



PROPOSED WIND ENERGY FACILITY EIA PROCESS

RECORD OF FOCUS GROUP MEETING

MATZIKAMA BUSINESS CHAMBER, VREDENDAL

Held on
Wednesday 25 July 2007,
Vredendal Library

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**FOCUS GROUP MEETING:
MATZIKAMA BUSINESS CHAMBER, VREDENDAL**

Venue: Vredendal Library
Date: Wednesday, 25 July 2007
Time: 17:30

WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

Shawn Johnston, the process facilitator for the proposed Eskom Wind Energy Facility Public Participation Process opened the meeting. He provided an overview of the project and the process that lead up to the current phase of the environmental impact assessment process. He then introduced the core team present from Eskom and Savannah Environmental.

- » Nico Gewers - Chief Environmental Advisor - Generation Environmental Management
- » Morore Mashoa - Chief Engineer - Division Client Office. Acts as the client for Generation.
- » Kubentheran Nair - EIA project manager from Eskom Generation
- » Bessie Mabondza – Eskom Project Manager
- » Karen Jodas – Savannah Environmental, undertaking the EIA for the project
- » Shawn Johnston - Sustainable Futures ZA, the public participation consultant for the project

MEETING ATTENDEES

- » Russel Geldenhuys, Spar Vredendal
- » Steyn Hendriks, ABSA Vredendal
- » Helmar Wobbe, Namakwa Sands Koekenaap
- » Therese Kotze, Battery Centre Vredendal (Business Chamber secretary)
- » Wilhelm Loff, Matzikama Municipality
- » Nico Gewers – Eskom Generation
- » Kubentheran Nair – Eskom Generation
- » Bessie Mabondza – Eskom Projects
- » Morore Mashao – Eskom Generation
- » Karen Jodas – Savannah Environmental
- » Shawn Johnston – Sustainable Futures ZA

BACKGROUND & TECHNICAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE PROPOSED PROJECT

It was discussed that, as this was the second interaction with the Matzikama Business Chamber regarding the proposed Eskom Wind Energy Facility, some information presented

may be a repetition of information provided in the first meeting. The first session was during the Regional Assessment process.

A formal presentation was delivered to the attendees. This presentation covered the following:

- » A strategic overview of Eskom's current initiatives and future generation plan (presented by Nico Gewers);
- » A overview of the Regional Assessment and Environmental Assessment Processes (presented by Karen Jodas);
- » A technical overview of the proposed Wind Energy Facility (presented by Morore Mashao).

The detailed information and presentations delivered by Nico Gewers, Karen Jodas and Morore Mashao are attached for reference.

After completing all the presentations, the facilitator opened the floor for points of clarification and questions.

DISCUSSION SESSION

It was noted that this meeting unfortunately coincided with the AGM of the Matzikama Tourism Association, and so not all interested parties were in attendance. The following questions were raised:

- » *There are few real benefits from the project in terms of job opportunities. The real benefit of the project lies in the fact that the fuel is wind – which is free.*

There are few people required for the installation of the facility. Indirect spin-offs are anticipated, specifically from the tourism sector. This will be the biggest wind energy facility in Africa, and from numbers recorded at the Klipheuwel facility, there is interest in viewing/visting such a facility (recorded 4000 people officially visiting Klipheuwel).

- » *How many houses can be supplied by such a facility?*
Up to 500 standard homes can be supplied by one unit when it is operating optimally.
- » *What will be the cost to the consumer in terms of electricity? How will it compare to current prices?*

This facility is only a small part of the Eskom fleet. It will not affect electricity costs to consumers. These are pre-determined. As a standalone facility, it is a cost-effective installation as the cost of fuel is zero, albeit that capital costs for establishment are high.

- » *Are any show stoppers foreseen for this project?*
The project has Eskom Board approval. Eskom is committed for a wind energy facility to be generating by 2010. From Eskom's perspective, there is also Government support for renewables projects. There may, however, be issues arising out of the EIA, but these will be determined.
- » *Have other farms/properties also been investigated?*

A regional site identification process identified the area as a study area. Other properties in the area have also been investigated, but this is the study area under investigation in this EIA.

- » *Has solar energy been considered for this area?*

Heat is required for energy generation with solar. This heat is affected by the windy conditions. Eskom have submitted an EIA for a pilot concentrating power plant in the Northern Cape near Upington, and are awaiting a decision. Other renewable are also being looked at from a research perspective, but Eskom focuses on mature technologies.

- » *The DePunt and Skaapvlei roads (the access road through the site) are used by locals when accessing crayfishing spots along the coast.*

- » *Where is the equipment/units coming from? Are they locally produced?*

There is no local supplier of the turbines themselves. They will be sourced internationally. However, Eskom would support suppliers using local companies to manufacture some of the components (e.g. sections of the tower), where feasible.

- » *Can the Saldana Railway Line service road be used to transport equipment instead of the existing national/provincial roads?*

This would need to be investigated with the relevant Departments and managers of the service road. This can be investigated as an option in the transportation study.

WAY FORWARD AND CLOSURE

The secretary of the Matzikama Business Chamber undertook to disseminate the Wind Energy Background Information document to all the current members of the Business Chamber.

Mr Johnston thanked everybody for their participation and questions. The attendees were informed that the next steps in the EIA process are:

- » distribution of notes from the meeting;
- » release of the draft Scoping Report for public review and comment;
- » notification of the public meeting; and
- » hold the public meeting in August 2007.

The meeting was closed at 18h50.