

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A 30M HIGH TELECOMMUNICATION MAST ON PORTION 28 OF FARM NO. 71, EENDEKUIL, PIKETBERG, WESTERN CAPE



PRE-APPLICATION BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR COMMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proposed Activity

This application is for the proposed development of a 30m high telecommunications mast and base station on Portion 28 of Farm No. 71, Eendekuil, Piketberg, Western cape. The proposed mast will be a lattice mast and will be 30m in height and will have a development footprint of 64m² (8m X 8m). Antennas will be placed on top the top part of the mast. The base station will include an equipment room to house the operator equipment, as well as three future service provider equipment containers for future clients. The mast will be constructed on a cement plinth and be surrounded by a 2.4m high palisade fence. No pipelines will be installed. No roads will be constructed. Electricity to power the mast will be sourced from the landowner. The site co-ordinates are **32° 40' 53.59" S, 18° 53' 43.42" E**. Please refer to Appendix B for the site plans.

Environmental Requirements

The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, Act 107 of 1998), as amended, makes provision for the identification and assessment of activities that are potentially detrimental to the environment and which require authorisation from the competent authority based on the findings of an Environmental Assessment. NEMA is a national act, which is enforced by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). In the Western Cape, these powers are delegated to the Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning (DEA&DP).

According to the regulations of Section 24(5) of NEMA, authorisation is required for the following:

Government Notice R985 (Listing Notice 3):

Activity no. 3: "The development of masts or towers of any material or type used for telecommunication broadcasting or radio transmission purposes where the mast or tower-

- (a) is to be placed on a site not previously used for this purpose; and*
- (b) will exceed 15 metres in height-*

but excluding attachments to existing buildings and masts on rooftops".

i. Western Cape:

- "i. All areas outside urban areas;**
- ii. Areas designated for conservation use in Spatial Development Frameworks adopted by the competent authority, or zoned for a conservation purpose, within urban areas; or
- iii. Areas zoned for use as public open space or equivalent zoning within urban areas".

Site Description

This application is for the proposed development of a 30m high telecommunications mast and base station on Portion 28 of Farm No. 71, Eendekuil, Piketberg, Western Cape. The proposed mast will be a lattice mast and will be 30m in height and will have a development footprint of 64m² (8m X 8m). Antennas will be placed on top the top part of the mast. The base station will include an equipment room to house the operator equipment, as well as three future service provider equipment containers for future clients. The mast will be constructed on a cement plinth and be surrounded by a 2.4m high palisade fence. No pipelines will be installed. No roads will be constructed. Electricity to power the mast will be sourced from the land owner. The site co-ordinates are **32° 40' 53.59" S, 18° 53' 43.42" E**. Please refer to Appendix B for the site plans.

The site is completely transformed from its natural condition due to past development activities on the property and is covered with some kikuyu grass and is surrounded with some tall trees. There is an existing dwelling approximately 75m north-west of the proposed site. According to Mucina and Rutherford, the Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (WCBSP 2017), the vegetation unit located on the property is Swartland Shale Renosterveld, a Critically Endangered vegetation type. This unit is listed as a threatened ecosystem in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004) (NEM: BA). The remaining natural area of the ecosystem is 8% and the proportion of ecosystem protected is less than 1% of original area. At least 35 endemic plant species and 151 Red Data List plant species occur in the ecosystem. The site does not fall within a Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA). However, the site is located within an Ecological Support Area (ESA). Please refer to Appendix D for the Biodiversity Overlay Map. There are no rivers or wetlands on or within

32m of the proposed the site. The site is approximately 1.4 km west of Kruismans River. Please see Appendix B for the site plans, **Appendix A1** for the locality map as well as **Appendix C**.

Conclusion

The proposed 30m high telecommunication lattice mast will allow for multiple service providers/ mobile network operators to attach and house their equipment (antennas) on the mast, decreasing the need for additional communications masts to be erected in the area. The benefits of telecommunications services in modern society are potentially limitless. The proposed activity will increase the coverage of these telecommunications services, including providing a more reliable and wider coverage. The activity would create a more efficient telecommunications service, considered essential to the business and private sector. The data capabilities provided by the proposed mast are also important in business, education and for the public, and has thus become paramount for social and economic development.

The construction of the telecommunications mast is therefore considered as part of the essential services for the greater community. The proposed communications mast is not expected to have any adverse effects on people's health and well-being (refer to **Appendix K4** and **Appendix K5**). It is also not expected to produce any noise or odours during the operational phase. Some noise can be expected during the construction phase, but this will be temporary, and the impact is expected to be negligible. Due to the design and location of the proposed communications mast, the activity is expected to have a medium-high impact on the visual character of the area. As a mitigation to the visual impact, the proposed mast must be painted green in order to blend in with the surrounding environment.

The site does not fall within a Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA). However, the site is located within an Ecological Support Area (ESA). Please refer to Appendix D for the Biodiversity Overlay Map. No cultural or historical aspects were identified on the site. There are no rivers or wetlands on or within 32m of the proposed the site. Kruismans River is approximately 1.4km west of the proposed site. Please see Appendix B for the site plans, Appendix A1 for the locality map as well as Appendix C. Any potential negative impacts during the construction phase are expected to be adequately mitigated through the implementation of the Environmental Management Programme ("EMPr") and the appointment of an Environmental Control Officer ("ECO") during the construction phase. Considering all the information, it is not envisaged that this proposed development will have a significant negative impact on the environment.

It is therefore recommended that this application be authorised with the necessary conditions of approval as described throughout this Pre-Application draft BAR for comment.