

# **SCOPING REPORT: TOURISM**

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE  
PROPOSED WIND ENERGY FACILITY AND  
ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AT A SITE IN THE  
WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This report was prepared by Dr Mike Fabricius, who is an international tourism consultant. Dr Fabricius has more than 15 years experience in tourism management and holds a PhD specialising in social impact assessment and an MBL specialising in tourism management. Prior to establishing tourism a consultancy practice in 2004 he served, among others, as Director of Domestic Tourism of South African Tourism, Chief Director of Tourism in the national Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and CEO of the Western Cape Tourism Board, where he was responsible for coordinating tourism management and marketing across the Western Cape province.

The author is not related or connected to any of the entities involved in the construction, land ownership or other potential key aspects of the proposed development and the opinions expressed here are solely those of the author.

The background, scope of work and methodology pertaining to this report are as follows:

### **1.1 Background**

Eskom has undertaken a regional site identification and selection process for a broader study area on the West Coast (the Olifants River as the southern boundary and the Northern Cape-Western Cape provincial boundary as the northern boundary) to determine and delineate areas suitable for wind energy development. This process was based on the regional assessment methodology developed and implemented by Western Cape DEA&DP and included the consideration of sites/areas of special environmental importance and planning criteria, as well as issues relating to landscape character, value, sensitivity and capacity. These aspects were then balanced with technical constraining factors affecting the siting of a wind farm, including the wind resource (wind potential diminishing with distance from the coastline), land availability, accessibility and existing grid infrastructure. The discussion of technical factors affecting the placement of a Wind Energy Facility is provided in a Regional Assessment report. Through this siting study, an area which falls within the Matzikama Local Municipality is now considered as potentially suitable for the wind energy development (as indicated on the map attached as Annexure 2). This area (> 35km<sup>2</sup> in extent) comprises the farms:

- Portion 5 of the farm Gravewaterkop 158
- Portion 620 of the farm Olifants Rivier Nedersetting
- Portion 617 of the farm Olifants Rivier Nedersetting

The wind farm is proposed to accommodate up to 100 turbines. The performance of the turbines is also determined by disturbances to the wind resource, which requires that they are appropriately spaced, and turbines would, therefore, be positioned over an area of approximately 25km<sup>2</sup>. As local level issues were not assessed in sufficient detail at the regional level, these issues are now required to be considered within site-specific studies and assessments through the EIA in order to delineate areas of sensitivity within the broader area. Once constraining factors have been determined, the layout of the wind turbines and infrastructure can be planned. The overall aim is to maximise electricity production through exposure to the wind resource, while minimising infrastructure, operation and maintenance costs, and social and environmental impacts. A micro-siting exercise

will be undertaken by Eskom to provide their proposed turbine footprints, and these will be available for assessment in the EIA Phase.

It is proposed that up to 100 turbines (the capacity will be dictated by availability, but would be from 1,5 MW) will be established. Basic details pertaining to infrastructure associated with the establishment of the proposed wind energy facility include:

- 100 turbine units (approximately 78 m tower, hub height 80m, 90m diameter rotor (3x45 m blades), 9 – 14,9 rpm,)
- a concrete foundation of 15m x 15m for each turbine,
- an access road to the site from the main road/s within the area,
- internal access road to access each wind turbine
- a substation on the site in an appropriate central position, with underground distribution/cabling to each wind turbine
- overhead powerline (132 kV distribution line) feeding into the electricity distribution network/grid at Koekenaap Substation (approximately 25km).
- Possibly a small office building and visitors centre at the facility entrance – approximately 150m sq in extent.

A practical layout could begin with the first row of turbines 2km inland from the coastline to optimise the wind resource, while still exercising sensitivity regarding proximity to the west coast coastline. The next row would be slightly offset further inland roughly separated 500m to 800m.

In terms of the area indicated on the map (Annexure 2) – the assumption should be made that although during operation the area affected will comprise 100 turbines (15x15m foundation area), access roads and a substation, during construction the bulk of the area “inside” the depicted footprint could suffer disturbance.

Other associated infrastructure includes the access road and 132kV powerline to connect to the grid. The existing access route to the site via Koekenaap would be considered as the first option for providing access to the site, and modifications will be made to the route where required. In addition, the preference is for the powerline to follow the access route as closely as possible, which will also allow for access to the powerline and ensure consolidation of the linear infrastructure. The actual point of connection to the grid is, however, not yet finalised, although the proposal at this stage is to connect to the existing Koekenaap Substation.

In terms of sections 24 and 24D of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998), as read with Government Notices R385 (Regulations 27–36) and R387, a Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment are required to be undertaken for the proposed wind energy facility and associated infrastructure. The following report scopes the potential tourism issues and impacts related to the proposed development.

## **1.2 Scope of work**

### ***1.2.1 Overall purpose of the tourism assessment***

The purpose of the assessment will be to determine the effect of the social, biophysical, visual, noise and other relevant impacts resulting from the proposed wind energy facility on the tourism potential of the study area. The term ‘tourism potential’ refers to current tourism flows to the area as well as the potential of

the area's resources – landscape, heritage, vegetation, cultural patterns, marine environment, etc. – to attract tourists in the future.

The overall aims of the study are as follows:

- Review available plans and strategies pertaining to tourism in the study area as contained in the relevant local, regional and provincial planning frameworks, such as Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), tourism-specific strategies and spatial frameworks and other relevant documents, in order to determine the strategic direction and guidelines for tourism in the area, the compatibility of the proposed wind energy facility with the vision for tourism, priority areas for tourism development and preferred types of tourism.
- Provide a description of local and regional tourism demand patterns.
- Identify long-term tourism planning frameworks and tourism projects located in the study area, or those currently in the pipeline.
- Obtain information regarding current demand levels, tourism flow patterns and tourism market characteristics.
- Obtain feedback regarding the potential impacts of the wind energy facility on the tourism potential of the area.
- Identify visitation patterns (points of interest, duration of visits, seasonality, activities undertaken, etc.) and characteristics of visitors.
- Consider the findings of related specialist studies, e.g. noise pollution, visual impact, heritage impacts, etc. and assess the implications of these findings on the tourism potential of the area.
- Assess the effect of the proposed mitigating measures for the identified impacts on the significance of the impact for the tourism potential of the area.

