

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A 35M HIGH TELECOMMUNICATION MAST ON PORTION 1 OF FARM UITKOMST NO. 343, LAASTEDRIF BOERDERY, CERES, WESTERN CAPE



FINAL BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR COMMENT

SEPTEMBER 2020

**THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A 35M HIGH
TELECOMMUNICATION MAST ON PORTION 1 OF
FARM UITKOMST NO. 343, LAASTEDRIF
BOERDERY, CERES, WESTERN CAPE**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proposed Activity

This application is for the proposed development of a 35m high telecommunication mast on Portion 1 of Farm Uitkomst No. 343, Laastedrif Boerdery, Ceres, Western Cape. The proposed development will a lattice mast, will be 35m in height and will have a development footprint of 68.5m². Antennas will be placed on the top part of the mast. The mast base station will be enclosed with a 2.4m high steel palisade fence for safety and security reasons (please refer to Appendix 2). The mast and base station will have three equipment containers for future clients and will have an access gate. No pipelines will be installed. No roads will be constructed. Electricity to power the mast will be sourced from landowner. The site co-ordinates are **33° 17' 37.86" S, 19° 39' 1.89" 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 35m high telecommunication mast on Portion 1 of Farm Uitkomst No. 343, Laastedrif Boerdery, Ceres, Western Cape. The proposed development will a lattice mast, will be 35m in height and will have a development footprint of 68.5m². Antennas will be placed on the top part of the mast. The mast base station will be enclosed with a 2.4m high steel palisade fence for safety and security reasons (please refer to Appendix 2). The mast and base station will have three equipment containers for future clients and will have an access gate. No pipelines will be installed. No roads will be constructed. Electricity to power the mast will be sourced from landowner. The site co-ordinates are **33° 17' 37.86" S, 19° 39' 1.89" E**. Please refer to Appendix B for the site plans.

The site is in a degraded state and has some patches of indigenous vegetation present. However, the proposed site is zoned for agricultural purposes and is surrounded by agricultural land uses. The proposed site is located on an undeveloped part of the property and is located adjacent to existing farm gravel road. There is dam approximately 245m south-east of the proposed site, mainly used for irrigation purposes. Lucerne and canola are being farmed on the property and surrounding farms.

According to Mucina and Rutherford, the Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (WCBSP 2017), the vegetation unit located on the property is Matjiesfontein Shale Renosterveld, a **Least Threatened** vegetation type. This unit is listed as a least threatened ecosystem in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004) (NEM: BA). The site does not fall within a Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA). However,

the site is located within an **Ecological Support Area (ESA1)**. 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**. Please see Appendix B for the site plans, Appendix A1 for the locality map as well as Appendix C.

Conclusion

The proposed 35m 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 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 (ESA1). 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. There is a non-perennial stream approximately 370m south-east of the site and another non-perennial stream approximately 250m north 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 Final BAR for comment.