

Environmental Impact Assessment and Management Plan for the Construction and Commissioning of an Eco-friendly Seawater Desalination Plant at Farm Hentiesbaai Town and Townlands No 133 in Henties Bay

Minutes of Public Consultation Meeting 25 November 2019, 16h30 Henties Bay Community Hall

1. Present

Please see the attendance register. There were 6 participants in the meeting in total. These included representatives of the Henties Bay community, the Proponent and the Consultant. Due to poor attendance, the Consultant together with the Proponent went door to door distributing Background Information Document (BID) to the business community around town. The purpose of the Public meeting was explained to them and the public was requested to send their comments to the details provided in the Background Information Document.

2. Welcome Remarks

The Proponent, Mr. Armin Wormsbaeher welcomed all present at the meeting and showed a brief video of the planned activity. The Environmental Consultant welcomed all present and informed the meeting that they were expected more people to attend as some stakeholders have expressed interest in attending the meeting and to know more about the project. He, however, welcomed those in attendance and indicated that the meeting will go ahead as planned and will reach out to other members of the Henties Bay community through a door to door meetings and also hand out Background Information Documents to the residents and Interested & Affected Parties (I&APs).

3. Introduction

The Environmental Consultant, Mr. Festus Kapembe 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 seawater eco-friendly desalination plant in Henties Bay area. Secondly, the consultant also indicated that community members can still express their comments/inputs or objection if there is any on the proposed project.

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 ESIA in terms of potential positive and negative impacts and mitigation measures. 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 project.

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 once that there will be opportunities for employment such as during construction stage where the proponent indicated that construction workers will be sourced from the Erongo Region mostly Henties Bay, Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. 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 proponent has been offered a place by the Municipality of Henties Bay, which is about 6 km east of Henties Bay town and share borders between the townland and the Dorob National Park. The place was offered to the proponent through the Municipal Council and the proponent is currently working to meet all the requirements i.e. conducting the EIA to obtain an Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) in order for the project to commence.

4.3. What other benefits will the Henties Bay community and Erongo Region, in general, get as a result of the proposed desalination plant?

Answer: In addition to local employment, the desalination plant will be beneficial to the Erongo Region as the activities will contribute to the economic growth of the region. Water is a scarce commodity in Namibia and thus investing in such a plant will place Henties Bay and Erongo Region in a better position to provide clean water for its residents and other Namibians. The plant will also grow a few trees that could eventually turn the place from its desert area to a greener area.

4.4. How many people will be employed at the desalination plant?

Answer: The exact number of people to be employed will be determined by the size of the plant to be built. However, it is hoped that there will be about 50 permanent employees with others employed as casuals. The number of employees is likely to increase in three (3) to five (5) years once the plant is fully operational.

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 desalination plant using renewable power will be announced as soon as the necessary requirements have been met. Once, the contractors are contacted, and the site handed over, the community will be informed through the local channels i.e. notice board at the Municipality of Henties Bay and also through their 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 construction of the desalination plant is open for national bidding and thus any Namibian contractor that

meets the requirements can bid and the proponent can issue the tender to the successful bidder. The meeting was further informed that the construction of the plant will require plus-minus 20 people of which 5 persons can be from the community while the rest are technical positions that require skilled and qualified people.

- 4.6. One of the community members asked whether the proponent is capable of operating such a complicated plant and whether it will have the capacity to provide water for the whole country?

Answer: The meeting was informed that the purpose of the proposed plant is to test its viability and the outcome will inform the proponent to expand the facility to make it bigger enough to supply the whole country. The meeting was further informed that that concept design of the plant has been done and the proponent is the developer of the concept and has the necessary experience to operate such plant.

- 4.7. Are there already appointed contractors for this project?

Answer: Not yet, the contractor will be appointed as soon as the relevant requirements at the Ministry of Environment and Tourism as well as the Abstraction Permit at the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform and thereafter, the construction contractor will be appointed.

5. Other concerns the Henties Bay community raised by the community:

- 5.1. A representative of the Henties Bay Municipality wanted to know whether the proponent will be taking water from the ocean or from boreholes if they will take from boreholes, whether an assessment was done to ensure there is enough underground water? The meeting was assured that an underground water assessment was being done and a study will be submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to seek for an authorisation to drill boreholes and abstract water from there.

- 5.2. There was also another concern that there is already another desalination plant that was initiated by AREVA a few years ago and community members were concern whether the proposed desalination might end up being the same white elephant. The proponent explained and assured the concerned member of the community that the proposed plant will be a success and that there are already links with some national and international investors and thus will succeed.

6. Time of adjournment:

- 6.1. The meeting was adjourned at 19:30.

Minutes compiled by Ms. Cammie Shilongo (Consultant, KPM Environmental).