



ECC-45-365-BID-05-D

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

PREPARED FOR

PARATUS TELECOMMUNICATIONS (PTY) LTD



OCTOBER 2021

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A BASE TRANSCEIVER STATION AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PARATUS TELECOMMUNICATIONS (PTY) LTD ON ERF 361 IN BRAKWATER WITHIN THE KHOMAS REGION, NAMIBIA.

1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to provide Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) background to the proposed project and to invite I&APs to register as part of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) process.

Paratus Telecommunications (Pty) Ltd (hereinafter the proponent) proposes to construct a base transceiver station and associated infrastructure on Erf 361 in Brakwater which lies to the north of Windhoek within the Khomas Region.

Through registering for the project, all I&APs will be kept informed throughout the ESIA process, and a platform for participation will be provided to submit comments/recommendations pertaining to the project.

This BID includes the following information:

- The necessity of the project, potential benefits or adverse impacts anticipated;
- The alternatives to the project that will be considered and assessed;
- How the ESIA process works;
- The public participation process and how to become involved; and
- Next steps and the way forward.

2 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

2.1 BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Environmental Compliance Consultancy (ECC) has been engaged by the proponent to undertake an ESIA and an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) in terms of the Environmental Management Act, 2007 and its regulations. An environmental clearance application will be submitted to the relevant competent authority, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT). The ESIA will also be conducted following the IFC standards.

2.2 LOCATION

The proponent proposes to construct a base transceiver station and associated infrastructure on Erf 361 in Brakwater within the Khomas Region, Namibia. The site lies to the left of the B1 highway (turning onto the D1473 road) when travelling in a northern direction from Windhoek (en route to Okahandja). The proposed site location can be seen in figure 1 and is situated approximately 12 km from Windhoek.

2.3 WHAT IS PROPOSED

Paratus Telecommunications (Pty) Ltd is a multinational organisation and has established telecommunication services across Africa for years. They have operational offices in Namibia, Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia, and further provide connectivity services to more than 20 African countries through an extensive partner network.

The proponent proposes to construct a base transceiver station and associated infrastructure on Erf 361 in Brakwater. The preferred base transceiver station height will be 48 meters in order to provide adequate transmission and reception of telecommunication radio signals. The typical base transceiver station equipment would include 3G/4G/LTE Access Power Solutions-APS6-400 Series, High-Performance Point-to-Point Microwave Antenna, FibeAir IP-20G Radio, Panel antenna and AirHarmony 4000/4200/4400.

2.4 WHY IS THE PROJECT NEEDED

The proposed project is needed to increase the network coverage in Brakwater, which will accelerate the use and development of information communication technology in the proposed area and Namibia at large. In addition to this, it will provide employment opportunities to the local people through the construction works and continued maintenance of the structures.

2.5 CONSTRUCTION PHASE

The proposed construction phase will include low-impact and non-intrusive activities. The following are envisaged to happen during the proposed project:

- Minor ground preparation (trenches and levelling) of the site;
 - Storage and stockpiling of material for the construction of the tower;
 - Construction of the tower; and
- Installation of cables and wiring.

2.6 OPERATION PHASE

During normal operation, the telecommunication infrastructure will require very little intervention. Inspections will be frequently conducted by the site manager.

The telecommunication infrastructure will be maintained by the proponent to ensure the longevity of it and secure current and potential future use.

