

**Ministry of Environment and Tourism  
Office of the Environmental Commissioner  
Private Bag 13306  
WINDHOEK  
Namibia**

**1 April 2021**

Dear Sir,

**APPLICATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE IN TERMS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2007, FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FACILITY TO HOUSE AND MAINTAIN A FIBRE OPTIC CABLE AND RELATED EQUIPMENT ON PROPOSED PORTION "A" MEASURING 1000M<sup>2</sup> IN EXTENT OF ERF 5360, SWAKOPMUND**

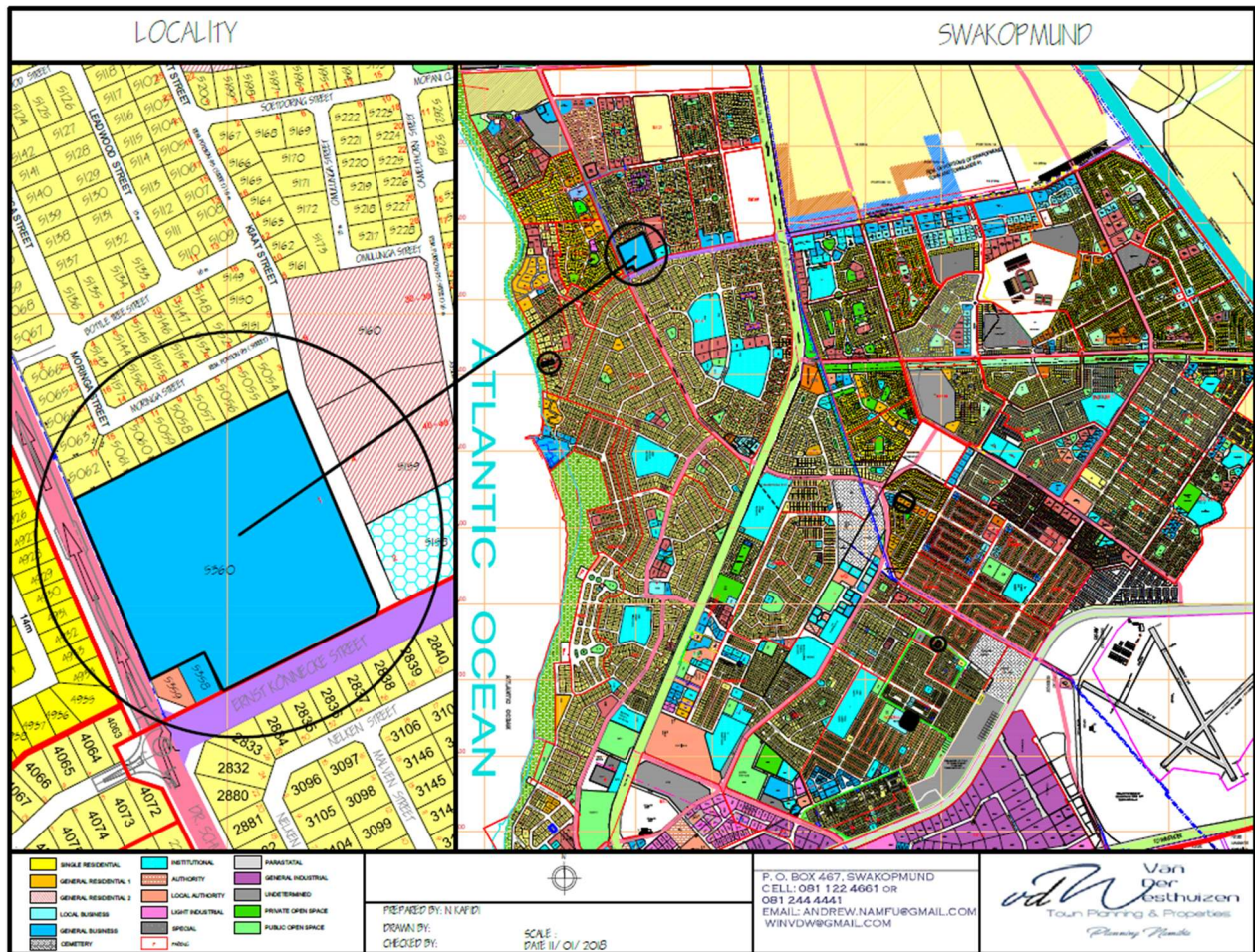
Van der Westhuizen Town Planning and Properties, on behalf of the proponent, Paratus Telecommunication (Pty) Ltd, herewith formally apply to the Environmental Commissioner for Environmental Clearance for the construction of a facility to house and maintain a fibre optic cable and related equipment on a proposed portion "A" of Erf 5360, Swakopmund.

