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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)**

**Environmental Scoping Assessment (ESA) for the proposed Construction and Operation of a 30m Lattice Telecommunication Tower in Omaruru-Ozondje Location, in the Erongo Region: An Application for Environmental Clearance Certificate**

**Environmental Consultant:** Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd

**Proponent:** PowerCom (Pty) Ltd

April 2024

## 1 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

PowerCom (Pty) Ltd (*The Proponent*) proposes to erect and operate a 30 m Lattice (network) tower in Omaruru, Erongo region. The proposed site is located in the area of (21°26'35.8"S 15°56'28.9"E), Erf 326 "Public Open Space", as indicated on the map in **Figure 1**.

Telecommunication-related infrastructures are among the listed activities that may not be undertaken without an Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC), as according to the Environmental Management Act (EMA) (2007) and its 2012 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. The relevant listed activities as per EIA regulations are:

- *10.1 (g) The construction of masts of any material or type and of any height, including those used for telecommunication, broadcasting, and radio transmission.*

In order to comply with the EMA and its Regulations, The Proponent has appointed Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd to conduct the required Environmental Scoping Assessment (ESA) process and submit the ECC application to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Forestry (DEAF) at the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT).

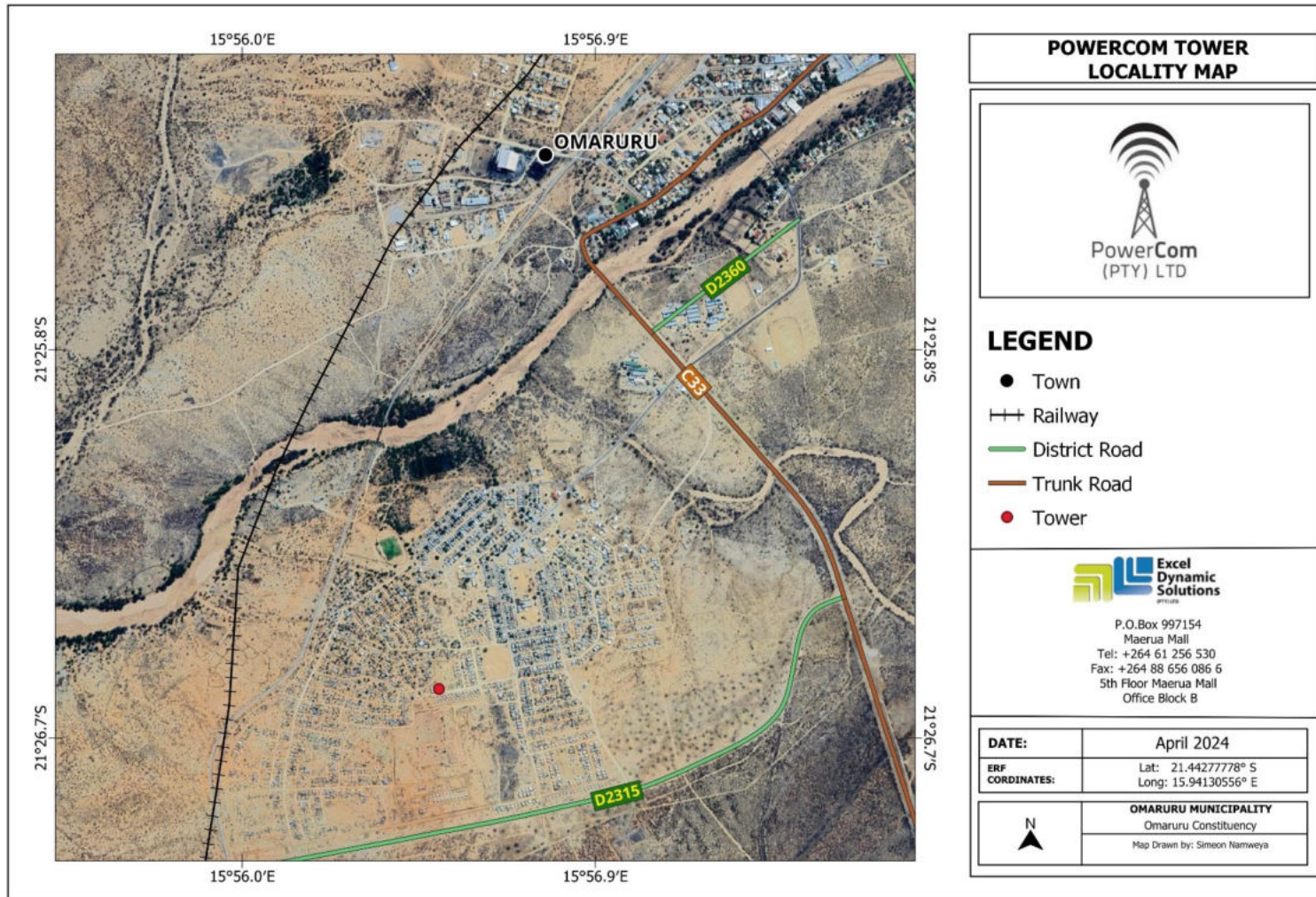


Figure 1: Locality map of the proposed site in Omaruru.

## **2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT**

It should be noted that the Background Information Document (BID) is a non-technical document of the ESA (not an ESA Report). The aim BID is to briefly introduce the proposed project and related activities to interested and affected parties (I&APs) / stakeholders, and provide them an opportunity to raise issues, comments and concerns about the proposed project.

The proposed installation and operation of the network antennae will only commence once the Proponent has been issued with an ECC and has obtained all required permits such as land use consent, where necessary,

## **3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Communications Act No. 8 of 2009, requires that service providers first consider sharing existing infrastructure in the area before erecting new structures. There is no other network infrastructure near the proposed site, therefore, there is a need for network antennae in the area.

There are criteria that are usually employed to optimize the positions of new structures in the telecommunication industry. These include coverage of existing network infrastructure, the topography of the area, current and future urban footprint and the surrounding built environment, and the most appropriate design of the facility.

Once the Proponent has been issued an ECC and obtained all relevant and required permits/licensing the proposed installation will commence on site.

