



Images above taken from Living Limpopo's website, contrasting the Limpopo region with the planned development of the MMSEZ

Background on Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone (MMSEZ), Limpopo, South Africa

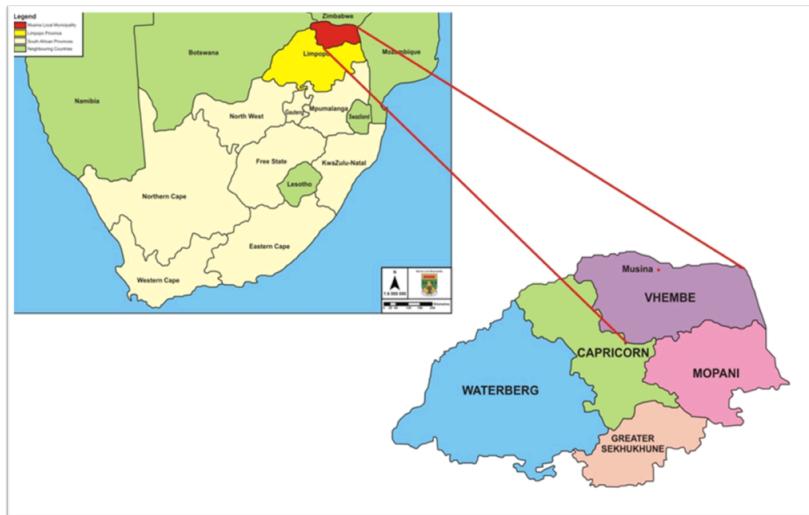
The **Musina-Makhado Strategic Economic Zone (MMSEZ)**, one of 11 SEZs designated in South Africa since the adoption/promulgation of the SEZ Policy and the SEZ Act in 2012 and 2014, is a large-scale heavy industrial development in South Africa's northernmost Limpopo Province. It plans to develop a crude steel manufacturing cluster and coal-fired power plant, and involves Chinese investors and a Chinese operator as the project falls under the purview of the Forum on China-Africa Capacity (FOCAC) China-South Africa Production Capacity Framework Agreement.

It is intended to double South Africa's annual crude steel output and support the development of the region's Greater Soutpansberg Coalfield, which contains an estimated 10 billion tons of coking and thermal coal resources. The MMSEZ will cover an area of 60 km² between the Southpansberg mountains in the south and the Limpopo River in the north.

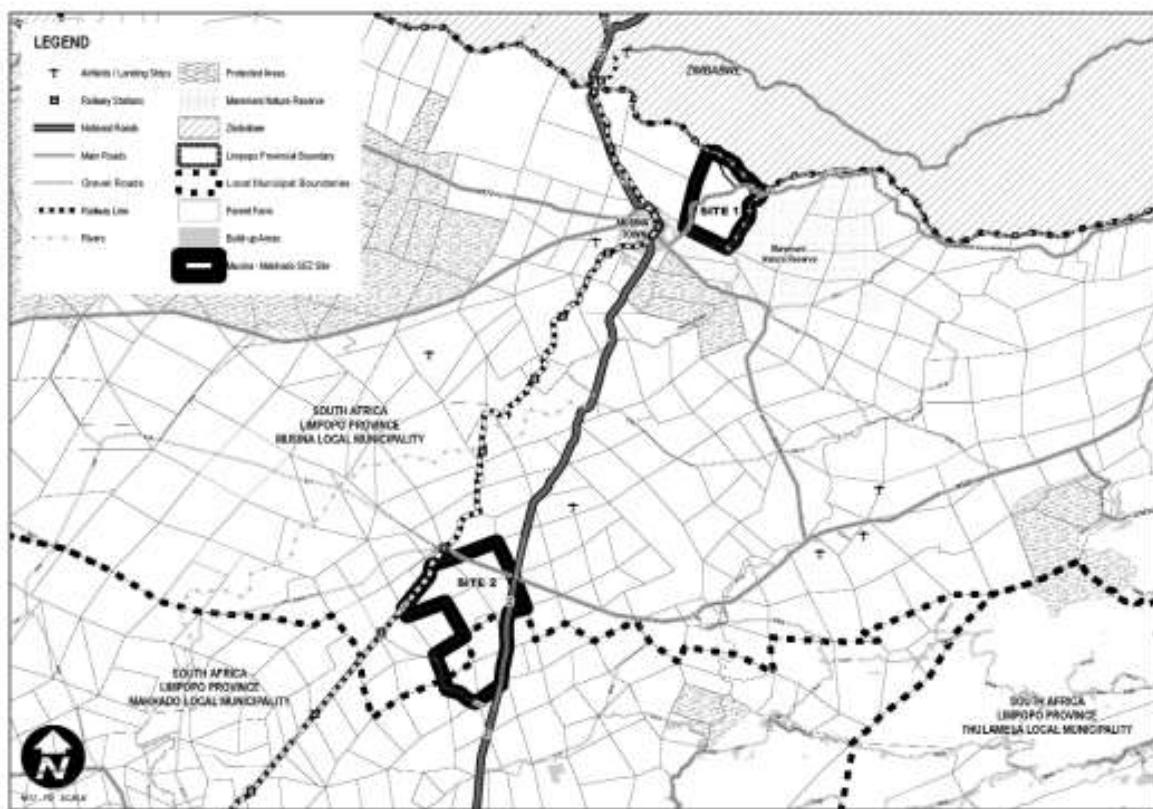
Chinese investors include Shenzhen Hoimor Resources Co, Ltd (Hong Kong).

