



Submitted to: Paratus Telecommunications (Pty) Ltd  
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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT:**

# **THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A BASE TRANSCEIVER STATION (BTS) TOWER AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PARATUS TELECOMMUNICATIONS (PTY) LTD ON ERF 398, OUTJO EAST, KUNENE REGION, NAMIBIA**

**PROJECT NUMBER:** ECC-45-569-BID-02-A

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## **TITLE AND APPROVAL PAGE**

Project Name: The Proposed construction and operation of a base transceiver station (BTS) tower and associated infrastructure for Paratus Telecommunications (Pty) Ltd on Erf 398, Outjo East, Kunene Region, Namibia

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Client Name: Mr Edward Esterhuyse

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## ABBREVIATIONS

| Abbreviation   | Description                                           |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| BID            | background information document                       |
| BTS            | base transceiver station                              |
| DEA            | Directorate of Environmental Affairs                  |
| EAP            | environmental assessment practitioner                 |
| ECC            | Environmental Compliance Consultancy (Pty) Ltd        |
| ESIA           | environmental and social impact assessment            |
| EMA            | Environmental Management Act No. 7 of 2007            |
| EMP            | environmental management plan                         |
| ESIA           | environmental and social impact assessment            |
| I&APs          | interested and affected parties                       |
| km             | kilometre                                             |
| Ltd            | limited                                               |
| m              | metre                                                 |
| m <sup>2</sup> | square metre                                          |
| MEFT           | Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism         |
| MICT           | Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology |
| Paratus        | Paratus Telecommunication (Pty) Ltd                   |
| Pty            | proprietary                                           |
| RoD            | record of decision                                    |
| ToR            | terms of reference                                    |

# 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document has been compiled to provide interested and affected parties (I&APs) with an introduction to the scope of work for the proposed construction and operation of a Paratus Telecommunication (Pty) Ltd base transceiver station (BTS) tower and associated infrastructure on Erf 398, Outjo East, in the Kunene Region, Namibia.

Environmental Compliance Consultancy (Pty) Ltd. (ECC) has been engaged by Paratus Telecommunications (Pty) Ltd. (herein referred to as the Proponent or Paratus) as the environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) to undertake an environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA) for the proposed Project in terms of the Environmental Management Act No. 7 2007 (EMA) and its Regulations of 2012. ECC has determined in terms of Section 32 (1) of the EMA that the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology (MICT) is the competent authority for the proposed Project. However, an environmental clearance certificate application will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) for a record of decision (RoD).

This background information document (BID) serves to invite I&APs to register as part of the environmental scoping and assessment process. A platform for I&APs to submit comments, concerns or recommendations will be established and all registered I&APs will be informed about the proposed Project as the ESIA process advances.

This BID includes the following information:

