



BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Study

The Proposed Construction and Operation of a New Telecommunication Lattice Tower and associated activities in Okahandja Town, Otjozondjupa Region - Application for Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC)

ECC Application No.: APP-002731

Proponent: Mobile Telecommunications Limited



**Prepared by: Serja Hydrogeo-Environmental Consultants CC
(The appointed Environmental Assessment Practitioner / Consultant)**

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1 INTRODUCTION

Mobile Telecommunications Limited (hereinafter referred to as MTC Namibia or the *Proponent*) proposes to construct and operate a 25m high lattice telecommunication tower in Okahandja Town of the Otjozondjupa Region (*the project site*). The site is internally referred by MTC as *Okahandja Industrial*).

The 9m x 9m project site (footprint) is located on the premises of the Ministry Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR) in the Industrial North Street (GPS coordinates -21.96939 16.90089). The locality map is shown in Figure 1.

1.1 Need for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Study

Telecommunication structures and related infrastructures are among listed activities that may not be undertaken without an ECC under the Environmental Management Act (EMA) (2007) and its 2012 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations.

The relevant listed activities as per EIA regulations are:

Listed Activity 10: Infrastructure

- 10.1 The construction of-
 - (g) *Communication networks including towers, telecommunication and marine telecommunication lines and cables;*
 - (j) *Masts of any material or type and of any height, including those used for telecommunication broadcasting and radio transmission, but excluding - (i) flag poles; and (ii) lightning conductor poles.*

Subsequently, to comply with the EMA and its Regulations and ensure environmental management and sustainability, MTC Namibia appointed Serja Hydrogeo-Environmental Consultants CC (Serja Consultants), Independent Environmental Consultants to apply for the ECC and conduct the required Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.

The EIA process will entail baseline assessment of the biophysical & social environment and public consultation. The findings of the EIA process are then incorporated into an EIA Report and a Draft EMP will also be developed for the proposed project activities. The ECC application is submitted to and registered with the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) as the Environmental Regulatory Authority.

Once the ECC is issued by the Environmental Commissioner, the Proponent will plan for the activities and thereafter commence with the tower construction activities and subsequently, its operations and maintenance.

1.2 The Purpose of this Document

It should be noted that this BID is not an EIA Report, but a non-technical summary of the EIA process, but used to:

- Share first-hand summarized information of the proposed project activities.
- Provide public guidance and basis for their participation from the beginning of the EIA process and register as interested and affected parties and raise issues/concerns.
- Register the ECC application on the Portal.

The information obtained from I&APs will then form basis of the EIA Report and EMP to help the Regulatory Authorities (MEFT) to make informed decisions and consider the issuance of the ECC.



Figure 1: Locality map of the 25m MTC lattice tower in Okahandja

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Planning and Design

The proposed 25m high lattice tower will host 3x dual band antennae and 1x microwave dish. Selection of the tower site was based on Radio Access Network Urban coverage for both voice and data services.

2.2 Construction Phase

Construction works for this project will include excavation, concrete civil works and tower rigging. There will be minimal earthworks required to prepare the sites for the tower construction and installation. The construction of the concrete foundation for the tower and its will take place onsite by using manual labour as far as possible.

The construction works is anticipated to take 2 to 3 months and the construction activities will be limited to normal working hours, i.e., 08h00 and 17h00.

For security purposes, the tower site will be fenced off to restrict access to authorized personnel (such as maintenance team) only, and prevent vandalism. A contractor will be appointed to carry out the tower construction/installation. The appointed contractor will have and make arrangements for the logistics (including accommodation) of their own workforce but not onsite. MTC and their appointed contractor for construction, will be required to adhere to health, safety and environment requirements for construction and operation (as well as maintenance) to be presented in the Draft EMP for the project.

2.2.1 Required Resources and Services

The following services and infrastructure as provided below will be required for the project activities:

- Human resources and accommodation: The number of workers required for the construction of the tower, and all logistics related to the workers, will be determined by the contractor to be appointed for construction works once the ECC is issued.
- Accommodation: The construction contractor will be responsible for their own private accommodation, but offsite.
- Water supply: although an insignificant amount of water is required during tower construction, minimal water will still be needed for in-situ concrete mixture (foundation casting) as well as drinking. This water will be sourced from the Town, either by purchasing from the host (MAWLR) premises or upon agreement with the Okahandja Municipality.
- Power supply: electricity is not required during the construction stage of the tower, but only during the operational phase. Therefore, the tower will be connected to the 3 Phase AC power from Okahandja Municipality upon engagement between the two parties (MTC and Municipality).
- Fuel Supply (machinery and equipment): there will be no onsite refuelling of project vehicles as this will be required to be done at the nearest fuel service stations in the Town.
- Accessibility (roads): The site is accessible off the Industrial North Street in Okahandja Industrial area.
- Waste management: the different waste will be handled as follows:
 - Sewage: A portable toilet will be provided on site and emptied according to manufacturers' instructions.
 - General and domestic waste: Solid waste containers will be made available onsite for waste storage and later proper disposal at the Okahandja Municipal site.