### ***1.2.2 Purpose of this scoping report***

Some of the above-mentioned aims are site-specific and will be addressed during the EIA phase of the study. As input to the scoping phase, this report aims to provide:

- A description of tourism environment for affected area;
- An identification and description of actual or potential tourism issues that may arise or be affected by the Wind Energy Facility;
- An evaluation of the significance of these issues;
- A scope of work for EIA phase;
- An identification of gaps in information, which need to be addressed through EIA.

### **1.3 Methodology**

The following methods were employed to conduct the scoping assessment:

- Studying and analysing existing reports and studies related to tourism in the area. These included the West Coast District Municipality Integrated Development Framework (2007/8), the West Coast District Municipality Tourism Strategy, the Western Cape Provincial Governments Integrated Tourism Development Framework and data and statistics obtained from the website of Cape Town Routes Unlimited, the official tourism promotion body for the province.
- Visiting the study area and carrying out a visual inspection of the broader terrain under consideration.
- Attending meetings and interviews conducted with stakeholders and gaining stakeholder input regarding tourism aspects of the study area.

## **2. POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE WIND ENERGY FACILITY ON THE TOURISM STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE AREA**

In terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and subsequent governance Acts and policies, tourism is a concurrent responsibility of national, provincial, district and local governments. The various governance tiers have the responsibility to plan, facilitate and promote tourism within their areas of jurisdiction.

The following section provides an overview of key strategic directives for the area and the possible impacts of the wind energy facility on these.

### **2.1 National level directives**

At a national level the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) is responsible for devising and coordinating a national tourism development framework, with SA Tourism being the marketing and promotion arm of the national government. The DEAT has engaged in various national tourism development frameworks, including the Priority Areas for Tourism Infrastructure Investment (PATII) initiative a spatial tourism prioritisation exercise to update the PATII and identify priority areas for tourism development and government support.

*None of these national planning initiatives have identified the West Coast as a priority development area and it is not foreseen that the facility will have any substantial effects on the execution of national tourism frameworks.*

While SA Tourism's Domestic and International Tourism Growth Strategies are primarily promotional frameworks and do not address spatial guidelines or priorities for tourism expansion, they should nonetheless be considered in future planning initiatives. The implications of these are dealt with in section 3 of this report, which deals with the impact of the proposed facility on tourism demand.

### **2.2 Provincial level directives**

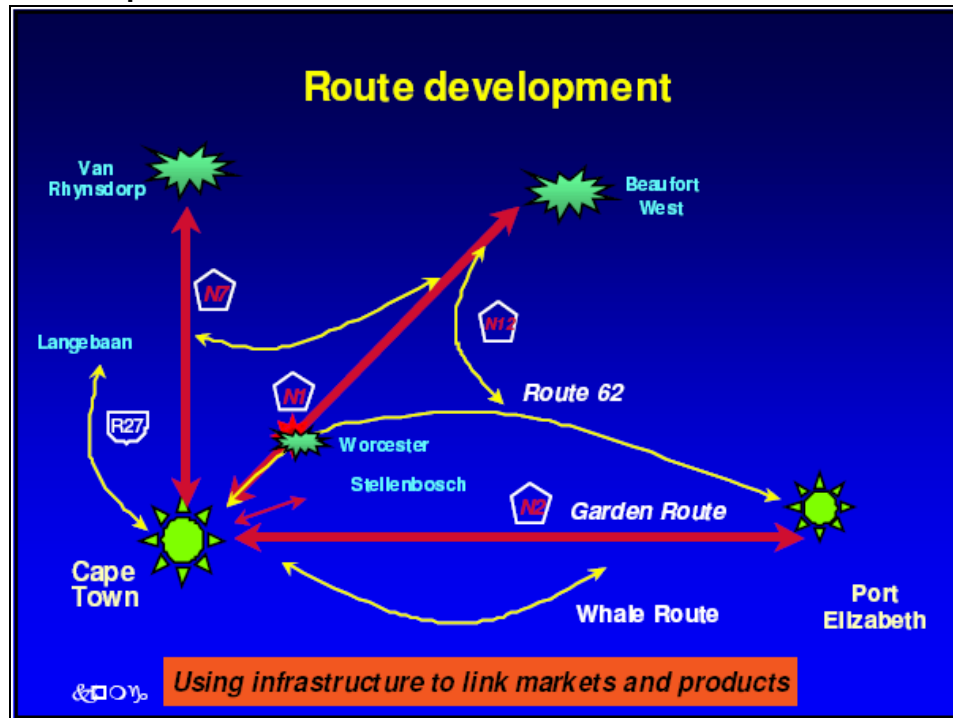
The Western Cape Provincial Government's (Department of Economic Affairs and Tourism) tourism development framework is the Integrated Tourism Development Framework (ITDF). The document provides an outline situation analysis of tourism, a spatial development framework and investment framework as action plan for implementation. A further initiative that may be of importance to the study area is the development and promotion of the N7 Cape to Namibia route, a joint initiative between the tourism authorities of the Western Cape, Northern Cape and Namibia.

#### **2.2.1 The ITDF**

The spatial framework identifies a number of priority development nodes in the Western Cape, classified according to their roles in the tourism flow process, i.e. as tourism gateways, staging posts, distribution points and destinations. The framework identifies nine such development areas including i) Mossel Bay/George/Oudtshoorn area; ii) Cape Aghulas area; iii) Overstrand; iv) Winelands Triangle (Stellenbosch/Paarl/Franschoek); v) the Northern Gateway (Beaufort West); vi) Langebaan/Velddrift; vii) the Cederberg Gateway; viii) the Eastern Gateway (Storms River/Plettenberg Bay/Knysna; and x) the Cape Town Metropole area. The approach taken in the document is one of anticipating tourism movement through the province and facilitating such flows through catalytic development projects along specific routes. *Figure 1* below provides a graphic outline of the proposed route development framework.

As can be seen from *Figure 1* the N7 route along the West Coast is regarded as one of the key access and exit routes to the Province. The route “loops” between Cape Town and Langebaan, and the entrance point/gateway at Van Rhynsdorp is highlighted as key nodes along the route.