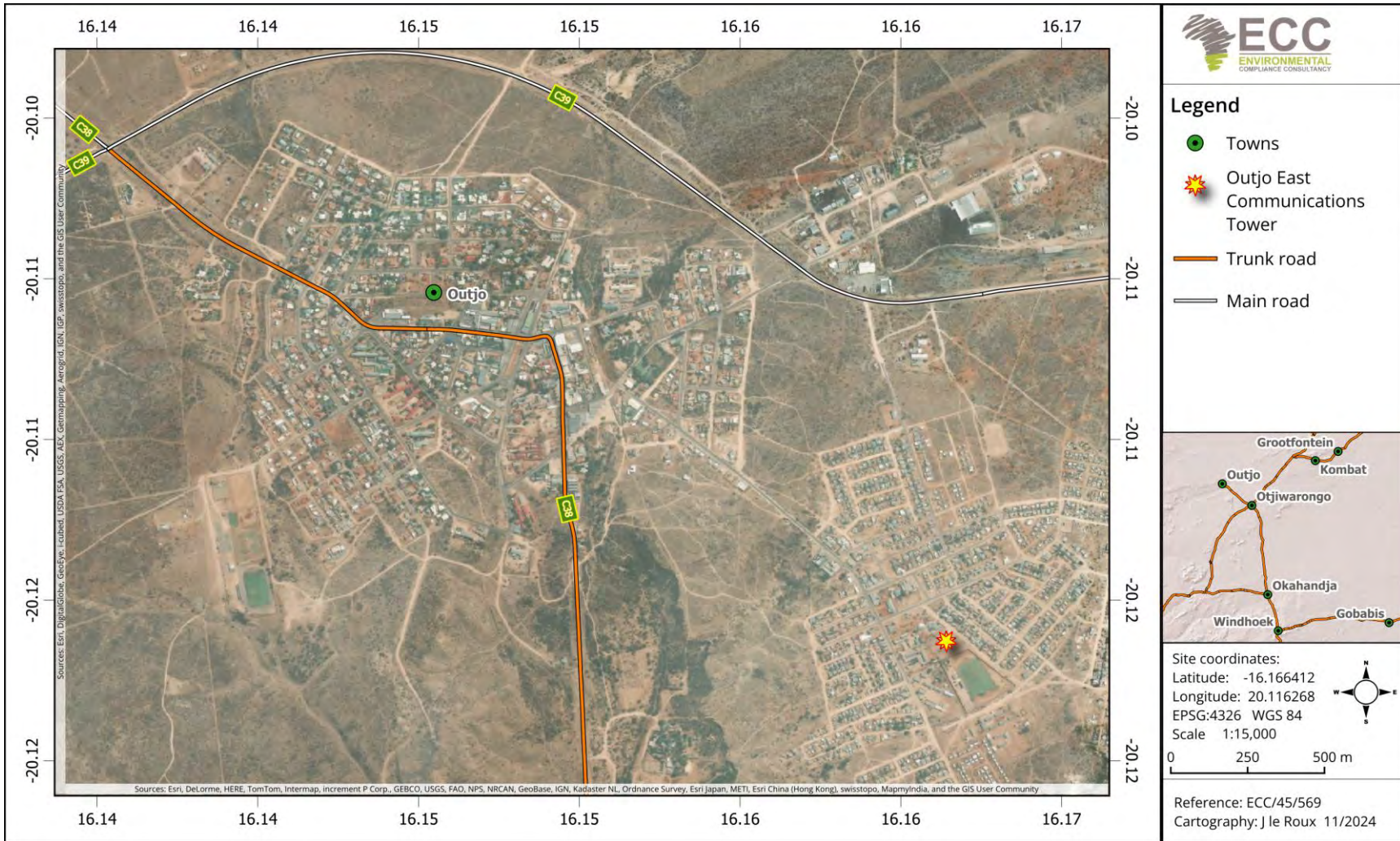
- The proposed Project and location;
- The necessity of the Project, potential benefits or adverse impacts anticipated;
- The alternatives that were considered;
- How the ESIA process works;
- The public participation process and how to become involved; and
- Next steps and the way forward.

## 1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The Proponent proposes to construct and operate a 30 m BTS tower (a lattice self-supporting steel structure), along with associated infrastructure on Erf 398, Outjo East. Land use approval for this Project has been issued by the Outjo Municipality. The BTS tower will improve and provide adequate transmission and reception of telecommunication service signal to the residents and business operators.

### 1.3 PROJECT LOCATION

The town of Outjo lies approximately 70 km west of Otjiwarongo and 112 km south of the renowned Etosha National Park. The Project site (i.e. Erf 398) is located within a well-established residential and recreational space, characterised by a mix of residential properties, schools, retail shops, churches, sports ground, municipal and regional government offices. The Project site itself covers an area of approximately 9 140 m<sup>2</sup>. The Project site is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1 - Location of the proposed Project site**

## 1.4 NEED FOR THE PROJECT

Paratus Telecommunication (Pty) Ltd (Paratus) is a multinational organisation and one of Africa's largest privately owned pan-African network operator. Paratus provides reliable, scalable satellite services and unlimited internet access to both businesses and residential customers. As such, Paratus is focused on growing its services through initiatives centred on ongoing infrastructure development.