-Hazardous waste: All vehicles, machinery and fuel consuming equipment onsite will be provided with drip trays to capture potential fuel spills and waste oils.

The waste fuel/oils will be carefully stored in a standardized container to be disposed of at the nearest approved hazardous waste management facility.

- Health and Safety: Adequate and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided to all project personnel while on and working at site. A fully-equipped first aid kit will be readily available onsite.
- Potential Accidental Fire Outbreaks: A minimum of two well-serviced fire extinguishers will be readily available onsite.

2.3 Operations and Maintenance Phase

During this phase, the tower is operational and providing telecommunication signals to residents and businesses in the Town. Tower maintenance will be carried out by MTC maintenance team/department according to maintenance schedules, when and as necessary. MTC is required to adhere to environmental, health and safety measures to be provided in the site Draft EMP.

3 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

3.1 Positive impacts (Benefits)

- Creation of temporary jobs during tower installation phase.
- Increase access to telecommunications by enhancing communications capabilities in the area

-Promotes technical expansion of businesses/industries due to improved access to reliable communication services

-Contributes to local economic development through increased access to telecommunications services for local amenities and social infrastructure in the area.

3.2 Adverse (Negative) impacts

-Physical land / soil disturbance resulting in compaction and erosion

-Environmental pollution (littering)

-Impact on archaeological and cultural heritage resources, in the case of any archaeological and heritage finds onsite (inadvertent unearthing during site preparation/excavations).

-Potential health and safety risks associated with mishandling of construction and operations (and maintenance) equipment.

-Health and Safety issues related to Electromagnetic Radiation emitted from the antennae of cellular structures may affect human health.

-Civil Aviation concerns may arise regarding the height of the tower and the position and stability of transmitters, in relation to any civil aviation facilities in the tower's vicinity.

-Visual impact associated with the presence of the tower in the surrounding may be a nuisance to locals.

The above-listed potential impacts as well as new issues that may arise from comments submitted by I&APs via emails and or to be noted from the consultation meeting will be described/assessed, and addressed in the EIA Report. The management and mitigation measures of these potential impacts will be provided in the Draft EMP for implementation.

4 THE EIA PROCESS STEPS

The following steps are followed for this EIA Study:

- Step 1: Project initiation - ECC application and registration at the DEAF, development of stakeholders list and compilation of the BID.
- Step 2: Baseline assessment - Literature and legal review (desktop study) of applicable data sources.
- Step 3: Ongoing Public Consultation and facilitation (throughout the EIA process)

The EIA notifications will be placed in two different newspapers (*The New Era and Market Watch (Die Republikein, Namibian Sun & Allgemeine Zeitung)*) for two consecutive weeks, i.e., on 01 and 07 February 2024.

- Step 4: Information sharing - Circulation of the BID to pre-identified I&APs and public who request for EIA registration.
- Step 5: Public consultation meeting, site visit and assessment. A consultation meeting and engagement will be held in Okahandja and will be communicated to all registered stakeholders and I&APs, including neighbours to the site (project).
- Step 6: Compilation of the Draft Environmental Scoping Assessment Report and Environmental Management Plan (EMP), and Review of Documents.
- Step 7: Final Reporting and Submission of the EIA Report and EMP to the Environmental Commissioner at MEFT for evaluation and consideration of the ECC.

- Stage 8: Follow-Up with MEFT on the status of the evaluation of the submitted EIA documents and decision on the ECC.

All the inputs, concerns, issues and/or comments should be put **in writing** (email, short messages (SMS or WhatsApp) or clearly handwritten letters) so that they can be considered in the Environmental Assessment Report as well as in the Draft EMP.

Contact Person: Ms. Fredrika Shagama

- Email: eias.public@serjaconsultants.com
- Mobile No.: +264 81 749 9223 (via WhatsApp or SMS)
- P. O. Box 27318 Windhoek, Namibia

4.1 Details for the Consultation and Engagement Meeting

The consultation and engagement meeting will be held in Okahandja as per the following details:

- **Date:** Tuesday, 13 February 2024
- **Time:** 10h00
- **Venue:** Okahandja Municipality Small Hall, Okahandja Town

4.2 Deadline for Registration and Comments

The last date for registration as I&APs and or to submit comments, concerns and issues is on **before end of the day on Thursday, 29 February 2024.**