**Fig. 1: Proposed route flows in the ITDF**



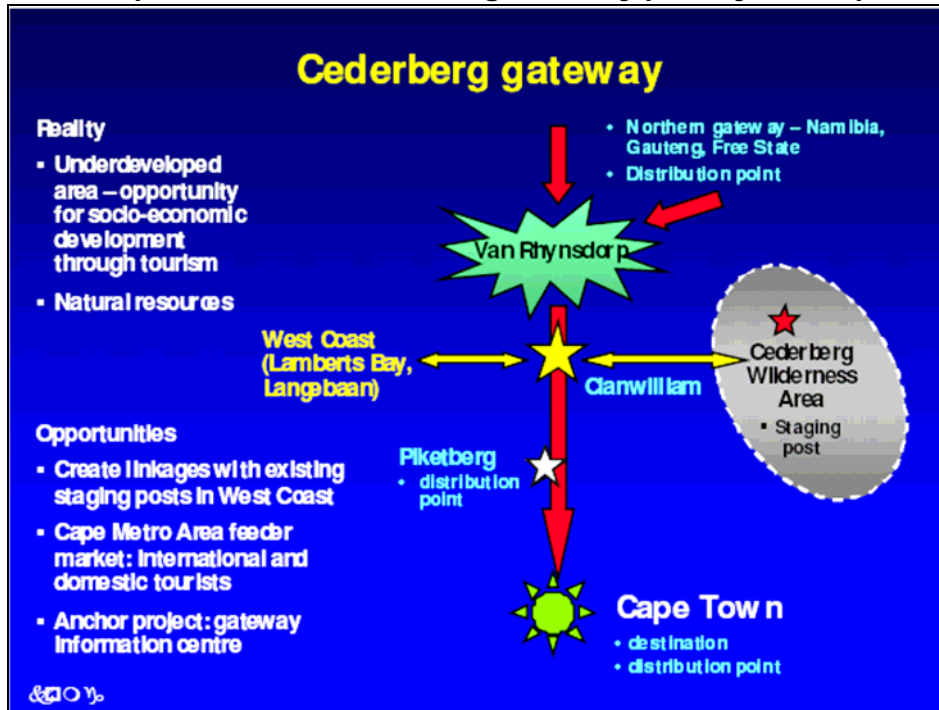
As is evident from the above-mentioned list of priority development areas, two such areas are located on the West Coast, namely the Langebaan/Velddrift area and the Cederberg Gateway. While the Langebaan/Velddrift area may offer some spin-off traffic to the study area it is primarily positioned as a short-distance “loop” from Cape Town to the West Coast. However, the Cederberg Gateway, as presented in *Figure 2* below, is positioned as a key entrance point to the province and increased tourist traffic through this gateway point will no doubt be of relevance to the study area.

Key ITDF recommendations pertaining to the Cederberg area include:

- upgrading of a 50 kilometre section of the N7 between Piekenierskloof Pass and Clanwilliam;
- agreement regarding the development of a Gateway status provincial information facility in the vicinity of Van Rhynsdorp; and
- creation of a southern information point for Citrusdal, Clanwilliam, Lamberts Bay and Cederberg Wilderness Area in vicinity of Piketberg.

*Although the growing importance of van Rhynsdorp as a tourism gateway could lead to an increase in tourism activity and infrastructure in the broader Vredendal area, there is no indication that the study area is specifically being targeted for future tourism expansion under the ITDF and it is not expected that the development of the wind energy facility will have any notable implications for the ITDF programme.*

Fig. 2 Components of the Cederberg Gateway priority development area.



### 2.2.2 The Cape to Namibia Route Initiative

The official tourism promotion agencies for the Western Cape (Cape Town Routes Unlimited), the Northern Cape (Northern Cape Tourism Authority) and Namibia (Namibia Tourism Board) have joined forces to launch the Cape Town-Namibia tourism route, which follows the N7 from Cape Town through the West Coast to Windhoek. The initiative has a dedicated website ([www.capenamibia.com](http://www.capenamibia.com)) and the three marketing bodies have signed an agreement whereby they undertake to promote the route, especially for tourist traffic from Europe that enters or exits through Namibia. While the initiative is still in its infancy the idea is to engage all product owners and role-players along the route and to position it as an alternative long range touring route to the traditional Johannesburg-Swaziland-Kwazulu Natal tour circuit. In describing the West Coast section of the route there is little mention on the [capenamibia.com](http://capenamibia.com) of the study area. The website mentions the succulents of the Knersvlakte and the Olifants River Wine Route, but under the beach, seafood and historic towns and villages the study area and surrounds are not mentioned.

Cape Town Routes Unlimited also promotes what is called the "Inland Route North (N7)" ([www.tourismcapetown.co.za](http://www.tourismcapetown.co.za)), which encompasses the Western Cape section of the N7 between Cape Town and Bitterfontein. The description of the route in CTRU marketing materials and on its website mentions The Cederberg as a main attraction and apart from a brief mention of the Olifants River Wine Route the focus of the route description is primarily on the southern and central parts of the West Coast (from Cape Town to the Cederberg).

*Similar to the ITDF the study area is not being targeted as a focal point on the Cape to Namibia Route. However, in the opinion of the author the construction of a major wind energy facility may well become a tourism drawcard along the route, which, if promoted could potentially lead to an increase in travelers veering off the main road and traveling via Lutzville to visit the facility. The Klipheuvel experimental wind energy facility site has received more than 4 000 recorded visits, indicating that there*



*is substantial interest in the concept. The proposed facility will no doubt receive major publicity and it is expected that visitor number could be substantial.*

### **2.3 District level directives**

The West Coast District Municipality (WCDM), the key public sector authority responsible for devising and implementing a tourism strategy for the West Coast has conducted two important tourism planning exercises, namely i) a West Coast Tourism Spatial Framework and Strategy Mapping (1999) and ii) a West Coast Tourism Implementation Strategy (2001).