The Project aims to significantly enhance mobile network coverage in and around Outjo. By improving both voice and data services, the Project will ensure better connectivity for residents, businesses and visitors. This will lead to more stable and high-quality mobile phone calls, faster internet speeds and improved overall network performance. The enhanced coverage will also support a higher number of simultaneous connections and an increase of data-driven appliances. Ultimately, the Project will contribute to greater accessibility, economic growth and improved quality of life through better mobile communication services. Employment opportunities will also be created during both the construction and operation/maintenance phases.

## 1.5 PROJECT DETAILS - CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATIONAL PHASES

### 1.5.1 CONSTRUCTION

It is expected that the construction phase will include low-impact and non-intrusive activities. The following activities are foreseen:

- Staging area development;
- Minor ground preparation (surface preparation and levelling) of the site;
- Storage and stockpiling of materials for the tower construction;
- Assembling of tower infrastructure;
- Installation of cables and wiring;
- Concrete casting;
- Commissioning transmitters; and
- Erecting a perimeter security fence.

### 1.5.2 OPERATION

A lattice tower is a free-standing structure that typically requires minimal maintenance. However, Paratus will proactively conduct routine inspections at regular intervals or as required. This will ensure that malfunctions or faults are timely maintained or repaired, which ensures the integrity and functionality of the tower and its associated infrastructure.

### 1.5.3 DECOMMISSIONING PHASE

In the case that the telecommunication infrastructure is deemed no longer required, the infrastructure would be decommissioned and dismantled. In such a case, arrangements for the safe disposal of all materials shall be coordinated with the Outjo Municipality.

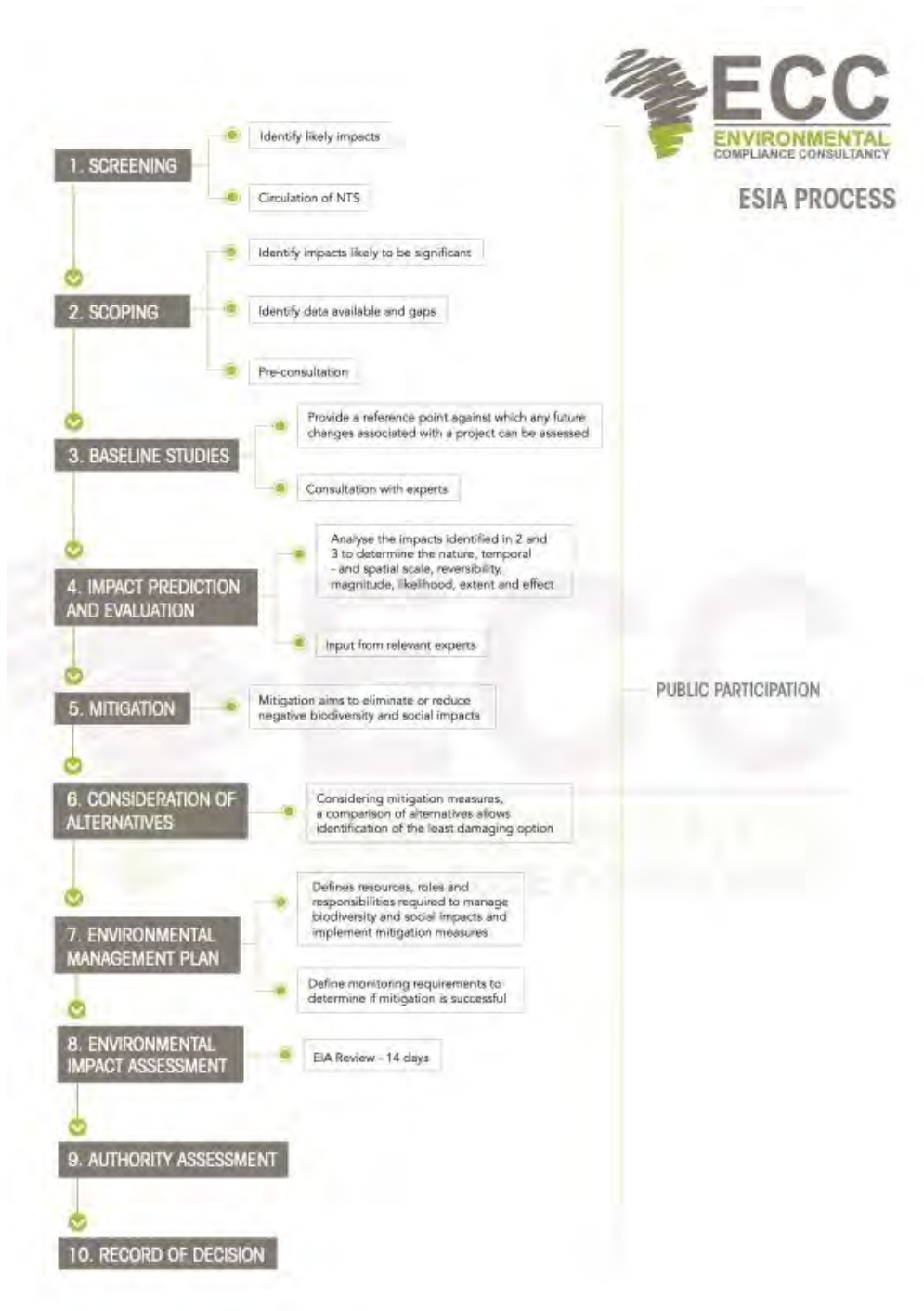
## 1.6 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

