

B2GOLD NAMIBIA PROPERTY PTY LTD – PROPOSED AGRICULTURE PROJECT FOR FARM ERHARDSHOF 575

Notes from the meeting with neighbouring farmers – 5 June 2020 at B2Gold Education Centre

The following issues and concerns were raised and need to be investigated further:

1. What volumes of water are disposed onto the TSF and what is the quality of seepage from that? How does the seepage affect the groundwater in the area? (This issue is not directly related to the irrigation project and will be addressed by the mine).
2. Water Associates is a company contracted by government for doing a regional study on groundwater resources to update the groundwater map of Namibia. It was stated by Mr Blume that the applicable catchment area is over allocated for abstraction by nearly 2mil m³/a and the Water Associates study needs to investigate this. More details on this over allocation is available from Department of Water Affairs. The irrigation project study also needs to consider other allocations in the area, including NamWater.
3. It was clearly indicated by participants that just planting a pasture crop, rotated by wheat and maize is not adding good value to the groundwater resource being exploited. A request was made that other high value crops be considered as alternatives in the study, like producing pecan nuts, vegetables, or fruit. In this manner water would be used wisely.
4. Regional data from Department of Water Affairs and NamWater will need to be included in the groundwater model. Data from neighbouring farms should be made available to the farmers.
5. The low recovery of the one borehole out of the three during the pump test should be a red flag showing that the aquifer cannot sustain this project. A scientific opinion on this is needed and a clear description of the pump test finding should be in the report being submitted.
6. B2Gold needs to keep the studies purely scientific and give regular feedback to their neighbours.
7. Has the use of smaller centre pivot units been investigated? Can 12 ha units not be used – Tsumeb and Otavi farmers are all changing to smaller units because it is more economical?
8. The extent of the link or the non-existence of the link to the Omarassa aquifer needs to be clearly addressed in any groundwater studies for the mine or the irrigation project.
9. Will B2Gold commit to actions like selective bush thinning of bush encroached areas to improve water recharge to the underground, as part of the mitigation measures? B2Gold will study this option and quantify the impact scientifically as it has been proven in forested areas in South Africa to be of value. Some bush thinning has already been done by B2Gold.
10. Mr Van Wyk has complaints of various boreholes in which pumps has burned out. He has discussed this with Mr Louis Brown and he believes that the mine is responsible for the impact on his boreholes. He has boreholes that are running dry much quicker than before and would like a thorough investigation from the mine, with feedback on the findings. He owns the farm

Fischer. (This issue is not directly related to the irrigation project and will be addressed by the mine).

11. Mr Steyn is concerned about his water supply at Okarihaiput. The open pit amethyst mine on the farm has run dry and used to be filled with seepage from groundwater. His farm boreholes are also not monitored by the mine, even though he is a next-door neighbour. The farm boreholes should be included in the monitoring and data from this included in the groundwater models.
12. The recharge figures for the different aquifers needs to be stated and clarified. This has an impact on the model water balance and the reported water in storage.
13. The mine must commit to drilling deeper boreholes and equipping them where needed if it is proven that they are lowering the water table on a neighbouring farm due to their activities. This is an international concept and should be legally binding for the mine to replace and/or compensate farmers for losses. The EMP should reflect this.
14. It would be helpful to Water Associates for comparison if a model run can be done for a post closure scenario with no water abstraction.
15. The mine should investigate the value of installing real time monitors in some boreholes with an online link. Currently 10 boreholes have continuous data loggers in them, but no connection to telemetry.
16. The lack of monitoring boreholes to the north east and east was highlighted. The Itasca study highlighted the need for an updated hydrocensus and the study should mention where monitoring is inadequate.
17. What links have there been with NamWater and their planned increased pumping from Omarassa for Otjiwarongo water supply? How has this future pumping been accounted for in the groundwater model and current study? The study report needs to reflect this.
18. The hydrocensus needs to note other farmers in the area that are irrigating and the volumes that they use. Some valuable information will also be gained to find out what crops they are planting as economically viable.
19. More discussions are needed with the farmers and the old open-door policy should be in place going forward.
20. The farmers need to be engaged as partners. The GWPP initiative was highlighted as an example where expectations were raised and a committee established, only to have no feedback for years and now suddenly the irrigation project is motivated by the GWPP being a beneficiary. More transparency is needed.
21. B2Gold will stick to doing the project in small increments, scientifically proving each step, and growing the initiative step by step as concepts are proven viable. Mr Loots have committed to address concerns about the GWPP and is available for any other concerns to be discussed. The mine wants to leave a sustainable post closure legacy in the region, which is the main motivation for the irrigation project.

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Attendance register

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Meeting Attendance Register

Date: 5 June 2020

Meeting Subject: Erla nels hof Agriculture Project - Bz Gold Property

Venue: Bz Gold Education Center

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