#### **2.3.1 The West Coast Tourism Spatial Framework and Strategy Mapping**

The West Coast Tourism Spatial Framework maps out various tourism experiences including: ecotourism, adventure, entertainment and shopping, health and fitness, meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE), cultural tourism, sun and sand, cruising and events. Through identifying attraction clusters and linking these up into circuits, the spatial framework identifies tourism gateways, staging posts, distribution points, destinations and proposed tourism routes. Vredendal is indicated as a potential distribution point for visitors to the surrounding areas and one of the proposed four routes includes a one-day leg from Lamberts Bay to Vredendal, with an emphasis on culture, seafood and wine. None of the proposals include the coastline in the vicinity of the site. The reasons for this exclusion may be related to, among others, the limited access to the coast and the poor scenic and environmental state of the coastline due to heavy mining excavations conducted over many years. The rehabilitation of the coastline will no doubt require a major investment and long term approach and given the tourism development needs and opportunities south of the Olifants River Mouth

*The proposals contained in the West Coast Tourism Spatial Framework involve areas south of the Olifants River mouth. None of the proposals include the areas to the north of the Olifants River, where the proposed development site is located. While the structures may be visible from certain points along the proposed Lamberts Bay-Vredendal tourism route (see report on visual impacts), the level of visual impact is expected to be limited. Again, there is a possibility that the proposed route may be extended to accommodate special interest visitors who wish to extend their visit to Vredendal to pay a visit to the site (see comment under section 2.2.2).*

#### **2.3.2 The West Coast Tourism Implementation Strategy**

The vision contained in the West Coast Tourism Implementation Strategy is that:

*"The West Coast will be recognised and visited as a region of the Western Cape and will offer unique tourism experiences utilising its natural assets, regional hospitality, proximity to existing markets and its gateway opportunities. It will focus on developing the domestic markets and will be known for its distinctiveness. It will be a sustainable and viable industry, which is market driven and contributes to the improvement of the quality of life of all the communities of the West Coast Region."*

The overall objectives for tourism on the West Coast, as contained in the strategy are:

- to grow the levels of local, domestic and international tourism to and within the West Coast;

- to market the West Coast tourism products to identified target markets;
- to complement and cooperate with tourism marketing and development initiatives at national, provincial, and regional levels;
- to ensure the alignment and integration of tourism at all levels with the other planning, development, conservation, infrastructure and service departments and authorities;
- to create employment and facilitate human resource development;
- to integrate previously disadvantaged communities into the tourism industry;
- to facilitate the identification and development of tourism products which are in line with tourism demand;
- to stimulate and facilitate investment into the tourism industry;
- to maximise the economic impact of benefits flowing from tourism within the West Coast and minimise leakages; and
- to ensure the sustainable use of all tourism resources.

The specific medium term objectives of the strategy are to:

- grow domestic tourism by 4,5% per annum over the next five years
- grow foreign tourism by 10% per annum over the next five years.

The following target market segments are proposed: (in order of priority):

- Cape Town upper LSM 7 and LSM 8 Market, i.e. the A and B higher income groups;
- Gauteng and rest of South Africa upper LSM 7 and LSM 8;
- Foreign Tourists on their first or second visit to the West Coast;
- Foreign Tourists on their second or third visit to the West Coast;
- MICE;
- Special interest foreign tourists;
- Special interest domestic tourists;

The strategy proposes the following priority product types:

- General Interest West Coast Tours with the following general market interests:
  - Flowers
  - Adventure
  - Wine routes
  - Whales
  - Coastal experiences and culture
  - Basic sun, sea and sand
  - Mountains and wilderness
  - Nature and scenic tours
- Special Interest:
  - Bird watching
  - Botanical

The high growth target for foreign visitors implies that there will be a high reliance on areas closer to Cape Town (the main gateway) and that international visitor numbers will reduce as the distance from Cape Town increases.

*While the area south of the Olifants River mouth on the coast and the Cederberg Wilderness inland has significant growth potential as a tourism, ecotourism and heritage route, the study area north of the Olifants River mouth is not particularly rich in any of the products targeted in the West Coast Tourism Strategy and is not expected to become a key tourism area in the long-term.*

This tourism focus on the coastline south of the Olifants River is underscored by the proposals for infrastructure investment contained in the strategy, including:

- A fishing museum and cultural experience – targeted at domestic and international visitors and located in one of the key tourism towns from Lamberts Bay southwards;
- Seaplane from Mykonos to Lamberts Bay;
- Local crafts and curios – targeted at key tourism nodes such as Langebaan, Clan William and Lamberts Bay;
- Conference facilities with accommodation – targeted not more than 2 hours from Cape Town;
- Middle market resort – targeted for the area south of the Olifants River
- Upmarket accommodation facilities as the coastal equivalent of Bushman's Kloof – Paternoster area;
- Wine route restaurants and opening times to be extended – especially for weekend visitors from Cape Town;
- Existing public resorts – located south of the Olifants River.

*The product development proposals contained in the West Coast Tourism Strategy do not include products to the north of the Olifants River mouth and in the vicinity of the study area.*

### **3. POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE WIND ENERGY FACILITY ON MARKET DEMAND**

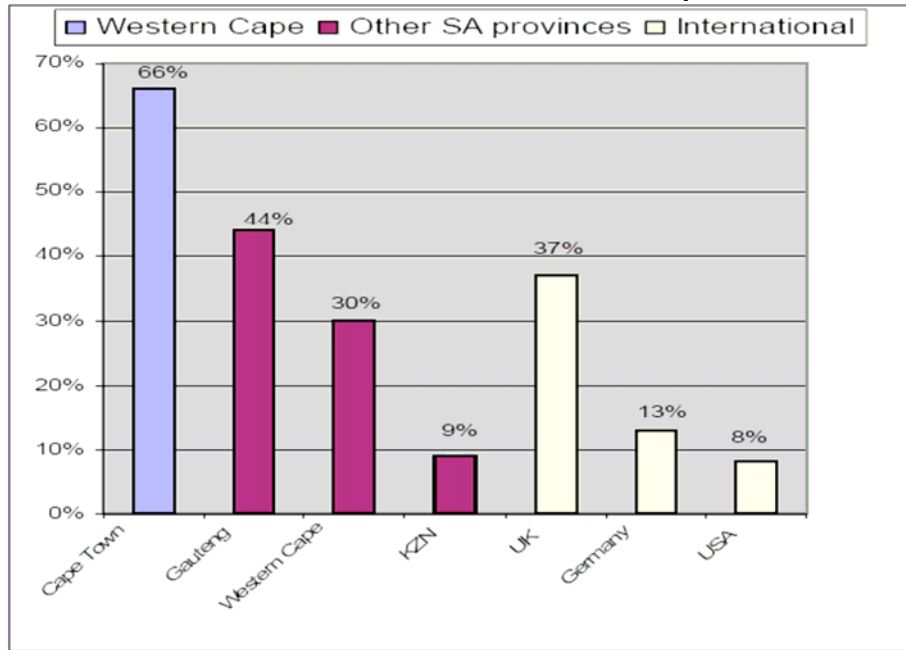
The following section provides an outline of the potential impact of the facility on general market trends and specific market segment potential of the study area.

