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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

for the

PROPOSED ACCURATE TRADING 47 (PTY) LTD TRUCK STOP AND FILLING STATION, PIENAARSRIVIER, BELA-BELA, LIMPOPO

**during Level 1 of the Lockdown regulations of the
COVID-19 pandemic**

November 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization's China country office reported a cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, in the Hubei Province of China. On 7 January 2020, the causative pathogen was identified as a novel coronavirus, "2019-nCoV". It was later renamed "SARS-CoV- 2" commonly known today as COVID-19, due to its similarity to the virus that caused the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2014-2015. Initially person-to-person transmission was not apparent as most of the cases were epidemiologically linked to the wildlife food markets in Jiangnan District of Hubei Province. This outbreak progressed into a worldwide pandemic, impacting all aspects of society including the workplace around the globe. On the 11th of March 2020, the World Health Organisation characterized the "SARS-CoV-2" (COVID -19) virus as a pandemic.

On Sunday the 15th of March 2020, the South African Government declared a "national state of disaster" in terms of the Disaster Management Act (Act 57 of 2002) in South Africa following the Corona Virus (COVID -19) outbreak in South Africa.

On the 21st of March 2020, the South African Government imposed a 21-day lockdown which came into effect from Midnight, Thursday the 26th of March 2020 until Midnight, Thursday the 16th of April 2020, to curb the infection rate of the COVID-19 Virus in South Africa. During the first 2 weeks of the lockdown the increase in new cases had declined from 42% to 4%.

On the 9th of April 2020, the South African Government announced an extension of the COVID-19 lockdown until the 30th of April 2020. As from the 1st of May 2020 the Lockdown status was relaxed from Level 5 to Level 4 and from the 1st of June 2020 it was further relaxed to Level 3. The country was on Alert Level 2 from 18 August 2020 and from 21 September to 28 December 2020 on Alert Level 1. The country was on adjusted Alert Level 3 from 29 December 2020 to 28 February 2021.

Adjusted alert level 1 is in place since 30 September 2021.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to establish a plan for implementing the Public Participation Process in line with the directions published in Government Notice No.660 on 5 June 2020 in Government Gazette No. 43412 regarding measures to address, prevent and combat the spread of Covid-19 relating to National Environmental Management Permits and Licences, and in particular to ensure fair licensing and public participation processes as required by law. These directions will apply during Alert Level 3.

Exigent is committed to continue to provide outstanding environmental services to our clients during the Covid-19 pandemic and to manage, as far as reasonably practicable, the risk to our employees, clients and the public.

3. OBJECTIVES

Public Participation is any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision-making and forms an integral part of the EIA. The Public Participation Process (PPP) provides people who may be affected by any stage (construction or operational) of the proposed development, with an opportunity to provide comments and to raise issues of concern, or to make suggestions that may result in enhanced benefits for the project.

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Comments and issues raised during the PPP will be captured, evaluated and included in a Comments and Response Report, which will be incorporated into the BAR. The draft BAR and draft EMPr will be made available for public review prior to submission of the Final BAR to the competent authority (CA).

The primary objectives of the Public Participation Process include:

- The meaningful and timeous participation of Interested and Affected Parties (I&AP's)
- Identification of issues and concerns of key stakeholders and I&AP with regards to the proposed development
- Focus on important issues
- Promotion of transparency and an understanding of the proposed project and its potential environmental, social and biophysical impacts
- Accountability for information used in decision-making
- To serve as a structure for liaison and communication with I&AP's
- Identifying potential environmental (social and biophysical) impacts associated with the project
- Maintaining protocols to limit and prevent the spread of Covid-19 during the Public Participation Process

4. APPROACH

a. Identification of and Consultation with Key Stakeholders and Landowners

- Local and Provincial Government
- Affected and neighbouring landowners
- Environmental Organisations

Identification of I&APs takes place through existing databases, door to door interaction, responses to newspaper advertisements, networking and a proactive process to identify key I&APs within the study area. All I&AP information (including contact details), together with dates and details of consultations and a record of all issues raised are recorded within a comprehensive database of affected landowners (and occupiers where relevant).

A database prepared by Exigent will be used to record I&APs and stakeholder responses. It will be continually updated throughout the Public Participation Process. This will act as a record of the communication/involvement process for future reporting.

