

Environmental Impact Assessment and Management Plan for establishing Agricultural Projects within the Oranjemund Constituency in //Karas Region

Minutes of Public Consultation Meeting
27 December 2019, 10h30
Rosh Pinah Community Hall

1. Present

Please see the attendance register. A total of 18 members of the Oranjemund Constituency members of the public including officials from the Oranjemund Constituency Office were consulted, informed about the proposed agricultural projects to be established in Rosh Pinah and Oranjemund areas. Due to a low turn-out at the meeting, the consultant also visited some business and individuals in Rosh Pinah and Oranjemund areas who were given Background Information Document with information about the proposed projects.

2. Welcome Remarks

The Proponent of this initiative, Hon. Lazarus Nangolo who is also the Constituency Councillor welcomed all present at the meeting and specifically to Oranjemund Constituency. The Proponent highlighted that the Constituency is quite bigger in size covering two major towns (Oranjemund Town Council) and RoshSkor which is yet to be proclaimed as a Village Council. The Councillor explained that the idea of the agricultural projects came about as the region is planning for sustainability of the two major mining towns with regards to how the residents would survive after mining activities has ended. Therefore, the concept of establishing small agricultural plots for farmers to produce agricultural products for local and international experts was initiated.

Hon. Nangolo further explains that the purpose of the meeting was for the environmental team to conduct the environmental assessment of the proposed agricultural activities, consult the relevant stakeholders and to apply for the Environmental Clearance Certificate from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

3. Introduction

The Environmental Consultant, Mr. Festus Kapembe (KPM Environmental Consulting) thanked everyone present for attending the meeting. He made a brief introduction on the purpose of the meeting that is to provide information about the planned agricultural projects to be established in Oranjemund Constituency specifically at the following sites:

- Farm 212 Hohenfels
- Lucerne A and Lucerne B
- Upper Portion closer to Plot B in Debaras 2 and
- Rosh Pinah (an open area adjacent to the C13 road between Rosh Pinah to Oranjemund)

The Consultant indicated that more additional places will be added on the project at a later stage once they become available i.e. at Oranjemund where some places are currently being used for exploration and mining.

Secondly, the consultant also indicated that community members can still express their comments/inputs or objection if there is any on the proposed agricultural projects.

The consultant provided a PowerPoint presentation to the participants covering a description of the project, an overview of the need for an EIA and the method for the EIA, and the key findings of the EIA in terms of potential positive and negative impacts and mitigation measures to be taken. Thereafter, members of the public were given an opportunity to ask questions on the proposed project and also to find out if they have any concerns, objections or if they support the initiative.

4. Questions from the Community at the meeting and also those met during door to door distribution of BID:

4.1. Will there be any opportunities such as employment for local people?

Answer: The meeting was informed that there will be lots of employment opportunities ranging from temporary to permanent employment especially during the operational stage. There will be temporally employment opportunities during the site clearing, fencing, construction and installations of agricultural infrastructures. The agricultural plots will be availed to anyone interested in farming and the constituency provides the plot, access to water i.e. from the Orange River or boreholes. Therefore, these will be major investments that would require lots of manpower to establish. The meeting was also informed that during the operational stage, there will also be long-term employment opportunities and those will be announced and opportunities availed to all qualified and experienced residents.

4.2. One of the community members wanted to know whether the Proponent has already secured the place for the proposed plant?

Answer: The meeting was informed that the Constituency Office together with the Community Development Committee (CDC) has proposed the various suitable areas the 4 above mentioned has been secured whilst others are still being considered. The projects are all to be established on state land and thus consultation with relevant authorities at a regional and national level has been done and where approved. The Constituency Office is the representative of the state at that level and the project has the support of the national government as well as affected stakeholders such as Namdeb who have already availed several sites. The Constituency Office is currently working to ensure that all requirements i.e. conducting the EIA to obtain an Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) in order for the project to commence are met.

4.3. What other benefits will the Oranjemund and Rosh Pinah communities and //Kharas Region, in general, get as a result of the proposed agricultural projects?

Answer: In addition to local employment, the agricultural projects will be beneficial to the //Kharas Region as the activities will contribute to the economic growth of the region and the country at large. Food security is one of the pillars in the fifth National Development Plan (NDP 5) as well as highlighted in the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) and therefore, these initiatives are the right steps towards achieving food security for the region and the country at large. Seeing that most of the selected sites are currently unused due to that fact that it is viewed as a desert, it will be good for //Kharas Region to be the first region to turn the desert into productive land.

