



# ARCUS

## **VOLUME I: APPENDIX C** **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REPORT**

for the

### **PROPOSED PAULPUTS SOUTH WEF GRID CONNECTION & ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE**

On behalf of

### **PAULPUTS WIND ENERGY FACILITY SOUTH (RF) (PTY) LTD**

NOVEMBER 2021

**DFFE REFERENCE: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2418**

**FINAL FOR AUTHORITY DECISION**



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Paulputs Wind Energy Facility (RF) (Pty) Ltd ('PWEF'), a wholly owned subsidiary of WKN Windcurrent SA (Pty) Ltd, was granted environmental authorisation for the 300 MW (75 turbines) Paulputs Wind Energy Facility (WEF) and its associated 132 kV OHPL on 11 December 2019 by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) (DFFE Reference 14/12/16/3/3/2/1120). As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)<sup>1</sup>, three alternative on-site substation options (A, B and C) were assessed. The Competent Authority (CA), DFFE, chose to only issue a favourable authorisation for the preferred OHPL option 'C' and on-site substation option 'A'.

To comply with the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) bidding requirements, the abovementioned 300 MW Paulputs WEF is being split into the 150 MW Paulputs South WEF and the 150 MW Paulputs North WEF (separate application process). The authorised OHPL option 'C' and on-site substation option 'A' will be used for Paulputs North WEF.

***This application process is required to obtain authorisation of the grid connection required to connect the proposed Paulputs South WEF to the national grid.***

WKN Windcurrent SA (Pty) Ltd, under the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Paulputs Wind Energy Facility South (RF) (Pty) Ltd ('Paulputs South'<sup>2</sup>), is applying for Environmental Authorisation to construct and operate the Paulputs South WEF Grid Connection (the 'proposed development / the OHPL') which, is vital for connecting Paulputs South WEF to the National Eskom Grid and for ensuring the Paulputs South WEF's successful contribution to the REIPPPP.

The proposed development will comprise of the below:

- A double circuit Overhead Powerline (OHPL) of 132 kV which will connect directly from the proposed on-site substation to the existing Eskom Paulputs Main Transmission Substation (MTS); and
- Up to 4 m wide jeep tracks to provide access to and along the 31 m OHPL servitude.

Arcus Consultancy Services South Africa (Ltd) Pty ('Arcus') has been appointed to act as project manager and to undertake the environmental impact assessment process for Environmental Authorisation under Chapter 4 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998 – NEMA) as amended, for the Proposed Development.

## 2 THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The sharing of information forms the basis of a Public Participation Process (PPP), with an aim to encourage the public to have meaningful input into the decision-making process from the project initiation until the final report is submitted to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) for a decision. The primary aims of the public participation process are:

- To inform Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) of the proposed development;
- To identify issues, comments and concerns as raised by I&APs;
- To promote transparency and an understanding of the project and its potential consequences;

<sup>1</sup> The EIA was undertaken by Arcus Consultancy Services South Africa (Pty) Ltd in 2019, which assessed the Paulputs Wind Energy Facility (WEF) and its associated 132 kV grid connection, is hereon referred to as the 'EIA (Arcus, 2019)'.

<sup>2</sup> Paulputs Wind Energy Facility (RF) (Pty) Ltd has given permission to Paulputs Wind Energy Facility South (RF) (Pty) Ltd to submit an application for the proposed development. Three separate Part II amendment applications are being undertaken in parallel with this application to split and amend the Paulputs WEF EA into Paulputs South WEF, Paulputs North WEF, and the Paulputs North WEF Grid Connection, respectively.

- To facilitate open dialogue and liaise with all I&APs;
- To assist in identifying potential environmental (biophysical and socio-economic) impacts associated with the proposed development; and
- To ensure that all I&AP issues and comments are accurately recorded, addressed and documented in a Comments & Response Report.

This Public Participation Report has been compiled as Appendix C to the Basic Assessment Report that has been prepared in support of the above application for Environmental Authorisation. This report has been updated to include all comments received up until submission of the application.

A public participation plan (PP Plan) was compiled and submitted to the CA on the 26 August 2020. This plan was submitted in compliance with Section 5.1 and Annexure 2 of the Regulation GNR660 published on 05 June 2020 in terms of the Disaster Management Act (57/2002) and titled: Directions Regarding Measures to Address, Prevent and Combat the Spread of COVID-19 Relating to National Environmental Management Permits and Licences.

The plan was not granted written approval for the following reason:

*"Please note that the Department has no mandate to approve the Public Participation Plan during alert level 2 of Covid-19. The direction that required submission of PPP during level 3 is no longer applicable in level 2. However, you are required to ensure that the EIA Regulations 2014 as amended are strictly followed and ensure that the disaster management directions which are still applicable are considered"*

Despite the above, Arcus have taken the decision to continue to follow the PP Plan that was submitted on 26 August 2020.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

The Public Participation Process (PPP) follows the requirements of Section 24 (5) and Chapter 6 (41, 42, 43, and 44) of GN R. 326 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014 (as amended), as well as the Public Participation Guidelines in terms of NEMA, 1998 EIA Regulations, 2014.

#### **3.1 Identification of Stakeholders**

The I&AP database of the authorised Paulputs WEF EIA (Arcus, 2019) process was used as a baseline for this amendment application.

