

12 June 2020

Dear Prof Bezuidenhout and Dr Bird

Thank you for nominating the landscapes

- METSI (Moorriver Environmental Trails for Scientific Investigations) ([Carlos.Bezuidenhout@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Carlos.Bezuidenhout@nwu.ac.za))
- Magaliesberg headwater streams ([mbird@uj.ac.za](mailto:mbird@uj.ac.za))

In total 57 landscape nominations were received and these have *a priori* been grouped into 25 regionally based clusters. Your nominated landscapes form the METSI Cluster and are the only 2 nominated sites in this cluster.

We have identified the METSI Cluster as a potentially suitable EFTEON landscape and would like to invite this cluster to submit a full proposal. In preparation for this we would like to invite you to a “regional workshop” to discuss the upcoming stages of the landscape selection process. The purpose of the regional workshops is to:

- 1) Provide additional information of the vision and intent of the EFTEON research infrastructure, to ensure that there is a common understanding of the intent and goals of the EFTEON RI.
- 2) To explain the landscape selection process going forward, including to outline the landscape evaluation process that will take place to assess full proposals.
- 3) Introduce interested parties within the regional cluster with the intent to develop the strongest possible landscape concept. At this point I would like to reiterate that this is the second step of the landscape selection process and the intent is to allow institutions and researchers active in the area to develop a coherent proposal, which may or may not include the original nominations.
- 4) Identify the lead and teams for the preparation of the full proposals.

The following collaborators have been identified on your nominations:

- METSI
  - Prof Sarel Cilliers - [Sarel.Cilliers@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Sarel.Cilliers@nwu.ac.za)
  - Dr Frances Siebert - [Frances.Siebert@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Frances.Siebert@nwu.ac.za)
  - Prof Stefan Siebert - [Stefan.Siebert@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Stefan.Siebert@nwu.ac.za)
  - Prof Sandra Barnard - [Sandra.Barnard@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Sandra.Barnard@nwu.ac.za)
  - Prof Juane Cilliers - [juanee.cilliers@nwu.ac.za](mailto:juanee.cilliers@nwu.ac.za)
  - Prof Dewald van Niekerk - [Dewald.VanNiekerk@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Dewald.VanNiekerk@nwu.ac.za)
  - Prof Victor Wepener - [Victor.Wepener@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Victor.Wepener@nwu.ac.za)
  - Prof Nico Smit - [Nico.Smit@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Nico.Smit@nwu.ac.za)
  - Dr Wynand Malherbe – [wynand.malherbe@nwu.ac.za](mailto:wynand.malherbe@nwu.ac.za)
  - Prof Mark Maboeta - [Mark.Maboeta@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Mark.Maboeta@nwu.ac.za)
  - Prof Louis du Preez - [Louis.DuPreez@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Louis.DuPreez@nwu.ac.za)
  - Prof Carlos Bezuidenhout - [Carlos.Bezuidenhout@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Carlos.Bezuidenhout@nwu.ac.za)

- Prof Sarina Claassens - [Sarina.Claassens@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Sarina.Claassens@nwu.ac.za)
- Prof Rasheed Adeleke - [Rasheed.Adeleke@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Rasheed.Adeleke@nwu.ac.za)
- Prof Stuart Piketh - [Stuart.Piketh@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Stuart.Piketh@nwu.ac.za)
- Prof Roelof Burger - [Roelof.Burger@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Roelof.Burger@nwu.ac.za)
- Prof Pieter van Zyl - [Pieter.VanZyl@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Pieter.VanZyl@nwu.ac.za)
- Prof Paul Beukes – [Paul.Beukes@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Paul.Beukes@nwu.ac.za)
- Dr George van Zijl – [George.vanzijl@nwu.ac.za](mailto:George.vanzijl@nwu.ac.za)
- Dr Renier Dennis – [renier.dennis@nwu.ac.za](mailto:renier.dennis@nwu.ac.za)
- Prof Ingrid Dennis – [Ingrid.dennis@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ingrid.dennis@nwu.ac.za)
- Dr Christian Steyn – [christian.steyn@nwu.ac.za](mailto:christian.steyn@nwu.ac.za)
- **Confirmed list of non NWU Collaborators:**
  - Prof Johan van Tol - University of the Free State – [vantoljj@ufs.ac.za](mailto:vantoljj@ufs.ac.za)
  - Prof Richard Greenfield – University of Johannesburg – [rgreenfield@uj.ac.za](mailto:rgreenfield@uj.ac.za)
  - Dr Darrah Woodford – WITS – [Darragh.woodford@wits.ac.za](mailto:Darragh.woodford@wits.ac.za)
  - Prof Chris Curtis - University of Johannesburg – [cjcurtis@uj.ac.za](mailto:cjcurtis@uj.ac.za)
- Magaliesberg Headwater Streams
  - Dr Darrah Woodford, Wits University, [darragh.woodford@wits.ac.za](mailto:darragh.woodford@wits.ac.za)

Please may I have a list of any additional people to contact to invite to the workshop.

During the shortlisting process key strengths that were identified in this cluster were in relation to; the strong existing infrastructure in METSI, the links to the BIOGRIP RI; and the the proximity to the urbanization and mining landscapes in the vicinity of the site. The proximity to the Vaal System was noted by the hydrologists in the Evaluation Panel and the potential link with the nomination in the Magaliesberg headwater streams may be appropriate. One of the areas of concern is that majority of the collaborators are based at one university. In the upcoming proposal development stages, the case for this landscape operating as a national RI would be strengthened by developing a more institutionally diverse list of collaborators.

The quality of the nominated landscapes has been excellent and it will be exceptionally difficult to narrow the selection to the six planned landscapes. While there is an element of competition in this landscape selection process, please remember that the intent of the EFTEON Research Infrastructure is to provide a set of research facilities for the broader South African Environmental and Social Ecological research community. The intent of the selection process is to ensure that the EFTEON infrastructure has landscapes that are; scientifically relevant for a number of thematic areas; logistically viable for long term operation; available for use by the broader research community; and are able to form a focal point for further experiments and observations.

In the event that your nominated landscape is not selected as an EFTEON landscape, you and your collaborators are encouraged to link ongoing and future research and activities in your proposed location to the selected EFTEON landscapes.



Dr Gregor Feig  
 EFTEON Manager  
 South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON)