



# 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: 14/12/16/3/3/1/1960/AM1

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Mr Alan Wolfrohm  
Highlands South 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 21 JANUARY 2020 FOR THE HIGHLANDS SOUTH WIND ENERGY FACILITY AND ITS ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE NEAR SOMERSET EAST WITHIN THE BLUE CRANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE**

The Environmental Authorisation (EA) issued for the abovementioned application by this Department on 21 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 21 January 2020, 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,
- removal of Condition 17.1 and 42 of the EA.

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

**From:**

<p><u>Listing Notice 1 GN R 327 (as amended) Activity 12:</u> 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 32 m of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse.</p>	<p><i>Infrastructure will be required at 9 water crossings and within 32 meters of a watercourse that covers an area of more than 100m<sup>2</sup>.</i></p>
<p><u>Listing Notice 2 GN R 325 (as amended) Activity 1:</u> The development of facilities or infrastructure for the generation of electricity from a renewable resource where the electricity output is 20 megawatts or more.</p>	<p><i>The WEF will consist of up to 15 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-</i> (ii) <i>infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 100 square metres or more; where such development occurs</i> (a) <i>within a watercourse</i> (c) <i>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 14 water crossings and within 32 meters of a watercourse that covers an area of more than 100m<sup>2</sup>.</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 15 turbines for electricity generation with a combined capacity of more than 20MW.</i></p>

The wind turbine layout design coordinates on page 08 of the EA are amended:

**From:**

The Final Mitigated Layout		
WTG No.	Latitude	Longitude
T29	-32°46'51.40 "	25°22'9.10 "
T27	-32°46'9.14 "	25°22'22.67 "
T28	-32°46'22.18 "	25°22'54.18 "
T30	-32°47'3.48 "	25°21'54.16 "
T34	-32°47'46.68 "	25°23'3.03 "
T31	-32°47'13.08 "	25°22'7.90 "

16

T32	-32°47'24.00 "	25°22'51.10 "
T33	-32°47'39.17 "	25°22'3.15 "
T35	-32°48'3.94 "	25°21'31.62 "
T36	-32°48'27.09 "	25°22'58.41 "
T38	-32°48'43.49 "	25°22'45.29 "
T37	-32°48'35.81 "	25°22'12.46 "
T40	-32°48'56.68 "	25°22'12.63 "
T39	-32°48'46.80 "	25°21'34.46 "
T41	-32°48'59.94 "	25°20'44.24 "

**To:**

The Final Mitigated Layout		
WTG No.	Latitude	Longitude
T27	32°46' <u>09.05</u> "S	25°22' <u>22.98</u> "E
T28	32°46'22.18"S	25°22'54.18"E
T34	32°47'46.68"S	25°23'03.03"E
T31	32°47'13.08"S	25°22'07.90"E
T32	32°47' <u>22.05</u> "S	25°22' <u>49.81</u> "E
T33	32°47' <u>33.78</u> "S	25°21' <u>59.14</u> "E
T36	32°48'27. <u>08</u> "S	25°22'58.41"E
T38	32°48'43. <u>50</u> "S	25°22'45.27"E
T37	32°48'35. <u>80</u> "S	25°22'12.46"E
T40	32°48'56.68"S	25°22'12. <u>62</u> "E
T39	32°48'46.80"S	25°21'34.46"E
T41	32°49' <u>01.18</u> "S	25°20'44.71"E

The technical details for the facility table on page 08, 09 and 10 of the EA is amended:

**From:**

Component	Description/ Dimensions
Type of technology	Onshore Wind Turbine electricity generators
Structure height (Tip Height)	Between 125 m and 200 m
Surface area to be covered (including associated infrastructure such as roads)	Typically in wind energy facilities, the amount of surface area covered by turbines and associated infrastructure such as roads is less than 1% of the total site. The footprint of the facility is estimated at 51.4ha.

Structure orientation	Conventional three bladed horizontal axis wind turbine generator mounted on a single vertical tower structure.
Laydown area dimensions (Construction period and Operation)	Permanent laydown area and the temporary construction laydown area will both be approximately up to 1 hectare each.
Generation capacity of the facility as a whole at delivery points	15 Turbines x Maximum of 6 MW per turbine = 90 MW Maximum Generation Capacity
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 three phases will be located. The actual infrastructure footprint will be around 1% of this for the Highlands South Wind Energy Facility.
Number of Turbines	Up to 15 turbines
Site Access	32°41'20.53"S 25°21'31.02"E (R63)
Hub Height from ground level	up to 135 metres
Blade Length	up to 75 metres
Rotor Diameter	up to 150 metres
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°47'25.30"S 25°22'27.45"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

**To:**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Description/ Dimensions</b>
Type of technology	Onshore Wind Turbine electricity generators
Structure height (Tip Height)	Up to 267.5m
Surface area to be covered (including associated infrastructure such as roads)	Typically in wind energy facilities, the amount of surface area covered by turbines and associated infrastructure such as roads is less than 1% of the total site. The footprint of the facility is estimated at 48ha.
Structure orientation	Conventional three bladed horizontal axis wind turbine generator mounted on a single vertical tower structure.
Laydown area dimensions (Construction period and Operation)	Permanent laydown area and the temporary construction laydown area will both be approximately up to 1 hectare each.
Generation capacity of the facility as a whole at delivery points	90 MW Maximum Generation Capacity
Location of the site	20 km west of Somerset East, Eastern Cape

