



**SUSTAINABLE
FUTURES ZA**

DEA ref: 12/12/20/1302

Dear Stakeholder,

**APPLICATION FOR AMENDMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL
AUTHORISATION: PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A WIND ENERGY
FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE ON A SITE NEAR
HOPEFIELD IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE**

**NOTIFICATION OF REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
AUTHORISATION: DEA REFERENCE No. 12/12/20/1302**

Umoya Energy obtained an authorisation for the construction of a wind energy facility and associated infrastructure on a site near Hopefield, Western Cape Province (DEA Ref No: 12/12/20/1302) in September 2009.

In terms of this environmental authorisation, the project description referred to the installation of 50 wind turbine units (circa 80m in height) with a diameter rotor of circa 96m. Following subsequent developments in technology since 2009, and in finalising the site development plan, Umoya Energy is now proposing to install up to 40 turbines with an increased hub height up to circa 95m. This will enable a newer technology turbine to be installed on the site which is better suited to the conditions on the site (and will increase the efficiency of the facility), and will further reduce the development footprint of the proposed facility (i.e. 10 less turbines than the 50 turbines originally proposed).

The activity as described in the environmental authorisation has been requested to be amended as follows:

- Up to 40 wind turbine generators with a hub height of up to 95m, rotor diameter of up to 115 m.
- An underground concrete foundation of approximately 22m x 22m to support each tower.

In terms of Condition 1.19 of the Environmental Authorisation, it is possible for an applicant to apply, in writing, to the competent authority for a change or deviation from the project description to be approved. In this regard, Umoya Energy have requested DEA's approval to amend the project description as above. Savannah Environmental has prepared a motivation in support of this request/application on behalf of Umoya Energy, and has also provided detail pertaining to the significance and impacts of the proposed change to the project description in order for the competent authority to be able to reach a decision. The supporting documentation includes impact statements from the avifauna specialist (the Endangered Wildlife Trust) and the visual specialist (MetroGIS) regarding the proposed amendment in turbine heights and numbers.

From the investigations undertaken, it is concluded that:

- » the change in hub height of the proposed turbines does not result in a change in the overall area of disturbance as assessed in the EIA;
- » the comparative viewshed analysis indicates that the medium- to short-distance observation (and potential visual impact) of the two alternative hub heights will be very similar (i.e. a negligible difference in visual exposure), but that the potential frequency of visual exposure will be less/lower due to the reduced number of wind turbines. To this end, the construction of fewer turbines (even if they are marginally taller) would be favoured for short to medium distance sightings;
- » a 15m difference in turbine height does not present any change in the significance of the impacts on birds as previously assessed. The increased turbine size is accompanied by a decrease in the proposed number of turbines, which may in fact lessen the impacts on birds;
- » the reduction in the number of turbines supports condition 1.13 of the Environmental Authorisation, as the reduced area of impact would keep the footprint of the impact to a minimum.

The repositioning of turbines would take into account all environmental constraints identified through the EIA process, as well as the conditions of the environmental authorisation granted in 2009. A final facility layout will also be required to be submitted to the National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) for acceptance.

This letter serves to bring the proposed amendment application to the attention of interested and affected parties, stakeholders and relevant Organs of State. In terms of Regulation 56 of the EIA Regulations (2010), an opportunity is being provided for registered interested and affected parties to submit written comment on the amendment application. The motivation for amendment and relevant information is available at www.savannahSA.com. Please submit your written comment by 30 September 2011. To obtain further information in this regard, please contact Shawn Johnston.

Kind regards

Shawn Johnston

(letter not signed, sent via email)

September 2011

** The Hopefield Wind Energy Facility is proposed to be registered as a CDM project in order to obtain carbon credits. **