



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 447· PRETORIA 0001· Environment House 473 Steve Biko Road, Arcadia· PRETORIA

DEFF Reference: 14/12/16/3/3/1/1958/AM1

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Mr Alan Wolfrohm
Highlands Central Wind Energy Facility RF (Pty) Ltd
Mountain Forest Farm
Erf 384 Hoekwil
WESTERN CAPE
6560

Telephone Number: (082) 529 4909
Email Address: MrWolf@wkn-windcurrent.com

PER EMAIL / MAIL

Dear Mr Wolfrohm

AMENDMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION ISSUED ON 25 JANUARY 2020 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE 72MW HIGHLANDS CENTRAL WIND ENERGY FACILITY AND ITS ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN BLUE CRANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

The Environmental Authorisation (EA) issued for the abovementioned application by this Department on 25 January 2020, the application for amendment of the EA received on 02 December 2021, the acknowledgement letter dated 07 December 2021, the draft amendment motivation report received by the Department on 06 December 2021, the comments issued by this Department on 21 January 2022 and the final amendment motivation report received on 24 March 2022 refer.

Based on a review of the reason for requesting an amendment to the above EA, this Department, in terms of Chapter 5 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 as amended, has decided to amend the EA dated 25 January 2020, as amended, as follows:

Amendment 1:

The applicant applied to amend the EA as follows:

- amendments to the project description of the EA;
- the addition of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS);
- amendments to the preliminary layout of the project; and,
- correction of an editorial error in the EA.

MS.

The title on page 01 of the EA has been amended:

From:

“Construction of the 70MW highlands central wind energy facility and its associated infrastructure Within Blue Crane Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province”

To:

“Construction of the 72MW highlands central wind energy facility and its associated infrastructure within Blue Crane Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province”

The activity description on the table on page 03 and 04 of the EA is amended:

From:

<p><u>GN R327 Item 12:</u> <i>“The development of- (ii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 100 square metres or more; where such development occurs (a) within a watercourse (c) if no development setback exists within 32m of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse.”</i></p>	<p><i>Infrastructure will be required at 12 water crossings and within 32 meters of a watercourse that covers an area of more than 100m².</i></p>
<p><u>GN R325 Item 1:</u> <i>“The development of facilities or infrastructure for the generation of electricity from a renewable resource where the electricity output is 20 megawatts or more.”</i></p>	<p><i>The WEF will consist of up to 12 turbines for electricity generation with a combined capacity of more than 20MW</i></p>

To:

<p><u>Listing Notice 1, Item 12:</u> <i>“The development of- (ii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 100 square metres or more; where such development occurs (a) within a watercourse (c) if no development setback exists within 32m of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse.”</i></p>	<p><i>Infrastructure will be required at 5 water crossings and within 32 meters of a watercourse that covers an area of more than 100m².</i></p>
<p><u>Listing Notice 2, Item 1:</u> <i>“The development of facilities or infrastructure for the generation of electricity from a renewable resource where the electricity output is 20 megawatts or more.”</i></p>	<p><i>The WEF will consist of up to 10 turbines for electricity generation with a combined capacity of more than 20MW</i></p>

The table with infrastructure associated with the facility on page 07 and 08 of the EA is amended:

From:

Component	Description/Dimensions
Location of the site	20 km west of Somerset East, Eastern Cape.
Facility Area	The Proposed development site is approximately 10 000 hectares. This is the total area covered, in which all six components will be located. The actual infrastructure footprint will be around 1% of this for the Highlands Central WEF.
Number of Turbines	Up to 12 turbines
Site Access	32°41'20.53"S 25°21'31.02"E
Hub Height from ground level	up to 135 m.
Blade Length	up to 75 m.
Rotor Diameter	up to 150 m.
Area occupied by inverter transformer stations/substations	1.1 hectares.
Capacity of on-site substation	66/132 kV.
Centre point coordinates of on-site substation	32°43'55.95"S 25°20'54.72"E
Area occupied by both permanent and construction laydown areas	1 hectare permanent laydown area. 1 hectare construction laydown area.
Operations and maintenance buildings (O&M building) with parking area	200 m x 200 m.
Length of internal roads	approximately 50 km.
Width of internal roads	12 m (6 m wide road surface plus 3 m on each side for road reserve and drainage).
Proximity to grid connection	On the northern part of the site, where existing 132 kV and 66 kV overhead power lines are located.
Height of fencing	Up to 3 m around substations and buildings.
Type of fencing	Stock proof palisade and/or diamond mesh.

To:

Component	Description/Dimensions
Location of the site	20 km west of Somerset East, Eastern Cape.
Facility Area	The Proposed development site is approximately 10 000 hectares. This is the total area covered, in which all six components will be located. The actual infrastructure footprint will be around 1% of this for the Highlands Central WEF.
Number of Turbines	Up to 10 turbines
Site Access	32°41'20.53"S 25°21'31.02"E
Hub Height from ground level	up to 180 m.
Blade Length	up to 87.5m.
Rotor Diameter	up to 175m.

