ALIEN INVASIVE PLANTS ERADICATION PLAN

FOR ULUNDI MUNICIPALITY

2025-2026

" The City of Heritage "

ULUNDI
MUNICIPALITY

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INTRODUCTION

Ulundi Local Municipality (LM) is one the five LMs, other four LMs being eDumbe, Abaqulusi, Nongoma and uPhongolo, constituting the Zululand Local. It is located on the southern boundary of the Zululand District Municipality in the north-eastern part of KwaZulu-Natal. The municipal areas is approximately 3,250 km2 in extent and includes the towns and settlements of Ulundi, Nqulwane, Mahlabathini, Babanango, Mpungamhlophe and Ceza as well as nine Traditional Authorities of Buthelezi, Mbatha, Mpungose, Ndebele, Nobamba, Ximba, Zungu, Nsimbi, Buthelezi-Emphithiphithini. It consists of 24 wards. The Ulundi LM is the administrative centre and seat for the Zululand District Municipality and a well-equipped airport.

The largest part of its area is rural and underdeveloped. Approximately half of the Municipal area consists of commercial farms and the area supports a substantial agricultural community. The town of Ulundi represents the only urban centre in the Ulundi LM area and accommodates approximately 40,000 people.

BACK GROUND

It has been observed that many areas are affected by the spread of alien invasive plants and that causes the competition of available resources to our native plants. Most of the community members are not even aware about the danger of them if they are not eliminated.

Alien invasive plants has been controlled in Ulundi mechanical whereby they are being cut by the use of bush knife or being removed by TLB or other big machineries. Mechanical control has been used for the past years and they are currently used because it seems to be the cheaper method. The method that is currently used

eliminate invasive plants for a short period of time and will eventually grow again as there are no chemicals applied to kill them down to the deepest root or to totally move them away for proper disposal.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary of the Acts that apply to management of alien plants on site. These are the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (Act No. 43 of 1983), the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No.10 of 2004) and the Fertilizer, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act (Act No. 36 of 1947).

GOAL

The major goal is to solve the undesirable environmental conditions through removal of alien invasive plants and other environmental practices that promote our natural Biodiversity. Significantly advance the management and control of invasive species within the town's jurisdiction in a manner that is sustainable and maximises the benefits to the communities involved.

OBJECTIVES

Table 1.1: High level support and buy-in

	Strategic action	Outcome
Obtain high level buy-in and support for the implementation of the IAS strategy	Obtain high level buy-in and commitment from all the relevant role-players to implement the strategy	Political and stakeholder support for the implementation of the program from the council.

PURPOSE

The purpose of alien invasive Plants Control is to:

- Educate local people on identify invasive alien plants and the proper techniques for their control.
- Ensure that alien invasive plants are not spreading.
- Protect indigenous vegetation/ native plants.
- Eliminating threat caused by their domination.
- Sustain the environment.

SCOPE OF THE PLAN

- Identify high-level priorities and directions to be translated into specific management actions in government planning documentation (e.g. business plans and other documents relevant to invasive species management);
- Set out a comprehensive risk management approach to address, as appropriate, species at all stages of invasion, ranging from those that can be excluded from Ulundi to those that are already widespread in Ulundi.
- Be relevant to management of both public and private land.
- Provide a clear rationale for the allocation of government investment in management of invasive species.
- Government partnerships with community, industry and key stakeholder groups are essential to maximise the benefits of government intervention.
- Invasive species management operations will be carried out in ways that are consistent with the aims of other policies, such as those concerned with animal welfare, protection of native species and communities.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (Act No. 43 of 1983)

In terms of the amendments to the regulations under the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (Act No. 43 of 1983), all declared aliens must be effectively controlled. Landowners are legally responsible for the control of invasive alien plants on their properties. In terms of this Act 198 alien species were listed as declared weeds and invaders and ascribed to one of the following categories:

- **Category 1**: Prohibited and must be controlled.
- **Category 2** (commercially used plants): May be grown in demarcated areas provided that there is a permit and that steps are taken to prevent their spread.
- **Category 3** (ornamentally used plants): May no longer be planted. Existing plants may be retained as long as all reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spreading thereof, except within the flood line of watercourses and wetlands.