#### **3.1 Impacts on general market trends**

Figure 3 below presents the Western Cape's tourism source markets, based on a survey conducted by Cape Town Routes Unlimited (CTRU) during the 2006/7 festive period. Typically, the majority of international visitors were from Europe (67%), whereas a significantly large percentage (11%) came from the North Americas (Canada and USA). With the exception of Africa (10%), the other continents/regions were below ten percent. The UK visitors dominated (37%), followed by Germany (13%), USA (8%) and the Netherlands (7%).

The majority of the South African visitors sampled in the Western Cape survey were from Gauteng (44%), Western Cape (30%), and KZN (9%), while the other provinces represented 5% or less of the domestic visitors surveyed. The intra-provincial visitors primarily originated from the Cape Town region (66%), and Winelands (15%) (Figure 3). One fifth of international visitors visited another country prior to coming to South Africa. Most travelled to a country in Southern Africa (40%) of which 17% visited Namibia.

**Fig 3: Tourism source markets for the Western Cape**



As is evident from Table 1 below more than 20% of all domestic and international visitors to the Western Cape visited the West Coast during the festive season. The area is particularly popular during school holidays (Easter and December) and the spring flower period (August to September).

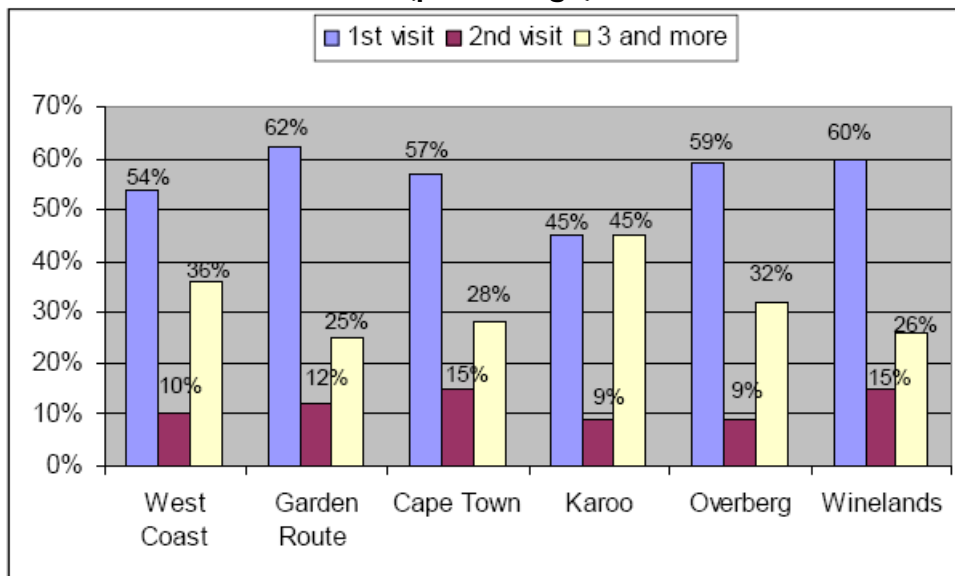
**Table 1: Percentage of visitors according to all visitors, international and domestic, that visited the six WC tourism regions (percentage)**

Region	All visitors	International	Domestic
Cape Town	65%	93%	48%
Winelands	45%	67%	31%
Garden Route and Little Karoo	44%	48%	41%
Overberg	31%	32%	30%
West Coast	22%	23%	21%
Greater Karoo	17%	8%	22%

Source: CTRU Festive Season Tracking Report, 2006/7

As can be expected due to the area not being part of the traditional international tourism circuit and being relatively far from Cape Town, it is mostly the more regular visitor that frequents the area, i.e. those who have visited the Western Cape 3 times or more.

**Fig. 4: Regions visited according to number of visits to province by international visitors (percentage)**



Source: CTRU Festive Season Tracking Report, 2006/7

While visitor surveys are not broken down to the level of sub-region, it could safely be said that there is at least a one-third/two-thirds split in visitor incidence between the northern and southern parts of the West Coast (i.e. from Lamberts Bay southwards and northwards). From a market perspective, the natural and heritage resources - rock art, mountain landscapes, unique vegetation, mission settlements, unpolluted air - of the northern part of the West Coast are largely undiscovered. Van Rhyndorp, Vredendal, Clanwilliam and the Cederberg Wilderness area in the interior and Strandfontein to Lamberts Bay on the coast have particular potential from a market growth perspective. The Van Rhyndorp inland area and West Coast with its mission stations, wetland areas, prime fishing areas and fisher's villages can be linked together to provide a touring experience for independent domestic tourists and short-break visitors from the Cape Metropole (West Coast Tourism Implementation Strategy, 2001).

*The above-mentioned market trends indicate that the northern part of the West Coast (i.e. north of Lamberts Bay) may receive between 5% and 10% of visitors to the Western Cape and that these are largely concentrated in the area to the south of the Olifants River mouth and Vredendal. There does not appear to be a marked trend of tourism growth in the area, and the market size in the immediate vicinity of the study area is very limited.*

### 3.2 Impact on domestic and international market segments

SA Tourism's domestic tourism research and strategy (in association with the provincial tourism bodies) has identified the following seven domestic holiday tourism market segments.

