

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to provide relevant stakeholders and Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) with background information about the proposed Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site (COH WHS) Mountain Bike (MTB) Trails project and introduce the feasibility study being undertaken. It also aims to inform I&APs on how to fully participate in the process and encourages active attendance at meetings and response to documents distributed for input.

Introduction and Background

The COH WHS Management Authority (MA) has identified the need to move towards sustainable tourism by providing best practise MTB Trails in the COH WHS within existing road reserves. This is aimed at providing high quality MTB trail experience to the general public as part of a system to establish opportunities for other stakeholders to assist the MA in creating a cycling destination of choice in support of the Outstanding Universal Value of the COH WHS.

Arcus GIBB (Pty) Ltd (GIBB) has been appointed as the consulting engineers to undertake the feasibility study.



Need for formalised MTB trails in the COH WHS

During the last few years, recreational cycling activity in South Africa has largely been transformed from being predominantly based around road cycling and closely related to major roads, to a marked increase of mountain bike use requiring off road conditions and dedicated single tracks trails away from major roads and associated traffic and safety issues.

The existing provision of “cycle lanes” on the shoulder of most of the provincial roads within the COH WHS provides the need for road cycling users. The same cycle lanes are however used by MTB riders in the COH WHS due to a lack of suitable trails for MTB use. The use of the limited cycle lanes by both MTB and road cyclists further increases the possible congestion on roads and cycle lanes in the COH WHS.

At present, formal MTB trails and related recreational activity is limited within the COH WHS. Currently this consists of the Kingskloof MTB Park being developed in conjunction with the COH WHS MA. Outside of the COH WHS is also the Van Gaalen Trails. Both these trails are reflected in the map provided on Page 3.

Informal trails also exist within the COH WHS. These trails are however generally out of bounds for recreational riders except during a formal MTB race events organized by Event Organizers who will only make these trails available for a day or two annually for use by riders subject to entry fees and race regulations.

These private trails offer very limited opportunity for recreational cycling in the COH WHS.

Aim and Objectives of the MTB Trails Feasibility Study

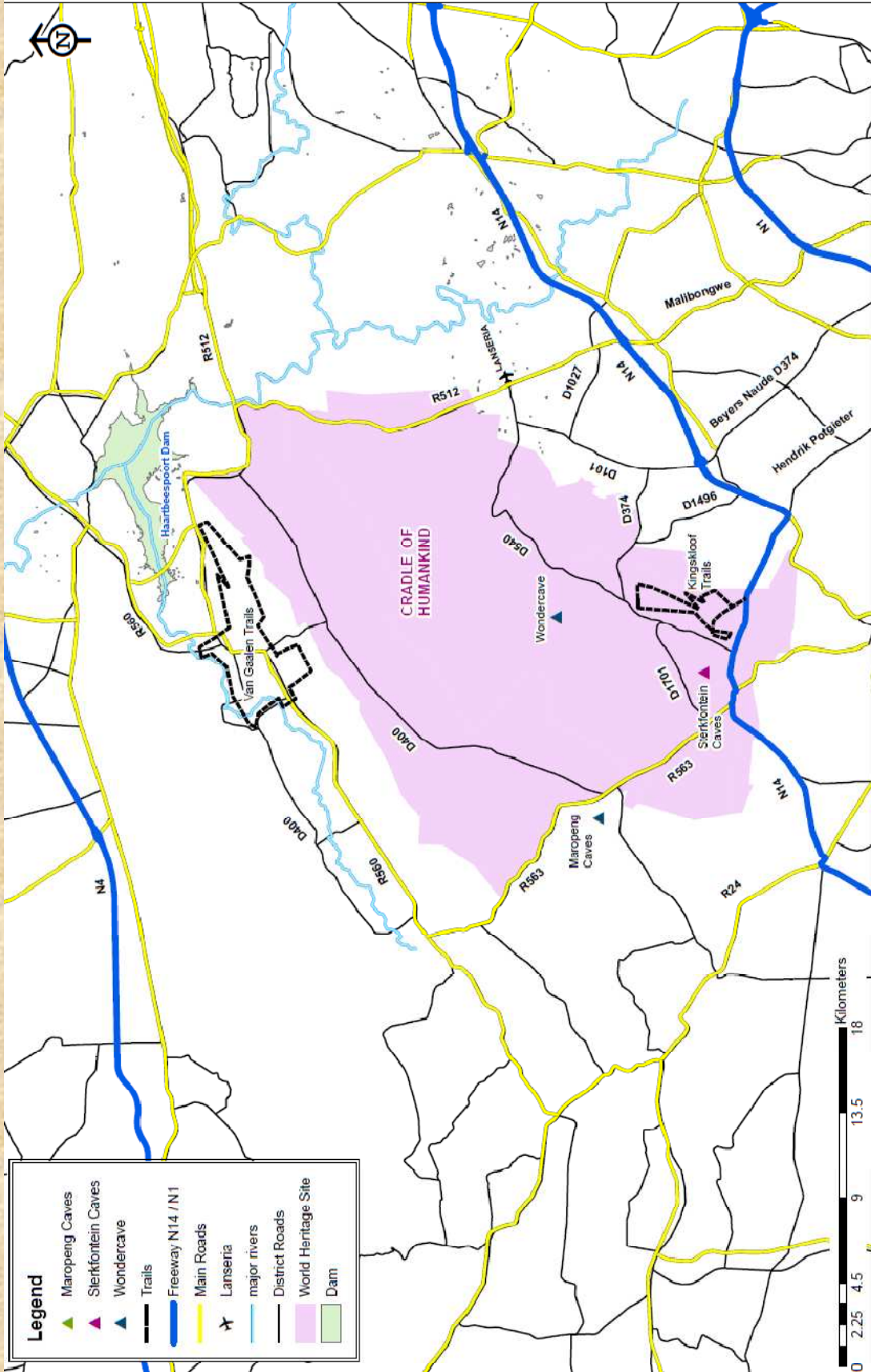
The aim of this project is to determine the need, desirability and feasibility of providing a core MTB trails network within the provincial road reserves within the COH WHS to act as a catalyst for further supporting trail loops on adjoining private property. This project is further aimed at providing accessible sustainable MTB trails in the COH WHS in support of the creation of a cycling destination of choice with direct benefits to surrounding stakeholders and communities. The development of guidelines for sustainable trail design, construction, maintenance and signage will also be addressed as part of a process to establish a “standard” for future MTB trail development in protected areas within South Africa.