Tip Height	Up to 267.5m
Area occupied by inverter transformer stations/substations	1.1 hectares.
Capacity of on-site substation	66/132 kV.
Centre point coordinates of on-site substation	32°43'56.44"S 25°20'57.40"E
Area occupied by both permanent and construction laydown areas	1 hectare permanent laydown area. 1 hectare construction laydown area.
Operations and maintenance buildings (O&M building) with parking area	200 m x 200 m.
Hard Stand area per turbine	6000m ²
Length of internal roads	approximately 45 km.
Width of internal roads	12 m (6 m wide road surface plus 3 m on each side for road reserve and drainage).
Proximity to grid connection	On the northern part of the site, where existing 132 kV and 66 kV overhead power lines are located.
Height of fencing	Up to 3 m around substations and buildings.
Type of fencing	Stock proof palisade and/or diamond mesh.
Battery Storage	Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) adjacent to the substation on the temporary (construction) laydown area, (with a footprint of approximately 1 ha, and a height of approximately 8 m)

The following technical details for the BESS table have been added to page 08 of the EA:

Component	Description/ Dimensions
Technology	Solid State (e.g.: Lithium Ion) or Flow Technologies
BESS footprint	Up to 1ha in total extent, including foundation and containerised battery system
Capacity	870MWh
Access road to BESS	The authorised road used to approach the substation compound would be used for the BESS, and once inside the substation compound, there would be internal roads to the office parking, substation and BESS. The roads may be approximately 8m in width.
Height	Up to 8m
Fencing	Fencing around the footprint of the BESS will be installed for access restriction measures.

Condition 1 on Page 09 of the EA is amended:

From:

"The construction 70MW highlands central wind energy facility and its associated infrastructure with in Blue Crane Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province is approved as per 21 SG code cited in the table above, on page 7."

To:

"The construction 72MW highlands central wind energy facility and its associated infrastructure within Blue Crane Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province is approved as per 21 SG code cited in the table above, on page 7."

Condition 16.1 on page 12 of the EA is hereby amended:

From:

"16. The EMPr amendment must include the following:

- 16.1. All recommendations and mitigation measures including those listed and recorded in specialist report attached in the final BAR."

To:

"16. The EMPr amendment must include the following:

- 16.1. All recommendations and mitigation measures including those listed and recorded in specialist reports attached in the final BAR and subsequent updates to specialist reports (as part of this amendment process)."

The highlands central turbine co-ordinates on page 21 of the EA are amended:

From:

Wind Turbine Number	Latitude(S)	Longitude (E)
T18	32°43'34.72"S	25°19'39.76"E
T17	32°43'6.88"S	25°19'58.07"E
T16	32°43'2.11"S	25°20'25.69"E
T15	32°43'12.21"S	25°21'27.31"E
T21	32°43'53.20"S	25°22'55.72"E
T23	32°44'0.81"S	25°21'16.85"E
T20	32°43'45.06"S	25°20'32.08"E
T22	32°43'57.26"S	25°20'12.26"E
T25	32°44'27.50"S	25°20'37.44"E
T24	32°44'9.36"S	25°20'52.57"E
T19	32°43'38.78"S	25°20'58.63"E
T26	32°44'32.01"S	25°21'41.06"E

To:

Wind Turbine Number	Latitude(S)	Longitude (E)
T18	32°43'35.32"S	25°19'38.33"E
T17	32°43'06.55"S	25°19'59.03"E
T16	32°43'10.02"S	25°20'32.08"E
T15	32°43'13.24"S	25°21'31.25"E
T21	32°43'52.52"S	25°22'55.50"E
T23	32°43'59.38"S	25°21'16.69"E
T22	32°43'56.94"S	25°20'12.54"E
T25	32°44'26.95"S	25°20'37.80"E

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AMENDMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION ISSUED ON 25 JANUARY 2020 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE 72MW HIGHLANDS CENTRAL WIND ENERGY FACILITY AND ITS ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN BLUE CRANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

T19	32°43'41.02"S	25°21'03.13"E
T26	32°44'33.03"S	25°21'40.00"E

Reason for amendments:

The Applicant wishes to increase the maximum dimensions of the Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) in order to align to current international WTG models. Given ongoing and rapid technological improvements in the wind energy industry, WTG models are evolving on a continual basis. In order to ensure that a WEF has the smallest possible footprint per total installed capacity, the WTGs are evolving in higher yielding and more efficient generating unit. The Applicant accordingly wishes to amend the authorised turbine specifications to future proof the project amidst rapid technology developments, whilst also reducing the number of WTGs at the WEF.