It is located about 60 km north of Louis Trichardt, near Mopane, and about 40 km away from the northern site. This area is the energy-metallurgical zone, which will be primarily focused on heavy industries like steel and ferro alloy production. Plans for the site include over 20 industrial plants, all connected to the steel making process.

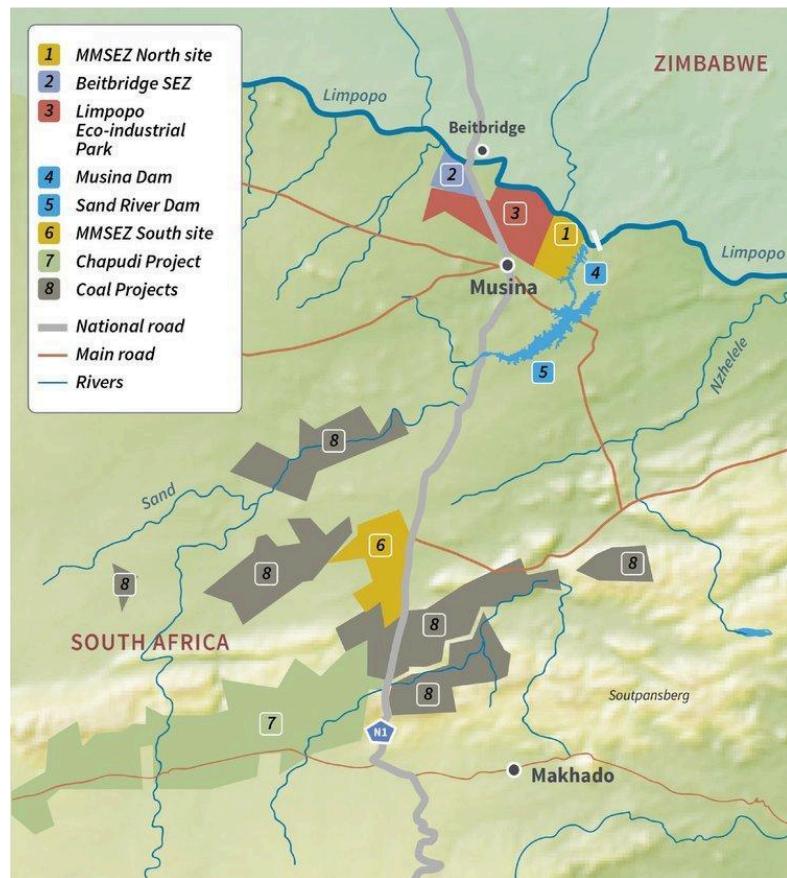
The map below shows the Vhembe region in the Limpopo. This map was taken from the MMSEZ website:



The map below shows the two sites for the MMSEZ in the Vhembe region. This map is from the MMSEZ February 2021 EIA Report:



The areas marked in yellow on the map below indicate the MMSEZ's north and south sites. The grey areas around the south site depict coal projects to supply the MMSEZ. Image is from Living Limpopo's website, credited to Toni Oliver:



Our Clients

1. Living Limpopo

Living Limpopo is a non-profit organisation, based in Limpopo, that campaigns against the ecocidal development plan for the Vhembe and, in partnership with the UNESCO-designated Vhembe Biosphere Reserve, advocates for a sustainable alternative for the region.