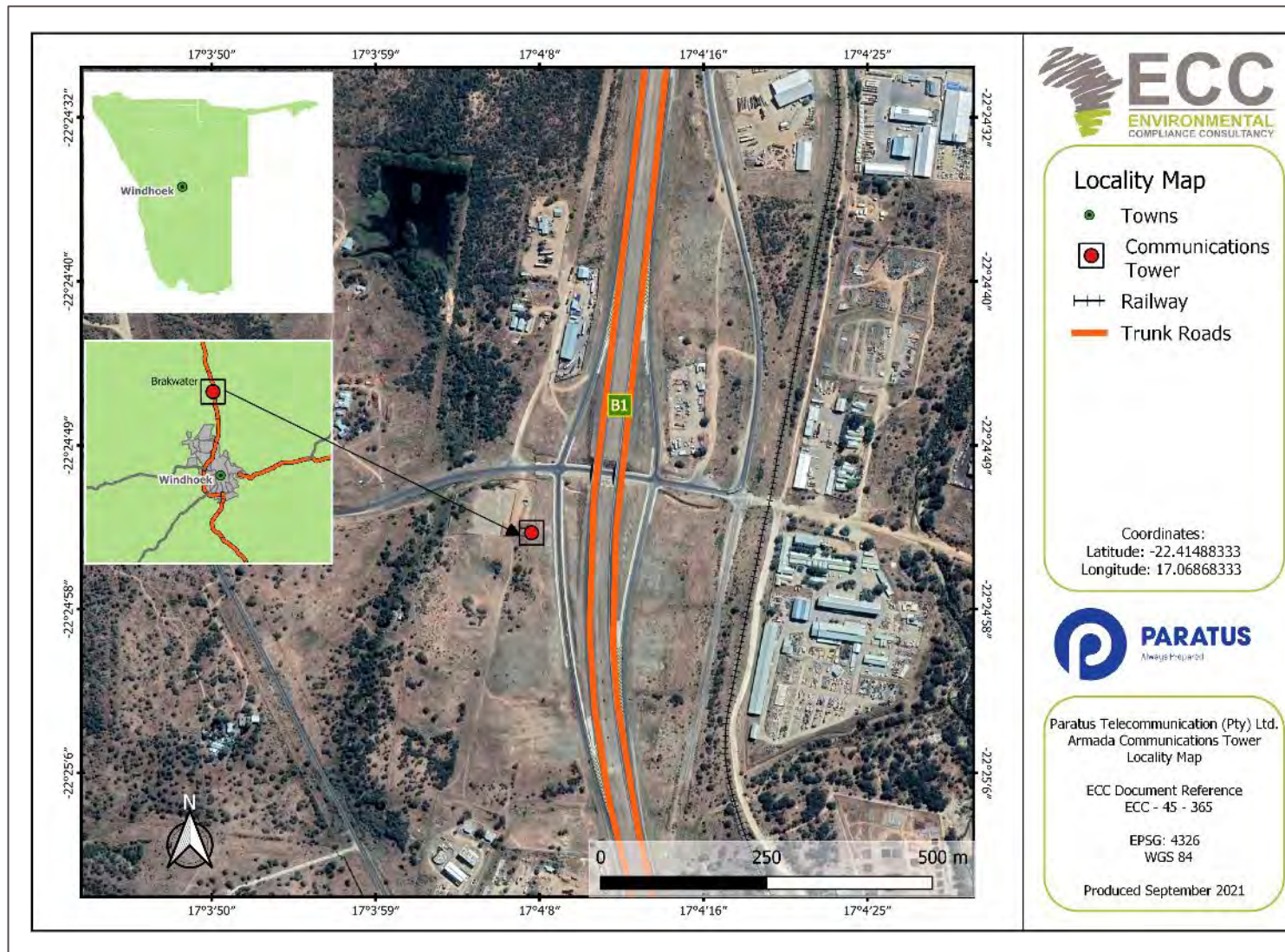


FIGURE 1 – LOCALITY MAP OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

2.7 POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

2.7.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC

The potential social impacts are anticipated to be of minor significance, these potential impacts may include the following:

- Some jobs will be created as a result of the proposed project;
- Potential traffic issues may be experienced during the construction phase;
- Some potential noise nuisances during construction;
- Potential visual impacts to possible sensitive receptors in close vicinity to the site, and
- Potential health and safety risks.

2.7.2 ENVIRONMENTAL

Due to the tower being proposed next to an existing Paratus Data Centre, which has already been rezoned the environmental impacts are expected to be minimal and non-significant the only more significant impacts identified were the:

- Potential impacts on bird species with regards collisions with the tower because of its height; and
- Potential radiation impacts on biodiversity (especially birds).

3 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

Best practice environmental assessment methodology calls for consideration and assessment of alternatives to a proposed project.

In a project such as this, it is difficult to identify alternatives to satisfy the need of the proposed project as the chosen location is paramount to the optimal functioning of the technology; the activities will be specific to the site. The current proposed site has been

identified as the best option for the tower as it will be constructed on Erf 361 next to the Paratus data centre.

4 THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

This ESIA, conducted by ECC, is undertaken in terms of the Environmental Management Act, 2007 and its regulations. The process followed in this ESIA is set out in the flowchart in Figure 2.