4.4. How many people will be employed at each agricultural projects?

Answer: The exact number of people to be employed at each project will be determined by the size and type of product that will be produced. The numbers have not been established but will be made available once the projects commence.

During the site preparation, there will be lots of temporary jobs and the opportunities will be availed through the Constituency office once the projects commence.

4.5. Will you be hiring people in the local community or outsiders? One of the community members indicated that they do have skills in the area and would prefer that the Proponent award the tender for construction to a local contractor.

Answer: The meeting was informed that the bids for the construction of the proposed agricultural installations will be announced as soon as the necessary requirements have been met. Once, the contractors are contracted, and the site handed over, the community will be informed through the Constituency office i.e. notice board at public places and also through the local radio announcements and through community development committees in terms of the number of local people needed for employment.

With regards to awarding the tender to a local contractor, the meeting was informed that the tender for installations of agricultural infrastructures will be undertaken by each farmer/plot owners and thus will depend on what type of work and materials will be required. However, the Constituency office will ensure that priority is given to local people in terms of employment, tenders and other opportunities.

4.6. One of the community members asked whether the Proponent is aware of the acute water shortage in the area and whether a study has been done to assess the viability of the proposed initiatives?

Answer: The meeting was informed that two sources of water have been identified, one to abstract water from the Orange River similar to the same concept at Aussinker at the grape farms and also augment that will boreholes. The meeting was informed that a Geohydrological Assessment is being undertaken and that will inform the project about how much water is available to be used sustainably for agricultural purpose. The meeting was also

informed that the Proponent will employ cost savings mechanisms for irrigation and recycle or re-use water where possible.

4.7. What kind of products will be produced at the farms/agricultural plots?

Answer: Farmers will have the option of proposing what they would like to produce in their business plans and the Constituency will review that in line with the needs of the market. However, preliminary assessment has indicated that grapes, citrus fruits, dates are some of the plants that adapt well in the area and thus will be given priorities. However, the Constituency would like farmers to be innovative and introduce new plants that could be produced in this kind of environment and under the local climatic conditions.

5. Other concerns raised by the community members:

5.1. One of the local farmers wanted to know whether drilling boreholes for mass production will not deplete the underground source? And thus a proposal was made to rather consider taking water from the sea, desalinate and use for agricultural purpose. The meeting was informed that borehole water will only be used where necessary and will not deplete the underground sources. However, the proposal to use seawater, desalinate will be explored and if viable will be considered.

5.2. There was also another concern that most people working in the two mining areas are coming from other parts of the country and surely will go back after mining activities have ended. Will this not become a white elephant once the mines have closed? The agricultural projects will contribute to food production and without the two mines, just like at Aussinker, food products will still be exported to other areas of the country and outside. Therefore, the long-term idea is to enable the two mining towns not to solely depends on mineral resources but to diversify where possible while creating more sustainable projects, employment opportunities while addressing the needs for food produced locally.

6. Time of adjournment:

6.1. After the meeting, the environmental team together with the Constituency Councillor conducted field visits at some of the proposed areas in Rosh Pinah and Oranjemund. The field visits adjourned at 19:30.

Minutes compiled by Mr. F. Kapembe (Consultant, KPM Environmental).

ANNEXURE 1: ATTENDANCE REGISTER

KPM

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AGRICULTURAL PROJECT FOR THE ORANJEMUND CONSTITUENCY OFFICE ALONG THE ORANGE RIVER IN KARAS REGION

Date: Friday, 27 December 2019
 Time: 10h00 – 12h00
 Venue: Oranjemund Constituency Office