The project also aims to provide best practice methodologies and should be seen as a logical extension to the existing network of cycle lanes in the COH WHS as a direct response to the demand for cycling activities in the COH WHS. The provision of a system of MTB trails will have further positive knock on effects with opportunities for supporting cycling infrastructure such as overnight accommodation, multi use trails that can be used by trail runners and walkers, cycle maintenance opportunities and a safe trail for use by local residents and learners using bicycles to commute through the provision of sections of the route designed to be more suitable to commuting cyclists.

The individual objectives for the completion of the feasibility study will be the following:

- Investigate the need and desirability of providing a dedicated core MTB trail system with provision for limited commuter use where appropriate in the road reserves as part of the wider green tourism approach for the COH WHS.
- Investigate the physical, technical and legal requirements for the creation of MTB trails in the above Provincial road reserves.
- Engage with property owners, cyclists (MTB and Road) and other Government Agencies to obtain their views on the above provision of MTB trails in provincial road reserves.
- Undertake a survey of cyclists (Road and MTB) presently utilising the COH WHS for recreational cycling to understand the existing use patterns and obtain views on the possible future use of these trails.
- Undertake a survey of existing MTB trails and MTB parks and facilities within the study area with a view to investigate possible links between these areas.
- Investigate the feasibility of the above proposed core trail with a focus on the following possible routes linking existing areas of tourism infrastructure development:
 - o Maropeng as a MTB activity node;
 - o Maropeng as a venue for MTB events;
 - o Maropeng as a venue for skills training and pump track;
 - o Routes from Maropeng to Sterkfontein as part of a green tourism initiative – fossil route by bike
 - o Routes from Maropeng to Van Gaalen MTB trails – linking with existing trails;
 - o Routes from Maropeng to Kingskloof – linking with existing trails;
 - o Routes from Maropeng to Bailey Property – future link trail to new facilities;
 - o Routes from Maropeng to Krugersdorp NR – linking with existing trails.
- Funding options – self sustaining income from services provided to the wider cycling community and income from events .

Mountain Bike Trail Feasibility Study Area



Public Consultation Process: How to get involved

Public consultation is considered as an important, although not legislated, component in the preparation of COH WHS MTB Trails Feasibility Report. It is important that relevant stakeholders are identified and involved in the public consultation process from the outset of the proposed project. The inputs received from participating stakeholders will form an integral part of the feasibility process and will also assist the COH WHS MA in its decision-making process, whether or not to proceed with the development of dedicated MTB trails in the COH WHS area.

A comprehensive Public Consultation Process (PCP) will be undertaken as part of the preparation of the Feasibility Report, as is relevant for the project. The PCP aims to:

- Ensure all relevant stakeholders have been identified and invited to engage in the COH WHS MTB Trails Feasibility Project;
- Raise awareness, educate and increase understanding of stakeholders about the proposed project, the affected environment and the feasibility process being undertaken;
- Create open channels of communication between stakeholders, landowners and the project team;
- Provide opportunities for stakeholders to identify issues or concerns and suggestions for contribution towards the development of the Final Feasibility Report; and
- Accurately document all opinions, concerns and queries raised regarding the project.

Stakeholders are invited to register and participate in the project through:

- Registering on the registration and comment form which is supplied at the back of this document for your convenience. Note that you can express your views regarding this proposed development on the form. Please feel free to add comments on a separate page should the space provided on the form not be enough.
- Completing the attached Survey Questionnaire and returning to GIBB at the address below.
- Registered stakeholders will be then be invited to attend one of two stakeholder workshops planned to be held as part of the feasibility study and review and comment on any documentation distributed as part of the process.

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The database of participants together with the comments / inputs received during the feasibility study will be incorporated and considered during the compilation of the Final Feasibility Study Report to be submitted to the COH WHS MA.

Stakeholder Registration and Comment Sheet

Name and Surname	
Landowner/Resident /Cyclist/Mountain Biker/Other	
Postal Address	
Tel Number	
Fax Number	
Email Address	

Please state your interest (i.e. direct business, financial, personal or other interest) within respect to participating in COH WHS MTB Trails Feasibility Study.

Please state any concerns, suggestions and/or potential impacts that should be considered during the study.