National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No.10 of 2004)

The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA) regulates all invasive organisms in South Africa, including a wide range of fauna and flora. Regulations have been published in Government Notices R.506, R.507, R.508 and R.509 of 2013 under NEMBA. According to this Act and the regulations, any species designated under section 70 cannot be propagated, grown, bought or sold without a permit. Below is an explanation of the three categories:

- **Category 1a**: Invasive species requiring compulsory control. Any specimens of Category 1a listed species need, by law, to be eradicated from the environment. No permits will be issued.
- **Category 1b**: Invasive species requiring compulsory control as part of an invasive species control programme. Remove and destroy. These plants are deemed to have such a high invasive potential that infestations can qualify to be placed under a government sponsored invasive species management programme. No permits will be issued.
- **Category 2**: Invasive species regulated by area. A demarcation permit is required to import, possess, grow, breed, move, sell, buy or accept as a gift any plants listed as Category 2 plants. No permits will be issued for Cat 2 plants to exist in riparian zones.
- **Category 3**: Invasive species regulated by activity. An individual plant permit is required to undertake any of the following restricted activities (import, possess, grow, breed, move, sell, buy or accept as a gift) involving a Category 3 species. No permits will be issued for Cat 3 plants to exist in riparian zones.

It is important to note that alien species that are regulated in terms of the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (Act 43 of 1983) (CARA) as weeds and invader plants are exempted from NEMBA. This implies that the provisions of the CARA in respect of listed weed and invader plants supersede those of NEMBA.

ALIEN INVASIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Invasive Alien Plants include annual grasses, woody and herbaceous species which are already established or emerging. In most cases complete eradication is no longer possible, therefore the species must be controlled through laborious clearing efforts. The threats represented by these species in terms of biodiversity loss, fire hazard, water availability and shelter for criminal acts all constitute major concerns to the City administration. Systematic planning and prioritization of areas shall precede control operations to ensure the highest impact and long term success. Management interventions include a range of actions such as prevention, early detection rapid response, control eradication and containment depending on the nature of the site and the management objectives thereof. Forward planning and prioritization ensures optimal utilization of resources through proactive, long term clearing of areas.

FACILITATOR

Ulundi Local Municipality

Responsible for the following:

- Formation of team to perform duties.
- Ensure that the requirements to conduct similar program are adhered to and implemented.
- Communicate with the leadership of the affected areas that are to be attended for permission.
- Responsible for monitoring and verifying the proper implementation of the program.

STAKEHOLDERS

Economic Development Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA)

To ensure that all practices conducted are not harmful to other natural resources. They are occasionally providing grant to assist on various wards concentration mainly on the deepest rural areas where the communities are not well educated about the threat caused by alien invasive plants.

Department Of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries

They assist mostly on the classification of these weeds and their treatment. They understand the protocol and regulations on how one can control and dispose the alien plants as they are occurring abundantly in Ulundi taking over natural grass land and invading gardens.

ZKN Ezemvelo Wildlife

They assist on controlling alien invasive plants where there is high population of people and where there is too much of spread caused by various factors which is mainly travelling from one place to another.

CURRENT STATUS

This section provides an outline of the existing status of the site with respect to alien invasive plant species. The purpose is to provide an indication of the likelihood of alien plant becoming established on site.

Vulnerable ecosystems and habitats

Invasive alien plants threaten three main components of the landscape:

- agricultural potential of the land;
- biodiversity value of the land;
- water quality and quantity.

Some habitats are more vulnerable to invasion by alien plant species than others and are therefore more likely to become problematic areas with respect to management of alien plant species. In addition, some parts of the site will be subject to greater levels of disturbance than others, which will promote conditions suitable for invasion by alien plant. Although any part of the site could become invaded by alien plants, the areas on site that are most likely to be problematic from the point of view of invasion by alien plants are as follows:

- drainage lines and water courses;
- areas with deeper soils, including primarily valley bottom areas;
- areas immediately adjacent to any disturbance due to construction activities;
- areas prone to increased runoff following construction, for example road margins

CONTROL GUIDELINE

This section provides an outline of the overall approach that should be adopted at the site in order to minimize the probability of invasive alien plants becoming established and ensuring that any outbreaks are managed quickly to ensure that they do not become a long-term problem on site. The establishment of any dense infestations will be expensive to eradicate and will require more complex control measures than would be necessary for low density invasions.

1. Prevention A prevention strategy should be considered and established, including regular surveys and monitoring for invasive alien plants, effective rehabilitation of disturbed areas and prevention of unnecessary disturbance of natural areas. Prevention could also include measures such as washing the working parts and wheels of earth-moving equipment prior to it being brought onto site, visual walk-through surveys every three months and other measures, as listed in the section below ("Habitat management").