**1. BACKGROUND**

Our client, Paratus Telecommunications (Pty) Ltd, applied to the Swakopmund Municipality on 5 March 2020 to purchase a portion of Erf 5360, Swakopmund for the establishment of a facility to house and maintain a fibre optic cables. The application served before Council on 26 March 2020 (Annexure D) whereby Council approved such sale of a portion measuring 1000m<sup>2</sup> of Erf 5360, Swakopmund to Paratus Telecommunications (Pty) Ltd.

The locality plan on the next page indicates where the Erf in question is located in relation to the other existing land uses in the area.





Picture 1: Indicating locality of Erf 5360, Swakopmund

## 2. OWNERSHIP

Ownership of Erf 5360, Swakopmund currently vests with the Municipality of Swakopmund as per the Conditions of Establishment as approved by the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development on 15 July 2008 (Annexure C). Once subdivision is approved, proposed portion "A" will be sold and carried into the name of the proponent.

## 3. LOCALITY AND ERF DESCRIPTION

Erf 5360, Swakopmund, is located on the corner of Ernst Könnecke Avenue and Dr. Shwietering Street in the Ocean View suburb of Swakopmund (Annexure A). The property is currently zoned "General Business". Once the subdivision has been approved, Portion "A" measuring approximately 1000m<sup>2</sup> will be reserved for Paratus Telecommunications and the Remainder shall remain with the Swakopmund Municipality. The property is approximately 38 119m<sup>2</sup> in extent in terms of the Conditions of Establishment attached.

## 4. CURRENT SITUATION

Currently this particular portion to be subdivided of Erf 5360, Swakopmund accommodates and semi-constructed building on it. No active fauna of flora can be found on the close proximity of the area be applied for. The plan on the next page indicates the portion to be subdivided from Erf 5360, Swakopmund.





## **4.1 Landscape**

The terrain is characterised by a soft sandy top surface layer which could be dough up easily when foundations is to be dag. The terrain is fairly flat and can be used for the intended development. It should be noted that the erf in question is barren with no permanent physical structures or vegetation located here.

## **4.2 Fauna and Flora**

Due to the land being situated in an already planned and developed area the site is highly disturbed already. There exist no fauna and flora in need of protection on the property. Due to the close proximity of other uses to the site and constant human activity no fauna and flora is present on the site resulting to no listed species in need of protection.

## **4.3 Social, Economic and Cultural Impact**

The social and cultural characteristics of the area can be described as that of high and low density residential. The proposed activity will therefore have no negative impacts on the Social, Economic or Cultural nature of the area in question. This proposed activity will in fact be beneficial to the area in terms of its social, economic and cultural status. From a public point of view the environmental advertisements and notices were supported by the general public as no objection/concerns were lodged in this regard.

## **4.4 Guide lines used for Scoping report**

During the compilation of this scoping report, the following Guide lines and Legislation was used:

- Environmental Management Act of 2007;
- Swakopmund Town Planning Scheme No. 12

## **4.5 Need and Desirability**

Paratus Telecommunications are the biggest connectivity service provider in Africa and connects 22 African countries through a distributed reseller network across the continent. Paratus has grown into a full-service network spanning across the African continent and connecting customers internationally.

Paratus owns and manage an extensive network of leading edge infrastructure that includes over 2500 satellite connections. They also have 6 operation offices in Africa which includes Namibia, Botswana, Angola, Zambia, South Africa and Mozambique.

Taking the above inconsideration, the proposed is needed in order to host and maintain the optic fibre cable that are currently being trenched and laid within Swakopmund. This housing facility, once operational will connect with surrounding countries like South Africa and Botswana allowing for better and faster telecommunication connectivity. Furthermore, this proposed project will create many job opportunities in various sectors to many Namibians and will thus positively contribute to the economic status of Namibia as a whole.

## **4.6 Significant and Cumulative Effects**

As mentioned earlier in this report, the fact that this erf and area in particular is located in an existing built up area of Swakopmund, there will be no detrimental, significant or cumulative effects or impacts on the environment or the community as a result of the proposed construction of a facility to house an optic fibre cable . In fact the intended proposal will positively contribute to the growth of the existing area and the economic status of Swakopmund and Namibia as a whole.





**Photo 2:** Indicates ground top soil structure



**Photo 3:** Indicates proposed portion “A” of Erf 5360, Swakopmund (Northern Direction)

#### **4.7 Draft Management Plan**

The existing built up area consists of high and low residential uses. An existing street network with all municipality services can also be found here. It is highly unlikely that this area will ever be rehabilitated to its original state. Taking the above in consideration, a Draft Management Plan will not be applicable for this proposed activity. The intended uses are not of such nature that any mitigating measures are to be put in place.