**Table 2: Potential domestic market segments identified in SAT's domestic market growth strategy**

Segment	Outline Profile
<b>Young Up and Coming</b>	Younger than 30. Low income. Short distance travel. Mainly intra-provincial. Entertainment, city life and relaxation. Stay with friends and relatives
<b>Independent young families and couples</b>	Younger than 40. High income. Travel inter-provincially. Family enjoyment, outdoor activities and city entertainment. High holiday spend. Internet savvy. Up market self-catering holidays and hotel breaks.
<b>Striving families</b>	Older than 30. Moderate income and holiday spend but save up for family holidays. Stay mainly with family and friends, or self-catering. Large travel groups. General holiday activities – beach, shopping, etc. Low internet usage.
<b>Well-off homely couples</b>	Late 20s and 30s. Moderate income. Travel mainly intra-provincial. Beach and nature breaks. Self-catering and timeshare accommodation. Internet savvy. Entertainment – cinema and theatre.
<b>Home based low income couples</b>	40 – 50 years old. Low holiday spend. Mostly stay with friends or relatives. Mainly intra-provincial. Visit local markets, take walks along the beach and catch up with family. Very low internet usage
<b>Basic Needs Older Families</b>	Large segment, 30 years and older. Holiday volumes, frequency and spend low. Stay with friends and family. Internet usage virtually non-existent.
<b>Golden Active Couples</b>	50 year and older, retired. High income and holiday spend but price sensitive. Longer holidays, often tied in with grandchildren school holidays. Self catering or camping. Enjoy shopping, nature, touring, eating out. Moderate – low internet usage.

From a value perspective, it is clear that at a national level 2 segments, namely the *Independent Young Couples and Families* (well-off family market) and the *Golden Active Couples* (mature citizens market) provide the best potential for tourism market growth

The following comments pertain to the attractiveness of the study area for these two segments:

- *Concerning the domestic family market, the Upper West Coast attractions are mainly the Olifants River Wine areas, the Cederberg Wilderness and the coastal towns south of the Olifants River mouth, i.e. from Strandfontein southwards. Except for certain niche markets e.g. the specialist 4x4 market, off-road motorcycling, recreational fishermen and a small segment of hikers few family tourists are expected to be interested in visiting the immediate vicinity of the site. This opinion is based on the limited range of family activities, the lack of quality beaches and the distance from other villages or towns and the related entertainment opportunities.*
- *The West Coast wildflowers is a major attraction for the mature citizens market, who are not bound by schools holidays and are able to visit the area during the flower season, which occurs from September to October each year. The study area is on the fringe of the Knersvlakte Biome, which is rich in unique succulent species and could be of particular interest to this market segment. However, based on the specialist report pertaining to the impact of the proposed facility of the vegetation of the area there is no indication that the wildflower or botanical quality of the study area is superior to other areas*

*or sites and it is not expected that the area attracts a substantial number of wildflower or botanical enthusiasts.*

Concerning the potential of the study area to attract international travellers, SA Tourism's international growth strategy identifies 2 primary target market segments that cut across the various source markets (key source markets are the UK, Germany, USA, France and the Netherlands/Benelux). These are:

- i) the Next Stop South Africa (NSSA) segment, consisting of travellers who are well travelled, looking for new travel destinations and may seriously consider South Africa as a destination. The NSSA are not very likely to move off the beaten track and prefer a fair degree of luxury and pampering. With the exception of specific upmarket destinations such as Bushmanskloof in the Cederberg Mountains the West Coast is not a luxury destination and it is not expected that it will become a destination for the NSSA's within the foreseeable future.
- ii) the Wanderluster segment, consisting of younger travellers in search of adventure, local interaction and who are more likely to travel off-the-beaten track to lesser known destinations even if these are further away from main tourism centres and visiting them entails a lesser degree of comfort. However, travel time is limited and they are likely to select significant and unique features and attractions. With regard to the Wanderluster segment, the area has a definite growth potential, especially in the following areas:
  - The Langebaan/Saldanah area: based on the ecotourism resources of the area, the coastal hospitality and its appeal to niche markets such as bird-watchers and water sport enthusiasts (surfing, windsports, etc.);
  - The Cederberg area: with its spectacular topography, hiking opportunities and isolated rural communities;
  - The touring opportunities associated with the N7 route: linking Cape Town with Namibia via the West Coast.

Of these, only the N7 route is expected to channel travellers into the broader study area. However the N7 route is long and opportunities for branching off the main route and venturing onto minor side roads is expected to be chosen with care. The majority of international "Wanderluster" travellers on the N7 will only venture off the route at key attraction spots, i.e. making a detour to experience a specific phenomenon or phenomena.

*While international travelers along the N7 "Cape to Namibia" route may be able to view the wind energy facility from particular spots along the N7 route (see report on potential visual impacts), the large majority of these travelers are not expected to travel beyond Vredendal when branching away from the main route given the choice of alternative branch-routings along the main route. Once the wind energy facility has been completed, it may become a drawcard for enticing a segment of visitors specifically interested in renewable energy to travel via Lutzville.*

#### **4. POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACTS OF THE WIND ENERGY FACILITY ON TOURISM**

It is clear from the analysis that tourism movement along the West Coast, away from the N7 axis, is mainly limited to the coastal and inland areas south of the Olifants River mouth. Apart from the Olifants River wine route, the tourism attractions in the area to the north of Lamberts Bay and the Cederberg are limited and few leisure travellers extend their journey beyond these areas. Those tourists that do travel further north seldom veer off the main roads to visit the smaller towns and community settlements in the vicinity. There is clearly a need for improving the attraction base of the area.

The proposed Wind Energy Facility could become an important tourism drawcard for the area if it is a single facility of major magnitude as planned. It is doubtful whether numerous smaller facilities will have much attraction value given the loss of scale and uniqueness.

##### **4.1 The potential for a world-class renewable energy interpretation centre**

While the facility itself may be a tourist attraction the sustained tourism attractiveness will be greatly enhanced by the development of a high quality education and interpretation centre focusing on the sources of renewable energy and developments in this field. Such a centre may be located at the entrance to the site or in one of the nearby towns, i.e. Lutzville or Vredendal.

As the study area is a long distance from key tourism gateways, the scale and nature of the interpretation facility should be of a world standard and it should be positioned as a major point of interest within the Western Cape and South Africa. The author is of the opinion that, if the interpretation facility is not of international quality it will not play a meaningful tourism role, given the lack of other key attractions and draw-cards in the area. Visitors will have to make a special trip to visit the site and will only consider this if the scale and quality of the facility warrants the time and cost.