2. Early identification and eradication : Monitoring plans should be developed which are designed to catch Invasive Alien Plant Species shortly after they arrive in the project area. Keeping up to date on which weeds are an immediate threat to the site is important, but efforts should be planned to update this information on a regular basis. When new Invasive Alien Plant Species are spotted an immediate response of locating the site for future monitoring and either hand-pulling the weeds or an application of a suitable herbicide should be planned. It is, however, better to monitor regularly and act swiftly than to allow invasive alien plants to become established on site.

3. Containment and control If any alien invasive plants are found to become established on site, action plans for their control should be developed, depending on the size of the infestations, budgets, manpower considerations and time. Separate plans of control actions should be developed for each location and/or each species. Appropriate registered chemicals and other possible control agents should be considered in the action plans for each site/species. The key is to ensure that no invasions get out of control. Effective containment and control will ensure that the least energy and resources are required to maintain this status over the long-term. This will also be an indicator that natural systems are impacted to the smallest degree possible.

SOME OF THE INVASIVE ALIEN PLANTS OBSERVED

Psidium Guavaja 	Senna didymobotrya Peanut Butter 
Famine weed (Parthenium hysterophorus) 	Solanum Mauritianum Wild tobacco 

Morus Alba Common Mulberry 	Ricinus Communis Castor Bean 
White Flower Mexican Poppy 	Carrot Weed 
Drooping Pricky Pear 	Lantana camara Tickberry/ Lantana 

ALIEN INVASIVE DRIVE CAMPAIGN

The program is conducted online through Ulundi Municipality Facebook page and other social media platforms on monthly basis to raise awareness against alien invasive plants. The main objective of this program is to educate local people on identify invasive alien plants, eliminating threat caused by their domination as well as protecting natural vegetation.

On each month there are 2 plant species which is highlighted, so that the public will be able to identify them. The poster is circulated through Municipal Facebook page and other social media platforms.

CONTROL GUIDELINES

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Prevention

A prevention strategy should be considered and established, including regular surveys and monitoring for invasive alien plants, effective rehabilitation of disturbed areas and prevention of unnecessary disturbance of natural areas. Prevention could also include measures such as washing the working parts and wheels of earth-moving equipment prior to it being brought onto site, visual walk-through surveys every three months and other measures, as listed in the section below (“Habitat management”).

Early identification and eradication

Monitoring plans should be developed which are designed to catch invasive alien plant species shortly after they arrive in the area. Keeping up to date on which weeds are an immediate threat to the area is important, but efforts should be planned to update this information on a regular basis. When new Invasive Alien Plant Species are spotted an immediate response of locating the site for future monitoring and either hand-pulling the weeds or an application of a suitable herbicide should be planned. It is,

however, better to monitor regularly and act swiftly than to allow invasive alien plants to become established on site.

Safety standards and guidelines

Safety is of the utmost importance when working with invasive alien plant control. Staff are likely to be working in remote areas with potentially dangerous equipment and chemicals. Proper safety training and equipment is therefore required.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The program is designed to cover all 24 wards of Ulundi but due to the limitation of budget focus is in/ around CBD and townships which are mainly: Unit A, B North, B South, unit C, unit D, unit K, unit L, Babanango and Mashona. The Tree Trimming team under Parks, Gardens and Cemetery Section within the Department of Community Services is dedicated to implement the program. The program is not solely relying on the Municipal team, however there are Government and non-Government structures that intervene and contribute to ensure that alien invasive plants are reduced and kept minimal since it is impossible to get rid of them completely within Municipal boundaries.

The affected areas are attended according to the monthly plan which states all critical places to be attended on each month. Honourable councillors together with community representatives also plays a role on alerting Municipality if there are any thorny issues in their respective wards that are to be taken care of.

CURRENT CONTROL METHOD

The current control method is mechanical control: it include the physical felling or uprooting of plants, their removal from the site, often in combination with burning.

The equipment used in ranges from hand-held instruments (such as Bush knifes, saws and slashers) to power-driven tools such as chainsaws and brush cutters, and even to use TLB in some cases. Mechanical control is labour-intensive which is also addresses the high rate of unemployment which is one of the biggest challenges in the entire country.

CONCLUSION

There is a positive impact contributed due to the Implementation of alien invasive plant eradication plan as it forms part of addressing climate change issues, improve human

actions towards differentiating between wanted and unwanted plant species as well as poverty alleviation as the vegetation areas are conducive for farming.

The plants around us are extremely important and have always been necessary for improving the human condition. It is not too hard to believe that without plants we humans would not exist on this beautiful planet. There are more practical reasons to admire and honor plants. An effective alien invasive eradication programme is therefore an integral part of NEMA in ensuring that the environment is protected and will help in guaranteeing an environment that is not harmful.