Registration of I&APs has continued throughout the process, and the I&AP database (Appendix C 1) was updated accordingly, based on comments received and included in the final amendment report.

All comments are included in the Comments and Responses Table (Appendix C 6), and responded to and addressed by the project team, i.e., EAP, Applicant and Specialists as applicable.

#### **3.2 Initial Notification Phase**

Initial Notification was conducted prior to the completion of the Draft Basic Assessment Report. Notification during the initial notification period of the PPP was undertaken in the following manner:

- A2 Correx board notices were placed on the boundary of the site in English and Afrikaans from 14 February 2020 (see Appendix C 2).

- A4 Posters have been placed at ten local public gathering places in the town of Pofadder and Kakamas in February 2020 (see Appendix C 2). Posters were in both English and Afrikaans.
- Newspaper Advertisements were placed in the Gemsbok and Die Burger newspapers on 13 November 2020 (in English and Afrikaans) (see Appendix C 2).
- Initial notification e-mails were distributed on 20 January 2021 to all pre-identified key I&APs including landowners, surrounding landowners, government organisations, NGOs, relevant municipalities, ward councillors and other organisations that might be affected. The notification informed I&APs of the intention of the applicant to apply for Environmental Authorisations for the proposed development (see Appendix C 3 and C 4). This included a locality map, brief proposed development plan and project description.

The notices and notifications also afforded all pre-identified I&APs the opportunity to submit their questions / queries / concerns, and indicate the contact details of any other potential I&APs that should be contacted and registered. The contact person at Arcus, contact number, email and fax details will be clearly stated on the notifications.

### 3.3 Submission: Draft Basic Assessment Phase

The draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) was subjected to a 30 day comment period from **Monday, 02 August 2021 to Wednesday, 01 September 2021 (both days inclusive)**.

The reports will be made available at the following locations:

Location	Physical Address	Contact person
Hard Copy Location:		
Pofadder Library	Loop street, Pofadder	J. Kamies – 054 933 0221
Electronic Copy Location		
Arcus Website	<a href="https://arcusconsulting.co.za/projects/">https://arcusconsulting.co.za/projects/</a>	Ashleigh von der Heyden 021 412 1529
Comment Submission		
<p><b><u>Comments were submitted to:</u></b>                      Arcus Consultancy Services South Africa (Pty) Ltd                      240 Main Road, 1st Floor Great Westerford, Rondebosch, 7700                      T +27 (0) 21 412 1529   E paulputs@arcusconsulting.co.za</p>		

Written Notification (in English) regarding the availability of the Draft Basic Assessment Report for Public Review and Comment was sent to all registered I&APs via e-mail (Appendix C 3). Where e-mail notification was not possible, notification was provided to I&APs in the form of Registered Mail (Appendix C 4). The written notification also advised I&APs of the following:

- How and where they can access the Draft Basic Assessment Report (electronic and hardcopy);
- The safety measures to consider when accessing the hard copy of the Draft Basic Assessment Report (due to the National COVID-19 Pandemic), such as the precautions to be taken for handling of the document (sanitizing / handwashing / wearing of gloves); and
- It afforded all I&APs the opportunity to submit their questions / queries / concerns / suggestions regarding the proposed development and content of the Draft Basic Assessment Report; and
- Informed the I&APs the duration that the Draft Basic Assessment Report was made available for public comment and the dates in which comments must be submitted.

Comments received during this period have been captured in the Comments and Responses table contained in Appendix C 6.

### **3.4 Submission: Final Basic Assessment Phase**

All registered I&APs will be provided with access to the Final Basic Assessment Report via the Arcus website. Notification regarding the submission of the FBAR to DFFE for a decision will be sent to all registered I&APs in the following manner:

- Written Notification (English and / or Afrikaans) has been sent to all registered I&APs (pre-identified key I&APs, I&APs registered during the initial and draft report period, as well as affected landowners, surrounding landowners and their occupiers) via e-mail and post (registered mail);
- SMS notifications will be sent to I&APs and / or land occupiers that have supplied mobile phone numbers and who does not have a postal or email addresses; and
- If written notification cannot be sent to an I&AP, notification will be provided telephonically.

### **3.5 Decision and Appeal Phase**

All registered I&APs will be provided with access to the decision and the reasons for such decision. Attention of all registered I&APs will be drawn to the fact that an appeal may be lodged against the decision in terms of the NEMA 1998 National Appeal Regulations, 2014 (as amended).

Notifications regarding the decision made by the DFFE will be provided in the following manner to all registered I&APs:

- Via e-mail, which will include an attachment of the decision, reasons for the decision, and appeal procedure;
- Via SMS, which will be sent to I&APs and / or land occupiers that have supplied mobile phone numbers and who does not have a postal or email addresses. The SMS will advise the I&AP that access to the decision, reasons for the decision, and appeal procedure must be accessed from the Arcus website: <https://arcusconsulting.co.za/projects/>;
- Via registered mail, which will include a complete hard copy of the decision, reasons for the decision and appeals procedure; and
- Courtesy telephone calls will be made to those who cannot receive access by either of the above-mentioned methods to advise them of the decision made by the DFFE and to confirm if and / or how they wish to receive access to the decision, reasons for decision, and appeal procedure.

I&APs will be provided with access to the decision, reasons for the decision by the DFFE and the process for appeals within 14 days of date of receipt of the decision.