### **3.1 Site Location and Ownership**

The regular network shortfalls experienced by mobile users in the area has led to this site selection. Furthermore, the outcome of the selection criteria used, provided the best potential position of the tower at Erf 326 “Public Open Space”, in the Omaruru – Ozondje Location. The site is under the ownership of the Omaruru Town Council, and land use (leasehold) agreement to occupy the land for the purpose of constructing a tower by PowerCom is awaiting officially written approval. The locality details of the site are shown in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1: Proposed site locality details**

<b>Site Name:</b>	Omaruru – Ozondje Location
<b>GPS Coordinates:</b>	21°26'35.8"S 15°56'28.9"E
<b>Local Authority:</b>	Town Council of Omaruru
<b>Regional Administration:</b>	Erongo Regional Council

### **3.2 Design and Technical Aspects**

The proposed tower will be a 30 m high, lattice structure mounted with antennae. The tower site will also include an outdoor cabinet, a perimeter fence, as well as electrical fencing to restrict unauthorized access. The site will be used to provide 3G/4G coverage for a  $\pm 1.5$  km radius, in order to have proper in-door and outdoor coverage. The footprint (surface area) to be covered by the tower and associated equipment/accessories is anticipated to be  $\pm 80$  m<sup>2</sup>, with only less of that total dedicated to the actual footprints of the tower.

### **3.3 Installation Phase**

There will be minimal earthworks to prepare the sites for the tower construction and installation. The construction work is expected to be completed within 3 months. The structures of the tower will be mounted to a concrete foundation and will not require any supporting cables. The physical assembling of the network structure and the construction of the foundations will

take place on the sites by using manual labour as far as possible.

For safety and security reasons, the tower site will be fenced to ensure restriction of access to the tower to authorized personnel (such as maintenance team) only, and to prevent vandalism.

PowerCom will appoint a contractor to carry out the construction. This work will be carried during weekdays only and between 08h00 and 17h00. Preference for the construction works will be given to locals, i.e., contractors from Windhoek.

The appointed construction contractors will not be housed on site but in their homes (for the locals) and in available accommodation facilities in Omaruru for out-of-town technical

staff (if necessary). Therefore, no campsite related to the proposed project will be set up on the site or its vicinity.

PowerCom, as well as the appointed contractor for construction, will be required to adhere to health and safety requirements to be presented in the Environmental Management Plan at the end of this study.

### **3.4 Operational and maintenance Phase**

This is the phase during which the tower will be operational and provide network signal to the residents and other future land users in these parts of the Town. Maintenance of the tower will be carried out by the PowerCom Maintenance Department, as and when required.