The land portion allocated for the Project is currently unoccupied. Land use approval has been granted by the Outjo Municipality and no other alternative locations/portions were explored.

Best practice environmental assessment methodology calls for consideration and assessment of alternatives to a proposed project. In this Project, it is difficult to identify alternatives to satisfy the need for the Project. During the assessment, the alternatives will take the form of consideration of optimisation and efficiency to reduce potential effects.

## 2 THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The ESIA is undertaken in terms of the EMA and its 2012 Regulations. The process followed for this ESIA is set out in the flowchart in Figure 2. The construction of a BTS tower and associated infrastructure triggers listed activities as per the EMA and its Regulations. The activities triggered are provided in Table 1.



**Figure 2 - Flowchart of the environmental and social assessment process**

The Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology (MICT) has been identified as the competent authority and will be consulted and engaged during the ESIA process. A final decision on the environmental clearance certificate application relating to the proposed Project will be made by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT); Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA).

The environmental scoping and impact assessment process will include:

1. Screening phase (completed);
2. Scoping phase, which includes baseline studies and consultation with key stakeholders and I&APs; and
3. Assessment Phase which includes impact prediction and evaluation of alternatives, assigning mitigation measures and developing conceptual monitoring plans. This phase culminates in the drafting of the ESIA report and draft environmental management plan (EMP) and submission to the appropriate competent authorities.

The main objectives of the ESIA are to:

1. Provide information describing the proposed Project and associated activities;
2. Provide an independent environmental impact social assessment of the activities associated with the proposed Project; and
3. Develop management and mitigation measures associated with any identified potential impacts, where necessary.

## 2.1 SCREENING

A review of the proposed Project was undertaken, and the findings of the screening exercise were compared against the listed activities; the findings are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1 - Listed activities triggered by the proposed Project**

| Listed activity as defined by the Regulations of the EMA                                                                                                                                                              | Screening findings and relevance to the Project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>infrastructure</b><br>(10.1) The construction of:<br>(g) Communication networks including towers, telecommunication lines and cables.<br>(j) Masts of any material or type and of any height, including those used | – A BTS tower and associated infrastructure will be constructed. The Project activities will include developing a staging area, surface preparation, levelling and establishing a storage and stockpiling area for materials and equipment. Key activities will include assembling tower materials, installing cables, wiring, casting concrete for the foundation, commissioning transmitters and erecting a perimeter security fence. An inspection and |

| Listed activity as defined by the Regulations of the EMA    | Screening findings and relevance to the Project                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| for telecommunication, broadcasting and radio transmission. | maintenance plan will be developed to enhance the performance of the tower which will guarantee consistent provision of reliable network service during operations. |

## 2.2 SCOPING

The scoping phase is directed towards defining the range and nature of anticipated potential impacts that may have significance to the biophysical and social environments at the scale of the proposed operations. The appropriate available data and the literature are identified forming the starting point for the assessment of the required baseline and specialist studies that may be required for assessment of the Project impacts.