Slight adjustments to the turbine positions in the preliminary layout were proposed to minimise wake effects between the turbines, as well as to avoid any part of the proposed larger turbine blades extending into areas identified as highly sensitive for birds and bats. Refinement to the proposed access roads layout is also required, due to the proposed amendments to the turbine positions and the reduction in the number of turbines (from 12 to a maximum of 10). Furthermore, the rotation of the substation yard is proposed for the Highlands Central WEF, to fit the proposed amended road layout.

The BESS would be located and developed immediately adjacent to the authorised substation on the temporary (construction) laydown area footprint, which forms part of the assessed and authorised development footprint of the proposed project.

This amendment letter must be read in conjunction with the EA dated 25 January 2020 as amended.

In terms of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act No 3 of 2000), you are entitled to the right to fair, lawful and reasonable administrative action; and to written reasons for administrative action that affects you negatively. Further your attention is drawn to the provisions of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act no. 4 of 2013) which stipulates that the Department should conduct itself in a responsible manner when collecting, processing, storing and sharing an individual or another entity's personal information by holding the Department accountable should the Department abuses or compromises your personal information in any way.

In terms of Regulation 4(2) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, as amended (the EIA Regulations), you are instructed to notify all registered interested and affected parties, in writing and within 14 (fourteen) days of the date of the decision, of the Department's decision as well as the provisions regarding the submission of appeals that are contained in the Regulations.

Your attention is drawn to Chapter 2 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) National Appeal Regulations published under Government Notice R993 in Government Gazette No. 38303 dated 08 December 2014 (National Appeal Regulations, 2014), which prescribe the appeal procedure to be followed. Kindly include a copy of this document (National Appeal Regulations, 2014) with the letter of notification to interested and affected parties in this matter.

Should any person wish to lodge an appeal against this decision, he/she must submit the appeal to the appeal administrator, and a copy of the appeal to the applicant, any registered interested and affected party, and any organ of state with interest in the matter within 20 days from the date that the notification of the decision was sent to the registered interested and affected parties by the applicant; or the date that the notification of the decision was sent to the applicant by the Department, whichever is applicable.

Appeals must be submitted in writing in the prescribed form to:

The Director: Appeals and Legal Review of this Department at the below mentioned addresses.

By email: appeals@environment.gov.za;

By hand: Environment House
473 Steve Biko,
Arcadia,
Pretoria,
0083; or

By post: Private Bag X447,
Pretoria,
0001;

Please note that in terms of Section 43(7) of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, the lodging of an appeal will suspend the environmental authorisation or any provision or condition attached thereto. In the instance where an appeal is lodged, you may not commence with the activity until such time that the appeal is finalised.

To obtain the prescribed appeal form and for guidance on the submission of appeals, please visit the Department's website at https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms#legal_authorisations or request a copy of the documents at appeals@environment.gov.za.

Yours faithfully



Ms Millicent Solomons
Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
Date: 04/07/2022.

cc:	Thabiso Klaas	Blue Crane Route Local Municipality	Email: mmanager@bcm.gov.za
	Gerry Pienaar	EC DEDEAT	Email: Gerry.pienaar@dedea.gov.za
	Charmaine Struwig	EC DEDEAT	Email: Charmaine.Mostert@dedea.gov.za
	Nicole Holland	Holland & Associates Environmental Consultants	Email: nicole@hollandandassociates.net



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Ms. Milicent Solomons
Director: Prioritized Infrastructure Projects

Dear Mrs Solomons

**APPOINTMENT AS ACTING CHIEF DIRECTOR: INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORIZATIONS
FOR THE PERIOD OF 25 APRIL 2022 UNTIL 31 OCTOBER 2022**

I hereby inform you that I have decided to appoint you as the Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorizations for the period of 25 April to 31 October 2022 whilst Mr Sabelo Malaza is fulfilling his temporary reassignment function at the Forestry Branch.

All the correspondence and other documents that are usually signed by the Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorizations must be signed under Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorizations during the above-mentioned period.

Your appointment in the above acting position remains subject to the provisions of the Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation No. 103 of 1994), as amended, the Government Employees Pension Fund Act, 1996 (Proclamation No. 21 of 1996), the regulations promulgated under these Acts and relevant circulars.

In the execution of your duties and the exercising of the powers delegated to you, you will furthermore be subjected to the provisions of the Public Finance Management Act, compliance with the Promotion of Access to Information Act, Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, the Minimum Information Security Standard, Departmental Policies and other applicable legislations with the Republic of South Africa. You are therefore advised to make yourself familiar with the provisions of these legislations and policies and the amendments thereof. (Copies of Departmental policies can be obtained from the Human Resource Office).

Please accept my heartfelt gratitude for all your assistance on behalf of the department.

Yours sincerely

Ms. Devnagle Bendeman
Deputy Director-General: RCSM (Regulatory Compliance and
Sector Monitoring)

Date 20 April 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I ACCEPT / ~~DO NOT ACCEPT~~
appointment as Acting Chief
Director: Integrated Environmental
Authorizations

Signed:

Date:

20/04/2022