate.

7.3 For information

Dr Clara doing a post-doc study on introduction and spread of ornamental invasive alien plants.

7.4 Hon CoW Inspectors

Explore with CoW whether it is possible to appoint Honourary CoW Inspectors to monitor, map, report on and engage with citizens on invasive alien plants.

8 End of meeting

The date of the next Working Group meeting will be communicated to members nearer the time.

There being no further matter, the Chairperson closed the meeting.