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Annexure 3 – Local Adverts

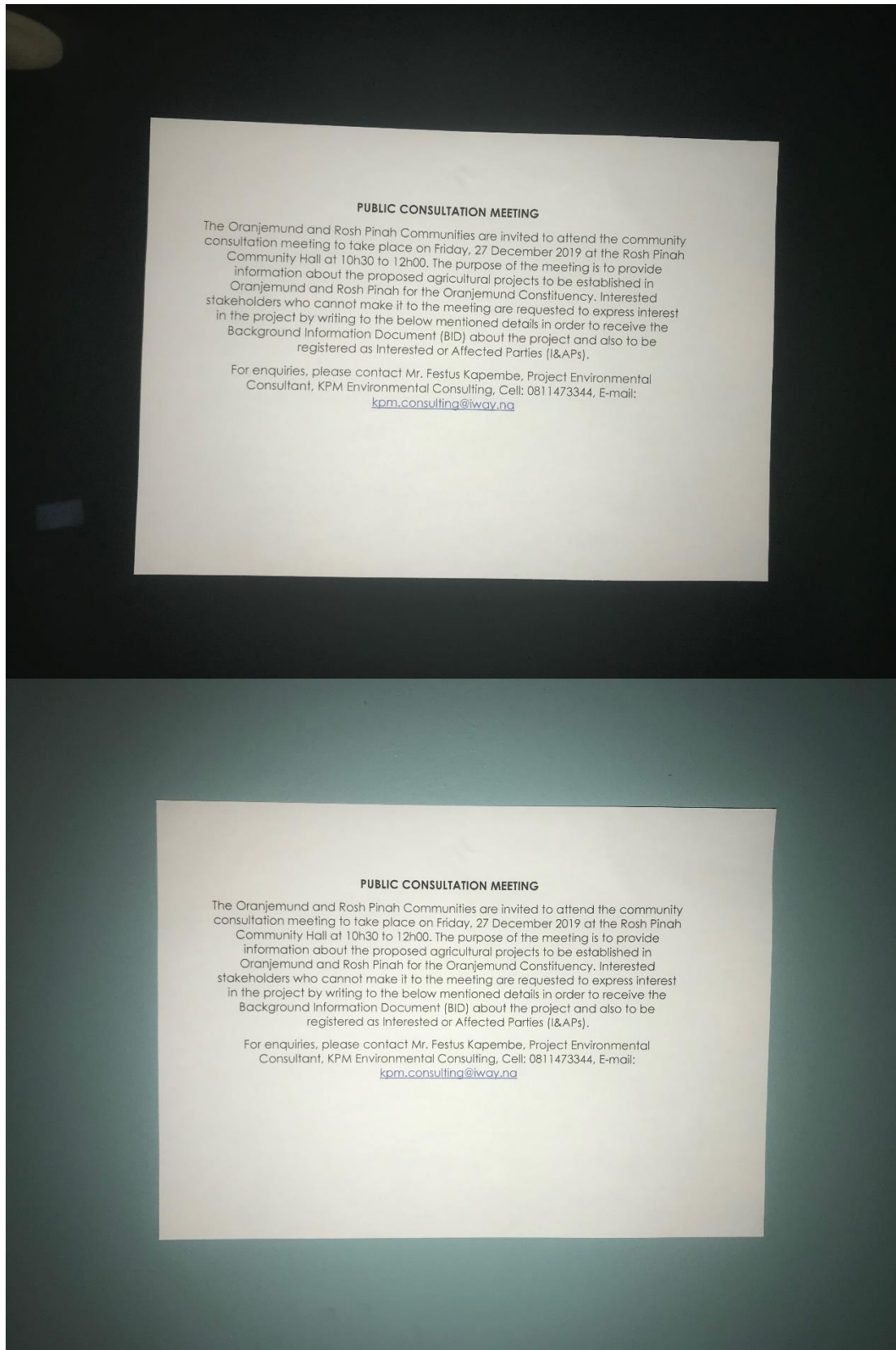


Figure 1: Invitation to a Public meeting was placed at Oranjemund Spar and also at Shopping Centre in Rosh Pinah

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

From : KPM Environmental Consulting

To : NBC National Radio, Afrikaans NBC and Kati FM

Date : 09 December 2019

PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETINGS FOR THE AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS IN ORANJEMUND CONSTITUENCY

The Oranjemund and Rosh Pinah communities are hereby notified of the public consultation meeting to take place on Friday, 27 December 2019 at Rosh Pinah Community Hall at 10h30. The purpose of the meeting is to notify the community about the proposed agricultural projects to be established in Oranjemund Constituency and to hereby from community members if they have any objection to the proposed projects?

For enquiries, please contact Mr. Festus Kapembe at 081 147 3344.

Figure 2: Public Announcement on NBC National, Afrikaans and Oshiwambo Radio Stations