DFFE Reference: 14/12/16/3/31/1960/AM1

4

AMENDMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION ISSUED ON 21 JANUARY 2020 FOR THE HIGHLANDS SOUTH WIND ENERGY FACILITY AND ITS ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE NEAR SOMERSET EAST WITHIN THE BLUE CRANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

Facility Area	The Proposed development site is approximately 10 000 hectares. This is the total area covered, in which all three phases will be located. The actual infrastructure footprint will be around 1% of this for the Highlands South Wind Energy Facility.
Number of Turbines	Up to <u>12</u> turbines
Site Access	32°41'20.53"S 25°21'31.02"E (R63)
Hub Height from ground level	up to <u>180m</u>
Blade Length	up to <u>87.5m</u>
Rotor Diameter	up to <u>175m</u>
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°47'24.34"S 25°22'28.30"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 <u>45km</u>
Battery Storage	Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) adjacent to the substation on the temporary laydown area. (with a footprint approximately 1 ha. and a height of approximately 8 m)

The following technical details for the BESS table have been added to page 10 of the EA:

<b>Component</b>	<b>Description/ Dimensions</b>
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 10 of the EA is amended:

**From:**

*"The proposed Highlands South Wind Energy Facility and Associated Infrastructure including grid connection infrastructure with a maximum output capacity of up to 90MW consisting of up to 15 turbines with a generating capacity of up to 6MW each, is hereby approved on the farms mentioned above on page 7."*

**To:**

*"The proposed Highlands South Wind Energy Facility and Associated Infrastructure including grid connection infrastructure with a maximum output capacity of up to 90MW consisting of up to 12 turbines, is hereby approved on the farms mentioned above on page 7."*

The following condition on page 13 of the EA is hereby removed:

*"17.1. An Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC) Control Plan, which identifies potential risk, mitigation measures and appropriate test and acceptable procedures during the design and construction of this facility. The EMC Control Plan must be made available to the Square Kilometre Array South Africa (SKA-SA) for acceptance and the SKA-SA accepted EMC Control Plan must be submitted to this Department for approval prior to construction."*

Condition 16.2 and 16.3 on page 13 of the EA is hereby amended:

**From:**

*"17. The EMPr amendment must include the following:*

*17.2. All recommendations and mitigation measures recorded in the BAR.*

*17.3. All mitigation measures as listed in the specialist reports within the BAR."*

**To:**

*"17. The EMPr amendment must include the following:*

*17.2. All recommendations and mitigation measures recorded in the BAR and subsequent EA amendment report(s).*

*17.3. All mitigation measures as listed in the specialist reports within the BAR and subsequent EA amendment report(s)."*

The following condition on page 18 of the EA is hereby removed:

*"42. The development footprint must exclude the area identified as a potential target for the protected area expansion (NPAES)."*

**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. Condition 42 of the EA currently states that: "The development footprint must exclude the area identified as a potential target for the protected area expansion (NPAES)". However, as indicated in the Revised Final BAR for the project (November 2019), "the majority of the development footprint falls within the Camdeboo Escarpment NPAES Focus Area" (Arcus Consultancy Services South Africa, 2019). The Applicant is therefore applying for the removal of Condition 39 of the EA, as it is viewed to be in conflict with the authorized project description and authorized EIA listed activities for the project (particularly the authorized EIA listed activities related to activities within the NPAES). Furthermore, it should be noted that the Highlands WEF area does not fall within an NPAES Focus Area under the more recent 2016 NPAES Layer.

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

This amendment letter must be read in conjunction with the EA dated 21 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](mailto:appeals@environment.gov.za);

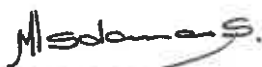
By hand: Environment House  
473 Steve Biko,  
Arcadia,  
Pretoria,  
0083; or

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](https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms#legal_authorisations) or request a copy of the documents at [appeals@environment.gov.za](mailto:appeals@environment.gov.za).

Yours faithfully



**Ms Milicent Solomons**  
**Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations**  
**Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment**  
**Date: 04/01/2022**

cc:	Thabiso Klaas	Blue Crane Route Local Municipality	Email: <a href="mailto:mmanager@bcm.gov.za">mmanager@bcm.gov.za</a>
	Gerry Pienaar	EC DEDEAT	Email: <a href="mailto:Gerry.pienaar@dedea.gov.za">Gerry.pienaar@dedea.gov.za</a>
	Charmaine Struwig	EC DEDEAT	Email: <a href="mailto:Charmaine.Mosterl@dedea.gov.za">Charmaine.Mosterl@dedea.gov.za</a>
	Nicole Holland	Holland & Associates Environmental Consultants	Email: <a href="mailto:nicole@hollandandassociates.net">nicole@hollandandassociates.net</a>





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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 Devinagle 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