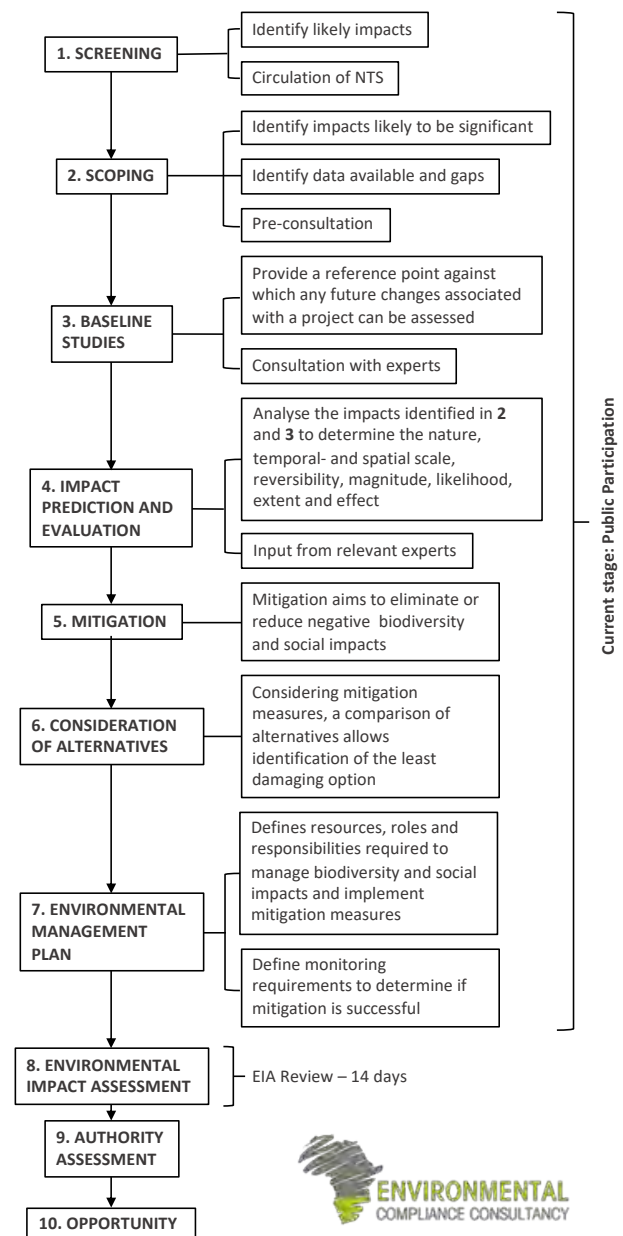


FIGURE 2 - FLOWCHART OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

4.1 SCREENING

A review of the proposed project screening findings against the listed activities was conducted; the findings of which are summarised below.

The potential environmental and social impacts are anticipated to be of minor to medium significance (with mitigation), and those that may occur shall be contained within and surrounding the site (i.e. Radiation).

INFRASTRUCTURE

(10.1.) The construction of:

(g) Communication networks including towers, telecommunication, and marine telecommunication lines and cables.

- Construction of a base transceiver station and associated infrastructure.

(j) masts of any material or type and of any height, including those used for telecommunication broadcasting and radio transmission.

- High-Performance Point-to-Point Microwave Antenna and Panel antenna will form part of the tower.

4.2 SCOPING

Due to the nature of the proposed project, and the implementation of best practice mitigation measures during the construction and operational phases of the project, the effects on the environment and society are expected to be minimal and localised.

4.3 BASELINE STUDIES

For the proposed project, baseline information was obtained through a desk-based study and site verification processes by focusing on the environmental receptors that

could be affected by the proposed project. ECC will also engage with stakeholders, I&APs and the proponents to seek input into the assessment.

4.4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Impacts will be assessed using the ECC ESIA methodology. The ESIA will be conducted in terms of the Environmental Management Act, 2007 and its regulations. ECC's methodology for impact assessments was developed using IFC standards in particular Performance Standard 1 'Assessment and management of environmental and social risks and impacts' (IFC 2012, 2017) and Namibian Draft Procedures and Guidance for ESIA and EMP (GRN, 2008) including international and national best practice with over 25 years of combined ESIA experience.

4.5 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

An EMP shall be developed for the proposed project setting out auditable management actions for the proponent to ensure careful and sustainable management measures are implemented for their activities in respect of the surrounding environment and community.

4.6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ADVERTISING

Public participation is an important part of the ESIA process; it allows the public and other stakeholders to raise concerns or provide valuable local environmental knowledge that can benefit the assessment, in addition, it can aid the design process. This project is currently at the scoping phase and public participation phase.

At this stage ECC will perform the following:

- Identify key stakeholders, authorities, municipalities, environmental groups and

interested or affected members of the public, hereafter referred to as I&APs;

- Distribute the BID for the proposed project (this document);
- Advertise the environmental application in two national newspapers;
- Place notices on-site at or near the boundary;
- If required host a public meeting to encourage stakeholder participation and engagement, and provide details of issues identified by the environmental practitioner, stakeholders and I&APs;
- Record all comments of I&APs and present such comments, as well as responses provided by ECC, in the comments and responses report, which will be included in the scoping report that shall be submitted with the application, and
- Circulate I&AP comments to the project team for consideration of project design.

Comments must be submitted in writing and can be emailed using the details in the contact us section below.

CONTACT US

We welcome any enquiries regarding this document and its content. Please contact:

Environmental Compliance Consultancy (ECC)

info@eccenvironmental.com

Tel: +264 81 669 7608

www.eccenvironmental.com

At ECC we make sure all information is easily accessible to the public.

Follow us online to be kept up to date:

