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Document Type:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)

Project Name:

**Environmental Scoping Assessment (ESA) for the proposed
Construction and Operation of a Telecommunication Tower
in Grootfontein Extension 9, Otjozondjupa Region:
An Application for Environmental Clearance Certificate**

Environmental Consultant:

Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd

Proponent:

PowerCom (Pty) Ltd

Date:

September 2021

1 INTRODUCTION

PowerCom Pty Ltd (*The Proponent*) proposes to erect and operate a 30 m lattice telecommunication (network) tower in the town of Grootfontein. The proposed site is located in the area of Grootfontein Extension 9 (19°34'40.7"S 18°06'28.4"E), as indicated on the map in **Figure 1**.

Telecommunication towers and related infrastructure developments are among listed activities that may not be undertaken without an Environmental Clearance Certificate (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:

- *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, an independent team of Environmental Consultants 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).

2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

It should be noted that **this Background Information Document (BID) is not an Environmental Scoping Assessment (ESA) Report. The BID is a non-technical summary of the ESA**, aimed at sharing information and a basis for public involvement from the beginning of the ESA process. The purpose of the BID is therefore to provide project background information to stakeholders as well as interested and affected parties (IAPs), thus providing an opportunity for them (IAPs) to receive information, comment and raise issues regarding the environmental authorization process. The aim of this document is to:

- Briefly introduce the proposed project and related activities to potential IAPs and stakeholders, and provide information on the ESA process and how IAPs can get involved,
- invite members of the public to register as IAPs and added to the ESA database so that they can stay informed about the ESA progress throughout its process, and
- To provide all IAPs with an opportunity to comment or provide inputs or raise issues on the proposed project activities. The IAPs' inputs will then form basis of the ESA documents to help the competent and regulatory authorities (Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) and MEFT), respectively) to make informed decisions on the issuance of the ECC.

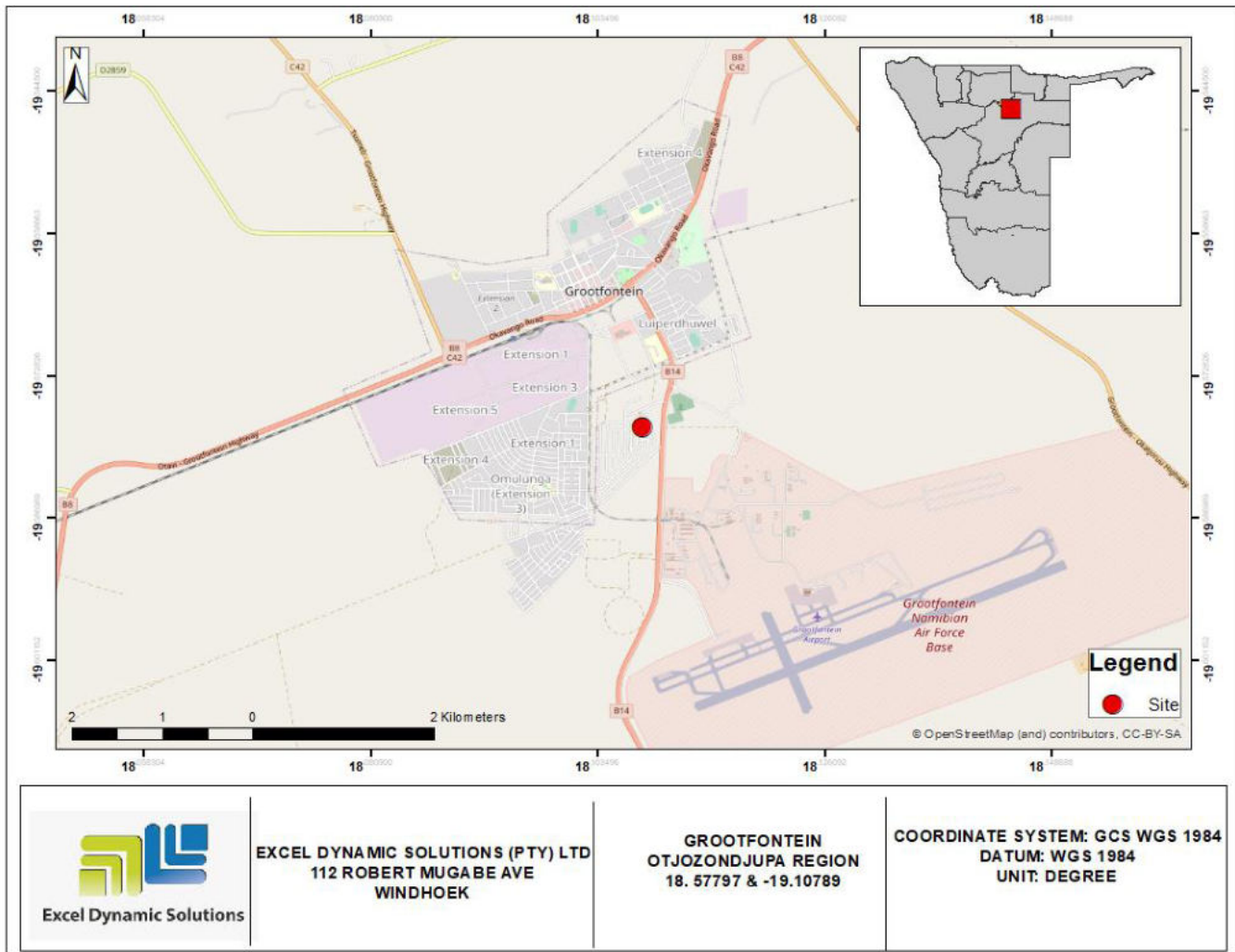


Figure 1: Locality map of the proposed telecommunication tower site in Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region

3 NEED AND DESIRABILITY OF THE ACTIVITY

Due to the constant growth in the use of mobile communication services in Namibia, the pressure (on service providers) to continuously expand the communications network is increasing. PowerCom has foreseen a shortfall in mobile network access (poor network signal) in this part of Grootfontein Town. This planned activity will provide additional capacity, reducing the congestion problems and improving coverage in the area. This will also ensure improved the quality of service provided to mobile users in the town.

4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Communications Act No. 8 of 2009, requires that service providers first consider sharing existing infrastructure in the area before constructing new structures. There is no other infrastructure near the proposed site, which could be shared by PowerCom to install/mount their antenna, therefore, they would need to construct a new tower.

There are criteria that are usually employed to optimise the positions of new structures in the telecommunication industry.

These include coverage of existing network infrastructure, surrounding topography & built-up environment, established and future urban areas, required footprint and the most appropriate design of the facility (GCS Water & Environmental Consultants, 2017).

Once the Proponent has been issued with an ECC and obtained all relevant and required permits/licensing such as land use /leasehold agreements, the proposed construction activities will commence at the site.

4.1 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 in Grootfontein Extension 9. The site is under the ownership of the Grootfontein Municipality, 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

Site Name:	Grootfontein Extension
GPS Coordinates:	19°34'40.7"S 18°06'28.4"E
Local Authority:	Municipality of Grootfontein
Regional Administration:	Otjozondjupa Regional Council

4.2 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 ±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 ± 80 m², with only less of that total dedicated to the actual footprints of the tower.

4.3 Construction 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 authorised 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 Grootfontein.

The appointed construction contractors will not be housed on site but in their homes (for the locals) and in available accommodation facilities in Grootfontein 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.

4.4 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.

4.5 Human Resources, Services, and infrastructure

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 can only be determined by the contractor to be appointed for construction works by PowerCom once the ECC is issued. The workforce will include skilled, semi- and unskilled workers, as necessary to complete the work. All non-skilled labour will be given to residents (from Grootfontein, preferably within the vicinity of the

tower site).

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. Alternating Current (AC) power will be required for the operation of the tower and will be connected to the site via the Central North Regional Electricity Distributor (CENORED) supply lines (PowerCom will need to engage the power supplier CENORED directly).

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.

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

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 Grootfontein 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 Grootfontein.

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

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

4.6 Decommissioning: Rehabilitation of Sites

The Proponent will need to properly decommission the construction works and carry out any necessary rehabilitation of

the site. This will include backfilling of any side trenches with topsoil. The aim is to ensure that disturbed site areas are left close to their pre-work state as much as possible.

5 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, assess them, and recommend practical and effective mitigation measures to be implemented by the Proponent to minimize these impacts, while maximizing positive impacts.

The main objectives of this ESA are to:

- Comply with Namibia's Environmental Management Act (2007) and its EIA regulations (2012).
- Identify potential impacts associated with the proposed Activity.

PowerCom (Pty) Ltd

- Inform Interested and Affected Parties (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.

5.1 Potential Impacts

The following potential impacts have been identified so far:

Positive:

- **Telecommunications convenience:** Current and future residents (mobile users) will have an improved infrastructure and will not have to struggle with network coverage.

BID: Telecommunication Tower in Grootfontein Extension 9

- **Employment creation:** Creation of temporary jobs during the construction of the tower.
- General contribution to local economic development through reliable communications services.

Negative:

- **Physical land / soil disturbance:** excavation activities to erect the tower could potentially lead to site soils' disturbance.
- **Disturbance:** During tower construction, the construction activity may disturb the immediate neighbours to the site.
- **Visual impact:** The presence of the tower in the neighbourhood may be a nuisance to locals.
- **Health and Safety issues:** Electromagnetic Radiation emitted from the antennae of cellular structures may affect human health.
- **Potential health and safety risks** associated with mishandling of construction 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.
- **Environmental pollution** from improper disposal of waste generated during construction and maintenance phases.
- **Archaeological or cultural heritage impact** through unintentional uncovering of unknown archaeological objects or sites by certain project activities such as excavation (the minimal site works).

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.

5.2 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.

You are hereby invited to the Public Consultation Meeting scheduled as follows:

Date: Wednesday, 06 October 2021

Time: 11h00

Venue: To be communicated to I&APs

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

Contact Person: Ms. Rose Mtuleni

Email: public@edsnamibia.com

Telephone No.: +264 (0) 61 259 530)

Please make sure that the comments, issues and concerns should reach EDS **before or on Friday, the 15th of October 2021**. 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 Scoping (ESA) Report.

APPENDIX E

List of Stakeholders / Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs)

Environmental Scoping Assessment for Telecommunication Site in Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region

No	Name	Position & Organization
The Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) / Environmental Consultant		
1.	Mr. Nerson Tjelos	Environmental Assessment Practitioner: Excel Dynamic Solutions Pty Ltd
The Project Proponent (PowerCom Pty Ltd)		
2.	Mercucio Mowes	Site Acquisition Officer
3.	Mr Patrick Britz	Senior Manager: Infrastructure
Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (Department of Environmental Affairs and Forestry)		
4.	Mr. Teofilus Nghitila	Executive Director

APPENDIX E

No	Name	Position & Organization
5.	Mr. Timoteus Mufeti	Environmental Commissioner
Ministry of Information and Communication Technology		
6.	Mr. Mbeuta Ua-Ndjarakana	Executive Director
7.	Ms. Emerencia Nguarambuka	Secretary to the ED
8.	Mr. Christopher Muhapi	Senior Information Officer: Otjozondjupa Regional Office
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform		
9.	Mr. Percy W. Misika	Executive Director (ED)
10.	Ms. Justy Matheus	Secretary to the ED

APPENDIX E

No	Name	Position & Organization
11.	Mr. Petrus Nangolo	Director: Land Reform
Ministry of Works and Transport		
12.	Ms Esther Kaapanda	Executive Director (ED)
13.	Ms. Charleen Benade	Secretary to the ED
14.	Ms. Monica A. Uupindi	Personal Assistant to Executive Director
Ministry of Urban and Rural Development		
15.	Mr. N Daniel	Executive Director
16.	Ms. Rosalia Ruben	Secretary to Executive Director
17.	Ms. B. van Wyk	Personal assistant to the ED
18.	Mr Big-Don Kondunda	Director: Habitat and Housing Development
Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN)		
19.	Mrs. Emilia Nghikembua	Chief Executive Officer



APPENDIX E

No	Name	Position & Organization
20.	Ms. Ella-Betty Chapoto	Secretary to the CEO
Roads Authority		
21.	Mr C. M. Lutombi	Chief Executive Officer
22.	Mr E. de Paauw	Senior Specialist Road Legislation, Advice & Compliance NP&C
Namibia Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA)		
23.	Mr. Nengola	Chief Executive Director (CED)
24.	Ms Gwendoline Kali	Secretary to the CED
National Radiation Protection Authority		
25.	Mr Axel Tibinyane	Director
Otjozondjupa Regional Council		
26.	Ms. Agatha Mweti	Chief Regional Officer (CRO)
27.	Ms Diethilde Makgone	Secretary to the CRO
Grootfontein Town Council		

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No	Name	Position & Organization
28.	Mr. Sinvula	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
29.	Ms Stella Tjilepa	Personal Assistant
Affected Land Users (Property owners) and Directly Neighbours to sites		
30.	Hilma Ndimulunde	Erf 1634 Ext 9
31.	Paulina Amunyela	Erf 1632 Ext 9
32.	Aune	
33.	Brian S	Erf 1672 Ext 9
34.	N. Selma	Erf 1671 Ext 9
35.	Christina Fillemon	Erf 1631
36.	Arlin Hanghome	Erf 1630
37.	Edward Shilongo	Erf 1665
38.	Lucas N S	Erf 1499
Other Registered Interested & Affected Parties (I&APs) / Members of the Public		



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No	Name	Position & Organization
39.	Nakasole Hosea	NUST
40.	Sylvia Matheus	NUST

SITE NOTICES

Environmental Scoping Assessment for Telecommunication Site in Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region



Grootfontein Municipality



Omulunga Community Hall



Puma Service Station Extension 9



Proposed Tower Site

Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd
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MINUTES FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING:

ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING ASSESSMENT (ESA) FOR THE PROPOSED 30 m TALL LATTICE TELECOMMUNICATION TOWER AT GROOTFONTEIN EXTENSION 9, IN GROOTFONTEIN, OTJOZONDJUPA REGION

Date: Wednesday, 06 October 2021

Time: 11H 00

Venue: Omulunga Community Hall, Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa Region

The Public Consultation Meeting was attended by four (4) Interested and Affected Parties, including two Environmental Consultants from Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd (EDS) - **Please refer to the attached attendance register.**

COVID-19 REGULATIONS ADHERENCE

Upon arrival at the Community Hall entrance, all COVID-19 Health Regulations protocol were adhered to from the procession of the meeting. Hand sanitizer was provided at entrance and meeting seats were arranged to observe social distancing. The attendees were also requested to keep their facemasks on throughout the meeting.

MEETING AGENDA AND PRESENTATION

Ms. R. Mtuleni presented the agenda of the meeting, which included the following items:

- **Introduction and welcoming**
- **Site information and Location**

Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd
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- **Description of the Project**
- **The Main Legal Framework & ESA/EIA process**
- **Preliminary potential impacts identified- positive and negative**
- **Stakeholder questions, concerns and comments**
- **Concluding remarks**

2.1 Explanation of what an ESA is, its Process and the Public Role in the Process

Ms. Mtuleni explained the purpose of an ESA and presented the proposed construction and operation activities of the Project. Additionally, Ms. Mtuleni presented the pre-identified potential positive and negative environmental and social impacts of the project.

2.4 Public Open Discussion (Interactive Session)

The meeting attendees were presented with an opportunity to raise their concerns/issues and or comment on the proposed project activities.

No major issues and comments were received from the participants, except a requirement for clarity on the location of the site, which was provided thereafter.

FINAL REMARKS AND CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING

Ms. Mtuleni concluded the meeting by thanking the attendees for making time for the meeting and raising their concerns. She indicated to the attendees that all their comments, concerns and inputs had been noted down for consideration and addressing in the Environmental Scoping Assessment (ESA) Report as well as incorporating any further recommendations into the draft EMP.

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Ms. Mtuleni further informed the attendees that there is still an opportunity after the meeting (two weeks) to submit further questions/ comments for incorporation into the draft ESA Report. She further informed the attendees that the draft Report together with the meeting minutes will be shared with them for review and further comments prior to finalizing the ESA Report and its submission to the Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism for consideration of an ECC.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30

Public Meeting Attendance Register

PROJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA) FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A
TELECOMMUNICATION TOWER IN GROOTFONTEIN EXTENSION 9, OT JOZONDJUPA REGION.

Venue: Omulunga Community Hall
Date: Wednesday, 06 October 2021
Time: 11h00

No	Name	Organization	E-mail Address	Telephone Contact	Signature
1.	Althea Brandt	EDS	abrandt@edsnamibia.com		
2.	Rose Mtsheni	EDS	rose.m@edsnamibia.com		
3.	NAKASOLE HOSEA	MUST	hoseanukulobole999@gmail.com	0813073053	
4.	Sylvia Mathews	NUST	216015235@students.nust.na	0813204064	
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					



Excel Dynamic Solutions

— Consultants, Data Experts, Project Managers —

**ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING ASSESSMENT (ESA) FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A
TELECOMMUNICATION TOWER IN GROOTFONTEIN EXTENSION 9, OTJOZONDJUPA REGION**

PUBLIC CONSULTATION LETTERS – DELIVERY REGISTRY

No.	Name	Capacity & Institution or Erf Number	Cell & Email (if any)	Date of delivery
Interested & Affected Parties / Neighbours to the Site				
1.	Christira Filleman	Erf 1631	081 81 29 629	06/10/2021
2.	Arlin Hanghorne	erf 1630	ndeyapohanghorne@gmail.com 0817697529	06/10/2021
3.	Edward Shilonga	Erf 1665	shilongsech@gmail.com 0810436744	06/10/2021
4.	Lucas NS	1479	shimbradecoa@gmail.com 081 621 7080	06/10/21
5.				



Excel Dynamic Solutions
— Consultants, Data Experts, Project Managers —

ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING ASSESSMENT (ESA) FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A
TELECOMMUNICATION TOWER IN GROOTFONTEIN EXTENSION 9, OTJOZONDJUPA REGION

PUBLIC CONSULTATION LETTERS – DELIVERY REGISTRY

No.	Name	Capacity & Institution or Erf Number	Cell & Email (if any)	Date of delivery
Interested & Affected Parties / Neighbours to the Site				
1.	Hilma Ndimulunde	Erf 1634 Ext 09	hnamuterya7@gmail.com	06 Oct 2021
2.	Paulina Amunyela	Erf 1632 Ext 09	0817809609	06 Oct 2021
3.	Aune		0811281936	06/10/2021
4.	BRIAN S.	ERF 1672 EXT 09	briansmatter16@gmail.com 0816376526	06/10/2021
5.	N. Selma	ERF 1671	0812476999	06/10/2021