It is believed that the study area is an appropriate location for such a facility in view of:

- The fact that the proposed wind energy facility will be a large-scale installation, which in itself will be worth a visit for passers by. However, apart from its visual impact the installation itself does not offer an adequate "depth" of experience to warrant a special trip by substantial numbers of visitors. However, the combination of a large scale wind energy facility and a world class interpretation centre for renewable energy could become a major drawcard. An appropriate comparison may be the increased tourism attractiveness and economy of Sutherland following improved visitor access to the astronomical facilities of the area.
- The rising debate regarding global warming and alternative energy sources provides an opportunity for stimulating interest and education in this field and such a centre could play a major role in highlighting South Africa's leadership in this field in Africa and its compliance with global best practice, while at the same time being a major tourist attraction.
- The study area is located along the N7 corridor, close to the border of the Northern Cape and the Western Cape, and alternative energy projects (wind and



solar energy) are being implemented in both of these provinces. An interpretation centre will be well-positioned in the area and could play an important role in highlighting the tourism potential of both the Northern Cape and the Western Cape West Coast.

- The development of a tourism attraction could play a major role in gaining the positive support for the development among the local population of the area.

*Incorporating a high quality Renewable Energy Interpretation Centre as part of the overall project development is strongly recommended. Such a facility could play a positive role in highlighting Eskom's leadership role and forward thinking in the area of renewable energy generation, while at the same time leaving a tourism legacy and providing a much needed major tourist attraction to the benefit of the area.*

#### **4.2 Other potential positive tourism impacts and mitigation measures**

While a detailed assessment of the tourism impacts in and around the site will be conducted during the EIA phase of the study, the following issues are of relevance for future consideration:

By adopting a proactive tourism approach Eskom could make a substantial contribution towards improving the tourism potential of the broader area. In addition to the proposed interpretation facility other potential opportunities include:

- Managing the site as a "floral preference area". By encouraging and nurturing the quality and variety of vegetation on the site it could be linked to the traditional flower routes as an attraction and highlight. It is recommended that the specialist study of potential vegetation impacts should consider the feasibility of such approach.
- Identifying, rehabilitating and improving key coastal sites in the vicinity of the site, including scenic landmarks (e.g. die Toring, Die Punt, etc.) and sites that have traditionally been used as camping and fishing areas. While these site could become additional attraction points for potential visitors to the site and interpretation centre, their improvement may also add value as visitor and recreation areas for the local population of the area.
- Supporting the development of a hiking trail from the Olifants River Mouth to the site and beyond, which could allow for local entrepreneurship and community involvement. Some recreational hiking already occurs in the area and the existing initiative may be expanded through upgrading of the sites and facilities along the coast and providing support for publicity and marketing.
- Supporting the local authority and volunteer groups in securing and improving the status of the Olifants River Mouth as a key potential attraction point. Local residents have expressed concern over the potential negative noise and visual pollution created by the facility and while the current site location is almost 15km from the river mouth every effort should be made to reduce negative impacts and enhance the potential of the river mouth as a birding site.

## 5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### 5.1 Potential impacts on the strategic tourism direction of the area

- None of the *national tourism planning initiatives* has identified the West Coast as a priority tourism development area and it is not foreseen that the proposed wind energy facility at a site west of Koekenaap will have any substantial effects on the execution of national tourism frameworks.
- Based on the provincial government's *Integrated Tourism Development Framework (ITDF)* the growing importance of van Rhynsdorp as a tourism gateway could lead to an increase in tourism activity and infrastructure in the Vredendal area. However, there is no indication that the study area is specifically being targeted for future expansion under the ITDF, and it is not expected that the development of the wind energy facility will have any notable implications for the ITDF programme.
- The study area is not being targeted as a focal point under the *Cape to Namibia Route initiative*. However, the construction of a major wind energy facility may well become a tourism drawcard along the route, which, if promoted could lead to an increase in travellers veering off the main road and travelling via Vredendal and Lutzville to visit the facility.
- The proposals contained in the *West Coast Tourism Spatial Framework* involve areas south of the Olifants River mouth, with none of the proposals including the areas to the north of this river, where the proposed site is located. While the proposed wind energy structures may be visible from certain points along the proposed Lamberts Bay-Vredendal route the level of visual impact is expected to be limited. Again, there is a possibility that the tourist route proposed in the framework may be extended to accommodate special interest visitors who wish to extend their visit to Vredendal to pay a visit to the site.
- According to the *West Coast Tourism Strategy* the area south of the Olifants River mouth on the coast and the Cederberg Wilderness inland has significant growth potential as a tourism, ecotourism and heritage route, while the study area north of the Olifants River mouth is not particularly rich in any of the products targeted in the strategy. The study is not expected to become a key tourism area within the foreseeable future. The product development proposals contained in the *West Coast Tourism Strategy* do not include products to the north of the Olifants River and in the vicinity of the site.

### 5.2 Potential impacts on tourism market demand

- Available tourism market trends indicate that the northern part of the West Coast may receive between 5% and 10% of visitors to the Western Cape and that these are largely concentrated in the area to the south of the Olifants River mouth and Vredendal. There does not appear to be a marked trend of tourism growth in the area and the market size in the immediate vicinity of the study area is very limited.
- Concerning the domestic family market, the Upper West Coast (north of Lamberts Bay) attractions are mainly the Olifants River Wine areas, the Cederberg Wilderness and the coastal towns south of the Olifants River mouth, i.e. from Strandfontein southwards. Except for certain niche markets (e.g. the specialist 4x4 market, off-road motorcycling and a small segment of

hikers), few tourists will be interested in visiting the immediate vicinity of the site.

- The West Coast wildflowers are a major attraction for the mature citizens market, who are not bound by school holidays, and are able to visit the area during the flowering season, between August and October. The study area is on the fringe of the Knersvlakte Biome, which is rich in unique succulent species and could be of particular interest to this market segment. However, based on the specialist report pertaining to the impact of the proposed facility of the vegetation of the area there is no indication that the wildflower or botanical quality of the study area is superior to other areas or sites and it is not expected that the area attracts a substantial number of wildflower or botanical enthusiasts.
- While international travellers along the N7 “Cape to Namibia” route may be able to view the facility from certain particular spots along the N7 route, the large majority of these travellers are not expected to travel beyond Vredendal when branching away from the main route given the choice of alternative branch-routings along the main route. Once the wind energy facility has been completed, it may become a drawcard for enticing a segment of visitors specifically interested in renewable energy to travel via Lutzville.