Landowners and key stakeholders will be given the opportunity to comment during the public review period of the Draft Basic Assessment Report, from 16 November 2021 to 10 January 2022.

b. Advertising

In accordance with the EIA Regulations, the intent and notification to the public of the EIA Process for the project was advertised in the local newspaper. An English advertisement was placed in the The Post/Die Pos on 30 April 2021 notifying the public of the intent of the lodging of the application of the proposed filling station development.

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To ensure that the widest group of I&APs are reached during the initial public participation phase, the public participation information will be distributed to the community in collaboration with the various Ward Councillors. The information will be sent via emails to the pre-identified I&APs and key stakeholders such as government departments. In addition to these distributed documents and letters, site notices will be placed in close strategic areas where the public can easily see it.

c. Background Information Document

A background Information Document (BID) will be compiled and distributed to I&APs and relevant stakeholders for the proposed project. The aim of the BID is to provide a brief outline of the proposed project, provide I&APs and stakeholders with a map of the study area, provide preliminary details regarding the Basic Assessment (BA), and to explain how I&APs can become involved in the project. The BID was distributed on the 30 April 2021 via email and comments and participation invited until 31 May 2021.

d. Public and Authority Review of the Draft Basic Assessment Report

The draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) and draft Environmental Management Programme will be available for review for 30 days through download from public.exigent.co.za on 16 November 2021.

All registered I&APs will be notified via e-mail and/or SMS that the draft BAR has been made available for download from Exigent's website. Additionally, the Ward councillors will also be notified of the availability of the DBAR and will further be encouraged to provide the information to the public (affected community members). Included in the communication, it will be stated that I&APs unable to obtain the document in this manner can contact Exigent for an electronic or hard copy of the Draft BAR.

Hard copies will be posted/couriered to the pre-identified key stakeholders and electronic copies will be distributed to all registered and pre-identified I&APs.

A 30-calendar day period will be allowed for this review process. All I&APs and Stakeholders registered on the project database will be notified of the availability of this report by letter, facsimile or e-mail. A hard copy of the draft report will simultaneously be submitted to the DEDET. The DEDET will request all state departments that administer a law relating to a listed activity to comment on the draft BAR within 30 calendar days from date of submission.

e. Issues Trial (Comments and Response Report)

Issues and concerns raised during the PPP will be compiled into a CRR, where responses will be provided by Exigent and the project team. Information from the PPP held during the BA Process will be incorporated into the BA Report. From this CRR, an action list will be compiled detailing the actions which the applicant is required to undertake to address specific issues raised.

5. REFERENCES AND GUIDELINES

- Disaster Management Act (Act no. 57 of 2002), Government Gazette No. 24252 of 15 January 2003.
- COGTA, 2020. Classification of a National Disaster – COVID-19, Government Notice No. 312 of March 2020.

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- COGTA, 2020. Disaster Management Act 2002: Determination of alert levels and Hotspots, GNR 608 of May 2020.
- COGTA, 2020. Extension of National State of Disaster (in terms of Act no. 57 of 2002), GN 646 of June 2020.
- DEA, 2020. Procedures for the assessment and minimum criteria for reporting on identified environmental themes in terms of Sections 24(5)(a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998, when applying for Environmental Authorisation. GG No.320 of March 2020.
- DEFF, 2020. Directions regarding measures to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 relating to National Environmental Management Permits and Licences.

6. RESTRICTIONS

As per GNR 608 of May 2020, stipulating the restrictions on movement during the National lockdown Level 3, the following restrictions have been placed on gatherings and movements of people. Under these regulations, all gatherings of people are prohibited except for faith-based institutions, funerals, workplaces (for working purposes), agricultural auctions and professional non-contact sports matches.

Considering the restrictions placed on movement and social gatherings in terms of Section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act (Act no. 57 of 2002), the following restrictions are to be implemented for the purpose of the public reviewing phase of this project:

- In order to prevent unnecessary movement of people, no public consultation meeting shall be held.
- In instances where direct contact with people are made (in events of delivering hard copies to the various stakeholders as required):
 - A safe distance will be maintained between all present individuals;
 - Hand sanitisers will be made available to all individuals handling the documentation (during the handover process);
 - Masks will always be used during the document handover process between Exigent and the receiving individual; and
 - Once the handover process has been completed, all individuals present will be encouraged to wash their hands thoroughly.

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