### 2.2.1 BASELINE STUDIES

For the proposed Project, baseline information will be obtained through the existing studies. The focus will be on environmental and social receptors that could be affected by the proposed Project. ECC will also engage the stakeholders, I&APs and the Proponent to seek input into the assessment, and should it be required, specialist studies will be initiated.

### 2.2.2 STAKEHOLDER/I&APS ENGAGEMENT

The public and key stakeholders receive invitations to register as I&APs. After the presentation of the proposed Project and ESIA process through the defined public consultation process, a period for input will be granted for the environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) to receive any additional concerns or comments from registered I&APs. All feedback from the initial public consultation process will be incorporated into the scoping report.

### 2.2.3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Based on the stakeholder engagement through the defined public consultation process, including any written correspondence and the baseline studies, the terms of reference (ToR) for the impact assessment may be finalised and submitted to the office of the Environmental Commissioner for approval.

## 2.3 SCOPING AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

The scoping and impact assessment report will be drafted and made available to the registered I&APs for comment before being submitted to the competent authority and MEFT. The scoping section of the report will contain a description of the Project and the biophysical and socio-economic environments, the specialist baseline studies (if any) and the stakeholder engagement report.

The impact assessment section will include ECC's ESIA methodology, a discussion on the potential impacts that have been identified and are likely to be triggered, an evaluation of the impact ratings and the management and mitigation measures to minimise the impacts.

#### 2.3.1 POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The potential social and environmental impacts should be considered with due regard to the nature and scale of the proposed Project. The potential environmental impacts that have been anticipated may include the following:

- Impact on the viewshed in the surrounding Project area;
- Improved network coverage on enhanced mobile internet access and other services;
- The impacts of electromagnetic radiation emitted from antennae on human health;
- Potential risk of avifauna collision with the telecommunication tower;
- Potential disturbance to heritage object or resources; and
- Job creation, skills development and transferability.

Additional potential impacts may be identified upon consultation with the I&APs and key stakeholders.

#### 2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

An environmental management plan (EMP) shall be developed for the proposed Project setting out auditable management actions to ensure careful and sustainable management measures are implemented for activities in respect of the surrounding environment and community. The EMP becomes the legally binding commitments upon approval by MEFT and the issuing of the environmental clearance certificate. An environmental clearance certificate is valid for a period of three years and renewal is subject to compliance with the provisions and conditions of the environmental clearance certificate and the EMP.

### 3 THE WAY FORWARD – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is an important part of the ESIA process. It allows you, the public and stakeholders to raise concerns or provide valuable local environmental knowledge that can benefit the assessment process, as well as aid the planning process for the scoping phase of the defined assessment process. At this phase, ECC will perform the following:

- Prepare and submit the application for the environmental clearance certificate in the prescribed manner;
- Identify relevant key stakeholders, authorities, municipalities, environmental groups and interested or affected members of the public, hereafter referred to as I&APs;
- Carry out a public consultation process in accordance with Regulation 21 of the EMA 2007 including:
  - o Distribute the BID for the proposed construction and operation of a BTS tower and associated infrastructure (this document).
  - o Advertise the environmental application and call for registration of I&AP's in two national newspapers.
  - o Open an I&AP register and 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.
- Prepare a scoping (with impact assessment) report and provide the same to registered I&APs for commentary; and
- Submit the scoping (with impact assessment) report and the I&AP comments to the competent authority and to the office of the Environmental Commissioner for a record of decision.

Your request for registration as an I&AP, as well as any comments on the BID or Project, must be submitted in writing and can be emailed using the details in the “contact us” section below. Registration as an I&AP for the Project can be completed online on ECC's website via the “projects” page, or by using this link: <https://eccenvironmental.com/projects/>

Registration as an I&AP should be submitted on or before 31 December 2024.

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

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