### **5.3 Potential positive tourism impacts**

- The proposed Wind Energy Facility could become a major attraction for the area, should it be accompanied by high quality interpretation facilities. Incorporating a high quality Renewable Energy Interpretation Centre as part of the overall project development is strongly recommended. Such a facility could play a positive role in highlighting Eskom’s leadership role and forward thinking in the area of renewable energy generation, while at the same time leaving a tourism legacy and providing a much needed major tourist attraction to the benefit of the area.
- Other potential positive impacts and mitigation measures relate to Managing the site as a “floral preference area; identifying, rehabilitating and improving key coastal sites in the vicinity of the site; supporting the development of a hiking trail from the Olifants River Mouth to the site and beyond and supporting the local authority and volunteer groups in securing and improving the status of the Olifants River Mouth as a key potential attraction point.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this report there is no reason from a tourism perspective why Eskom should not pursue a detailed investigation for a Wind Energy Facility on the proposed site. While this report provides a broad overview of the tourism vision and potential of the area and the possible tourism impacts of the proposed wind energy facility on these, the detailed tourism impacts i) during the construction phase and ii) during the operations phase of the project will be further investigated during the EIA stage.

Such site-specific potential negative impacts to be further investigated may include:

- Visual impacts: Preliminary visual analysis indicates that the proposed wind energy facility will be visible from certain locations along the N7 and the tourism route from Lamberts Bay to Vredendal via Strandfontein. The exact nature of such visual impacts require further investigation.

- Noise impacts: Given the large size of the site and the number of turbines envisaged the noise factor may be substantial in the immediate vicinity of the site. The potential negative effects of such noise on the bird population at the Olifants River Mouth and the impact on its potential as a major birding site was raised as a concern by environmental interest groups during the stakeholder interviews. While it not envisaged that the noise factor will extend over this distance the extent of noise required further analysis.
- Physical impacts: the construction of the supportive road and powerline infrastructure and of the turbines may disturb the natural scenery and landscape of the area and the extent and impact of such disturbances on tourism requires further investigation.

As has already been mentioned the development may have various positive impacts on tourism and the potential site-specific positive impacts to be investigated may include:

- Economic impacts: Visitor numbers may increase due the special interest and novelty value of the site and this should be further analysed based on relevant assumptions, such as the nature and extent of visitor interpretation facilities, etc.;
- Improvements in the site setting and surrounds: Improvements of the special landmarks and potential visitor points along the coastline may unlock visitor attractiveness and provide opportunities for entrepreneurship associated with hiking trails, camping and picnicking, etc. Such opportunities require further investigation.

More specifically tourism inputs during the detailed phase should include:

- A more detailed analyses of extent and significance of the potential tourism impacts of the facility and the related road and powerline infrastructures, taking into account the results of specialist studies pertaining to visual, noise and other potential impacts during the various phases of the project;
- Analysis and investigation of the properties and potential mitigation measures to improve the site and surrounds from a tourism perspective and the extent and significance of such measures;
- Further consultation with tourism role-players to ascertain their views and potential level of involvement in the project;

## **REFERENCES**

Cape Town Routes Unlimited, 2007, Research programme to track visitor patterns and trends, report from the December 2006/ January 2007 survey

South African Tourism, 2004, Gearing up to be Globally Competitive: Tourism Growth Strategy: 2005 – 2007

Western Cape Provincial Government, 2001, Integrated Tourism Development Framework for the Western Cape

West Coast District Municipality, 2001, Tourism implementation strategy for the West Coast Region – Phase 1

West Coast District Municipality, 2007, Draft Integrated Development Plan

West Coast Investment Initiative, 1999, Spatial Framework and Strategy Mapping

## **Annexure 1: Notes of meetings with stakeholders Site visit to West Coast, 16-18 April 2007**

### **Meeting with West Coast District Municipality**

- Wessel Rabbets and team supportive, visual effect of growing no mentioned
- Olifantsriver area sensitive - Knersvakte biosphere
- Estuary area potential for tourism. Bird site etc. But north of there lots of space.
- Look at rehabilitated mining areas.
- Wessel will send electronic copy of GTKF tourism study
- Mentions use of local labour.

### **Meeting Vredendal Sakekamer**

- Question re solar energy, Karen explains being tested in Upington
- Questions re local jobs (locals for labour, experts for technical.
- No more questions

### **Meeting Matzikama Municipality**

- Municipal Manager Dean O'Neill 0272013331
- Annelie vd Westhuizen Town Planning 0272013323
- Vredendal and Strandfontein earmarked for growth in provincial growth study
- Area within Knersvlakte biosphere - busy having it proclaimed. No specific tourism developments planned.
- Hiking trail friends of the swart tobie through area. Kobus Kritzinger Cape Nature, John Wiggins, Suzanne du Plessis Strandfontein (Seekat Rd) 0833838420 027 2151685
- Christo Paulsen, 027 2191552
- River mouth land claim Ebenaezer community. Mission settlement.
- Papendorp/Ebenaezer community - disagreement w.r.t. land ownership - people don't have title deeds so difficult to finish process. Land use also not sorted out. Development plan document by Johan Hamman.
- Municipality sensitive w.r.t. mining on coast, unhappy with lack of restoration. Teaming up with biosphere people.
- Olifants mouth - international birding area? Uncertain, check out
- Cape nature busy with zoning study of Olifants mouth. (Kobus Kritzinger).
- Elbie Cloete van Rhynsdorp Cape Nature coastal study. 082 4555 992
- Land limitations at Strandfontein and Doornbaai, limits investment.
- State land along coast – "admiraliteitszone" + lots of other state land - managed by public works but uncertainty w.r.t. who should maintain it, who is custodian?
- Karen asks about possibility of Eskom being involved in improvement of specific sites for tourism.
- They regard tourism potential being regional - town should pool attractions.

## **Meeting Knersvlakte Biosphere Region Committee**

Christo Paulse, Walter

- Suzanne du Plessis - serious question re impact of sound on birdlife at estuary, KKaren explains acoustic engineer on board.
- Point made about visual impact - be careful!
- Buffer zone, how far inland, Karen mentions we'll be comfortable with 2 km zone.

Annexure 2: Proposed Site for Wind Energy Facility