The applicant will however ensure that all building materials such as sand, cement, bricks, stone, wood, etc. required during the construction phase of his residential dwelling, is kept on site. Any waste that will be created during the construction phase will be placed in waste bins and skips to insure no material waste is left in the open. These bins and skips will be covered to insure that not waste is blown out of it by prevailing winds. Removal of these waste bins and skips will be done on an ad-hoc basis as they become full. A portable site toilet will also be placed on site to insure that the construction workers do not make use the public areas to relieve themselves. This toilet will be cleaned on a regular basis by and independent company where this toilet is rented. No waste run-

off water will be created as water will only be used for the cement required for foundations and building.

#### **4.8 Advertising and Public Participation**

Advertisements for the Environmental Clearance of the closure of a portion of Abalone Avenue, Swakopmund, were placed in the New Era on 13 November 2020 and 17 November 2020. Closing dates for objections was on the 1 December 2020. Neighboring properties have also been requested by registered mail to give their comments and/or objections in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of the Swakopmund Municipality and the applicant before the closing date. Attached please find copies of letters to neighbors via registered post (Annexure E) as well as copies of advertisement placed in the Newspaper (Annexure F). A Notice was also placed on the erf for public comments (Annexure G).

#### **4.9 Terms of Reference**

##### **4.9.1 Description of all tasks undertaken**

The tasks that was undertaken for the compilation of this report includes consultation with the Manager of Town Planning Section as well as the Environmental Officer of the Swakopmund Municipality and various stakeholders within Paratus. Site visits to the Erf was done for inspection to assess if any fauna or flora is present on the site and also to assess the soil structure and physical structures on the property. The Environmental Management Act of 2007 was used as a guideline together with the Swakopmund Town Planning Amendment Scheme No. 12.

##### **4.9.2 Stages for Consultation with Environmental Commissioner**

As the Swakopmund Municipality has delegated authority from the office of the Environmental Commissioner for the issuing of Environmental Clearance Certificates within their town boundaries, it was understood by our office that it was not required to consultant with the Environmental Commissioner. Due to the location within an already developed local authority area and the small size of the area being applied for, our office only consulted with the Environmental Officer of the Swakopmund Municipality.

##### **4.9.3 Assessing Environmental Issues and Alternatives**

Looking at the site photos within this report, it can be reasonably be argued that no environmental issues was identified during the assessment of the proposed activity nor was any alternatives required or needed. The proposed activity is within an existing built up area and is in line with the requirements of the Swakopmund Town Planning Scheme No. 12.

##### **4.9.4 Nature and Extend of Public Participation**

Public Participation was done according to the requirements of the Environmental Management Act of 2007. This included the placing of advertisements for the intentions in the local newspapers for two consecutive weeks. These advertisements were placed in the Namib Times on 13 November 2020 and 17 November 2020 and is attached to this report as Annexure F. Registered mail was also sent to adjoining neighbours informing them of the proposed activity and should they have any comments or objections to please forward such comments to the Chief Executive Officer of Swakopmund Municipality and our offices on or before the 15 December 2020. A notice was also placed on site for 31 days informing the general public of the proposed activity. It should be noted that no objections or comments was received from the neighbours or general public during the Public Participation phase.

#### 4.10 Proposed Statutory Processes

It will be needed to follow the following procedures in order to apply to the Swakopmund Municipal Council for approval for such housing facility:

- a) Environmental Clearance for the construction of a facility to house and maintain a fibre optic cable and related equipment on a proposed portion "A" of Erf 5360, Swakopmund.
- b) Submission of building plan application to Swakopmund Municipal Council for approval.
- d) Submission of subdivision application to the Urban and Regional Planning Board for final approval by the Honourable Minister.

#### 5. APPLICATION

Application is herewith made to the Environmental Commissioner for Environmental Clearance for the following:

**"For the construction of a facility to house and maintain a fibre optic cable and related equipment on a proposed portion "A" of Erf 5360, Swakopmund"**

It is herewith requested that the application be found favourable by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism based on the reasons as contained within this document. It should however be noted that the situation in Swakopmund is unique to other towns as there are very little worth saving within the areas as indicated in this document. It is due to the aforesaid that Van Der Westhuizen Town Planning and Properties on behalf of the proponent urge the Environmental Commissioner to find the above application favourable in order to facilitate the sustainable and efficient growth of Swakopmund.

For any further enquiries please do not hesitate to contact Van Der Westhuizen Town Planning and Properties directly on details provided.

Yours Faithfully,



**A R VAN DER WESTHUIZEN**