



environmental affairs

Department
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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DEA Reference: 14/12/16/3/3/2/278/AM4

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Mr Steyn de Vos
Castle Wind Farm (Pty) Ltd
22nd Floor Metropolitan Centre
7 Walter Sisulu Avenue
Foreshore
CAPE TOWN
8001

Telephone Number: (021) 831 6147
Email Address: steyn.devos@juwi.co.za

PER EMAIL / MAIL

Dear Mr De Vos

AMENDMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION (EA) ISSUED ON 08 MAY 2015 FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CASTLE WIND ENERGY FACILITY NEAR DE AAR IN THE EMTHANJENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

The EA for the above-mentioned project dated 08 May 2015, the amendments to the EA dated 30 June 2015, 04 April 2017 and 15 March 2018, your application for EA amendment received on 03 July 2019 and the final motivation report received on 23 October 2019, 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 08 May 2015 as amended as follows:

Amendment 1: Change in the contact details of the holder of the EA:

From:

Corne van der Westhuizen
Castle Wind Farm (Pty) Ltd
22nd Floor Metropolitan Centre
7 Walter Sisulu Avenue
Foreshore
CAPE TOWN
8001

Telephone Number: (021) 831 6129
Cell phone number: (083) 611 7073
Email Address: *come.vanderwesthuizen@juwi.co.za*

MS

To:

Mr Steyn de Vos
Castle Wind Farm (Pty) Ltd
22nd Floor Metropolitan Centre
7 Walter Sisulu Avenue
Foreshore
CAPE TOWN
8001

Telephone Number: (021) 831 6147
Cell phone number: (082) 388 4738
Email Address: steyn.devos@juwi.co.za

The reason for the change of the contact details of the holder of the EA is that Mr Van der Westhuizen is no longer the contact person for the project, and Mr De Vos is now responsible for the EA.

Amendment 2: Amendment to the project description of the EA:

Page 01 of the Amendment to the EA dated 04 April 2017:

From:

"up to 31 wind turbines with a generation capacity of up to 4.5 MW each, with a hub height of up to 130m and a rotor diameter of up to 150m and an overall wind farm generation capacity of 118MW"

To:

"Up to 24 wind turbines with a generation capacity of up to 7.9MW each, a hub height of between 90 to 150m, a rotor diameter of between 110 to 200m and an overall wind farm generation capacity of 118MW"

Page 06 of the EA dated 08 May 2015, as amended:

From:

"31 Crane hardstand areas"

To:

"24 Crane hardstand areas"

The motivation for the EA amendment is that following the issuing of the EA for the project, there have been advancements in wind turbine technology with newer turbines becoming larger and more powerful. The turbines authorised in the EA are therefore not considered to be the most suitable in terms of production and economic considerations.

The reason for the reduction in the number of turbines, is that based on the assessment, there are turbine positions located in the Verreux Eagle Nest Buffer, as well as the High Bat Sensitivity Buffer, which is deemed as No-Go Areas.

As a result of the amendments, the following conditions are hereby added into the EA:

- 90A. *"Turbine position 01, 04, 05, 18, 20, 24 and 28 are not approved and must be removed from the project."*
- 90B. *"A 3km no-go buffer has been identified around each of the known Verreaux's Eagle nests. No new infrastructure may be constructed within these areas. There are currently three turbines inside this buffer area and these are to be relocated during micro-siting."*
- 90C. *"Any significant impacts detected by post-construction monitoring must be mitigated where judged necessary by the avifaunal specialist. The onus is on the wind farm operator to have planned ahead for such an eventuality, particularly in respect of financial budgeting."*
- 90D. *"The local population of Verreaux's Eagle must be monitored for the full lifespan of the wind farm to ensure that any impacts are measured. This will require 2-3 visits to each of the 3 known nests (and any new ones subsequently found) during breeding season each year by a suitably qualified independent ornithologist."*
- 90E. *"Ongoing monitoring is required to determine breeding status at nests of Verreaux's Eagles. Evidence of abandonment of breeding or compromised productivity of breeding Verreaux's Eagles will require offset or compensation plans to be developed by a suitably qualified independent ornithologist."*
- 90F. *"Should fatalities of one Regionally Red Listed species or two other species of concern be recorded a mitigation plan should be developed and implement (this could involve curtailment, shutdown on demand, habitat management, deterrence and any others available at the time of implementation)."*
- 90G. *"At other operational wind farms it has been suspected that ground burrowing small mammals such as Ground Squirrel found more favourable burrowing conditions along new road and hard stand verges on site after construction, which resulted in an inflated prey base for eagles close to turbines, and consequent higher turbine collision risk. It is essential that the Castle Wind Farm does not create favourable conditions for such mammals in high risk areas. Discussions with civil engineers previously have determined that it is not possible to adequately compact road verges, drains and hard stand edges during construction to eliminate such burrowing. We therefore recommend then that within the first year of operations a full assessment of this aspect be made by the ornithologist contracted for post construction monitoring. If such burrowing is found case specific solutions to exclude these mammals from areas close to turbines will need to be developed. Additionally, any alterations of habitat and areas identified with the potential to increase raptor prey populations should be monitored and corrected through compaction or other deterrence's."*

This letter must be read in conjunction with the EA dated 08 May 2015, as amended.

In accordance with Regulation 4(2) of the NEMA, EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended) you are instructed to notify all registered Interested and Affected Parties, in writing and within 14 (fourteen) days of the date of this amendment to the EA, of the Department's decision and that an appeal may be lodged against the decision in terms of the NEMA, National Appeals Regulations, 2014 and the provisions regarding the submission of appeals as contained in these Regulations.

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 (twenty) 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 on 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 NEMA, the lodging of an appeal will suspend the EA or any provision or condition attached thereto. In the instance where an appeal is lodged, the Applicant 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 by sending an e-mail to: appeals@environment.gov.za.

Yours faithfully



Mr Sabelo Malaza
Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations
Department of Environmental Affairs

Date: 26/02/2020

CC:	Jo-Anne Thomas	Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd	E-mail: joanne@savanahsa.com
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