Living Limpopo's objection to MMSEZ and other coal-fuelled industries is based on the major negative environmental impacts that it will have in the Vhembe region of Limpopo. MMSEZ's North and south sites both fall in the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve. This area is declared a UNESCO biosphere reserve. The area is therefore a dedicated conservation area and advocates for sustainable human activities within it.

The development of MMSEZ will destroy thousands of hectares of the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve. Thus, MMSEZ is seen by Living Limpopo as an ecocidal development that needs to be stopped due to its destruction of a carbon sink, the strain that it will put on the limited water supply in the province, and the negative impacts it will have on other sectors of the economy, such as tourism. Living Limpopo's work is focused on exposing the economic madness of South Africa investing in coal-fuelled industrialisation that will contribute to climate change and generate large amounts of pollution and destruction to the surrounding environment.

Link to website: <https://livinglimpopo.org/>



2. The Herd Reserve

The Herd Reserve is affiliated with Living Limpopo. It is a private nature reserve that forms part of the 10,000 ha Philip Herd Private Nature Reserve, a declared nature reserve, situated on the Limpopo River at the confluence with the Nzhelele in the north-east of the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

The Herd Reserve is 6,000 ha and encompasses four contiguous farms. The Herd Reserve is born of the vision of its landowners, who share a passion for saving Africa's dwindling wilderness areas.

The objects of the company is to develop and manage nature-based tourism and other business opportunities based on sustainable use of natural resources and biological resources. This is in support of the primary objectives of restoration, preservation and conservation of the Limpopo Ridge Bushveld savanna biome vegetation sub-type; its rare and endangered species; the integrity of its ecosystems and the sustained supply of critical ecosystem goods and services.

The Herd Nature Reserve is located immediately downstream of the proposed MMSEZ Musina Dam on the Limpopo River.

Link to website: <https://www.herdreserve.org.za/>



3. Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS)

CALS is a human rights organisation based at the Wits School of Law. They use a combination of research, advocacy and litigation to advance social justice. CALS practises human rights law with and justice work with a specific focus on intersecting areas, namely Business & Human Rights, Civil & Political Justice, Environmental Justice, Gender Justice and Home, Land & Rural Democracy. CALS uses a combination of theory and practice to advance human rights primarily through research, advocacy and strategic litigation. The CALS Environmental Justice programme has been involved in assisting communities in the Vhembe region to participate in sustainably developing their environment over the last decade.

Link to website: <https://www.wits.ac.za/cals/>



More Links to various sources

- 19 March 2025-Carte Blanche, from media interest in the MMSEZ, conducted their own investigation on it. Find a link to a short clip of their exposé here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CW_CanP31Mk
- 14 January 2025- Business Day article by Toby chance, “Signs of progress at trade department, but trouble below the surface”: [TOBY CHANCE: Signs of progress at trade department, but trouble below the surface](#)
- 12 November 2024 interview with Lauren Liebenberg, Living Limpopo, on SAfm Night Talk with Oliver Dickson
<https://omny.fm/shows/late-night-conversation/vhembe-biosphere-reserve-under-threat>
- 16 November 2024 interview with Kirsten Youens on SAfm Jet Set Breakfast with Michelle Constant titled, “Thirsty, energy-hungry steel ‘monster’ set to destroy thousands of Limpopo protected trees in industrial drive”
<https://omny.fm/shows/the-jet-set-breakfast-1/thirsty-energy-hungry-steel-monster-set-to-destroy>
- 25 November 2024-Daily Maverick Opinion from Lauren Liebenberg called: [Old King Coal's pursuit of a marginal economic zone in Limpopo](#)
- 15 September 2023 interview with Kirsten Youens and Lauren Liebenberg on Just Us and the Climate titled, “The public versus the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone - Part 1”
<https://iono.fm/e/1360705>

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