Similarly, to the construction phase (works), PowerCom, as well as the appointed contractor for construction, will be required to adhere to health and safety requirements to be presented in the Environmental Management Plan at the end of this study, during this phase.

### **3.5 Human Resources, Services, and infrastructure**

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

**Human resources:** The number of workers required for the installation of the communication tower can only be determined by the contractor to be appointed for installation works by PowerCom once the ECC is issued.

**Power Supply:** No electricity is required during the construction of the tower. However, it will be required during the operational maintenance phase of the tower. However, it will be required during the operational maintenance phase of the tower. Alternating Current (AC) power will be required for the operation of the tower and will be connected to the town's grid.

**Water supply:** Minimal amount of water will be required during construction. This water will be used for drinking and efficiently used for in-situ concrete mixture, i.e. the amount of water will be part of the concrete works for foundation casting. The required water will be sourced from the town. This will be upon agreement with the Municipality or relevant water supplier, who can be the nearest home or business owners.

**Health and Safety:** Adequate and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided to every project personnel while on duty at the site. A standard first aid kit will be readily available onsite during installation works.

**Waste management:** There will be minimal waste generated on site. This will include general, solid, and possibly wastewater (sewage). This different waste will be handled as follows:

**General and domestic waste:** Enough waste bins (containers) will be made available at the site to manage the accumulation of general and domestic waste on site during construction. The waste bins will be disposed of at the Omaruru landfill site.

**Sewage:** Portable ablution facilities will be provided on site and emptied according to manufacturers' instructions. The wastewater will then be transported offsite to the wastewater treatment facility in Omaruru or nearby towns.

**Accessibility (roads):** The site is within the town of Omaruru; therefore, it will be accessed through the existing access roads and streets.

**Potential Accidental Fire Outbreaks:** A minimum of basic firefighting equipment, i.e., a fire extinguisher will be readily available at the site during installation.

### **3.6 Decommissioning: Rehabilitation of Sites**

The Proponent will need to properly decommission the installation of antennae and carry out any necessary rehabilitation on the rooftop.

## **4 ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

This ESA process is conducted in accordance with the provisions laid out in the Environmental Management Act (No. 7 of 2007) and its' Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2012).

The primary objective of the ESA will be to identify potential negative impacts associated with the proposed activity and assess them. Practical and effective mitigation measures will be recommended for implementation.

The main objectives of this ESA are to:

- Identify potential impacts associated with the proposed Activity.

- Inform Interested and Affected I&APs and relevant authorities about the proposed activities and to provide them with a reasonable opportunity to participate during the EA process.
- Assess the significance of issues and concerns raised.
- Compile a report addressing all identified issues and potential impacts related to various aspects of the activity.
- Compile an Environmental Scoping Report as well as a Draft Environmental Management Plan (EMP) which includes impacts' management and mitigation measures.

#### 4.1 Pre-Identified Potential Impacts

The following potential impacts have been identified:

##### **Positive:**

- **Telecommunications convenience:** Current and future residents will have improved infrastructure and network coverage.
- **Employment creation:** Creation of temporary jobs during the installation.
- General contribution to local economic development through reliable communications services.

##### **Negative:**

- **Disturbance:** Installation activity may disturb the immediate neighbours.
- **Health and Safety issues:** Electromagnetic Radiation emitted from the antennae may affect human health.
- **Potential health and safety risks** associated with mishandling of installation and operations equipment.
- **Civil Aviation concerns:** The proposed site designs and location need to be verified to ensure that it meets the approval of the Directorate of Civil Aviation regarding the height of the masts and the position and stability of transmitters.



The potential impacts listed above are pre-identified and therefore should not be deemed as final or the only ones. Other potential impacts will be identified as the ESA process progresses i.e., upon site visit and consultation with the public (IAPs). All impacts and public concerns/comments will be incorporated and addressed in the Environmental Assessment Report and EMP.

#### **4.2 Public Consultation**

Public consultation is an important part of ESA process. During the consultation process, interested or affected members of the public are given an opportunity to find out more about the activity and raise any issues or concerns pertaining to the environmental assessment.

To comment or receive further information on the project, **please register with Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd using the details below:**

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Please make sure that the comments, issues and concerns should reach EDS **before or on 12 April 2024**. All registered I&APs will be kept informed throughout the various stages of the project and will be provided the opportunity to comment on the ESA Report.