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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REPORT

AQUA FARMING DROOGFONTEIN PIVOT AGRICULTURE EIA





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1 INTRODUCTION

Aqua Farming (Pty) Ltd (hereafter referred to as the applicant) has appointed Environmental Impact Management Services (Pty) Ltd (EIMS) as the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to assist with undertaking the required authorisation processes (including the statutory public participation), and to compile and submit the required documentation in support of application for:

- Environmental Authorisation (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Management Act, NEMA (Act 107 of 1998- as amended), GNR984,2014 (Listing Notice 2) and GNR985, 2014 (Listing Notice 3).
- Water Use Licence (WUL) for various relevant water uses in accordance with the National Water Act – NWA (Act 36 of 1998).

Additional activities to be applied for may be raised and will be confirmed during the process.

The applicant wishes to develop pivot irrigation systems for the cultivation of seed potatoes, potatoes, onions, and various grass-feed crops. The development of these pivots will occur in phases/seasons over the course of 7 years. With each phase/season, approximately 175 Ha will be cleared for the pivots. Therefore, after approximately 7 years a total of 1050 Ha will have been cleared. An alternative pivot layout is discussed in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIR), where an alternative option would be to reduce the number of pivots and reshuffle the position and size of the remaining pivots, which would reduce the amount of vegetation clearing by approximately 330 ha and in so doing reduce the number of protected trees affected. The priority would be to remove approximately 10 pivots from the areas of high sensitivity (high tree densities).

The total area that will need to be assessed in support of the Environmental Authorisation application for the project is 1800 ha. The proposed project is located approximately 20 km North from Kimberley, on the Remainder of the Farm Bulpan 51, the Remainder of the Farm Witpan 52, Portion 2 of the Farm Eerste Aan Leg 50 and a section of Portion 16 of the Farm Droogfontein 62, in the Sol Plaatje Local Municipality, Frances Baard District Municipality, Northern Cape Province. Additionally, Aqua Farming wishes to build a buffer dam as a reservoir for irrigation water with a capacity of approximately 50 000 m³ of water. This water will be sourced from the Vaal River. The current existing water use licence will need to be amended accordingly.

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

South Africa, being one of the countries with the most progressive constitutions, enshrined the public's right to be involved in decisions that may affect them in its Constitution. Section 57(1) of the new Constitution that provides: *"The National Assembly may (b) make rules and orders concerning its business, with due regard to representative and participatory democracy, accountability, transparency and public involvement"*. This provision, along with several others gave rise to many new trends in South African legislation. In environmental legislation, the idea of public participation (or stakeholder engagement) features strongly and especially the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998, NEMA) and the recent regulations passed under the auspices of this Act makes very strict provisions for public participation in environmental decision-making.

Public participation can be defined as..."*a process leading to a joint effort by stakeholders, technical specialists, the authorities and the proponent who work together to produce better decisions than if they had acted independently*"¹. From this definition, it can be seen that the input of the public is regarded as very important indeed.

The Public Participation Process (PPP) is designed to provide sufficient and accessible information to Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) in an objective manner to assist them to:

During the Environmental Authorisation:

- Verify that their issues have been recorded;
- Comment on the findings of the environmental assessments; and



- Provide relevant local information and knowledge to the environmental assessment.

The PPP is a requirement of several pieces of South African Legislation and aims to ensure that all relevant I&APs are consulted, involved and their opinions are taken into account and a record included in the reports submitted to Authorities. The process ensures that all stakeholders are provided this opportunity as part of a transparent process which allows for a robust and comprehensive environmental study. The PPP for the necessary authorisation required for the project needs to be managed sensitively and according to best practises in order to ensure and promote:

- Compliance with international best practice options;
- Compliance with national legislation;
- Establishment and management of relationships with key stakeholder groups; and
- Encouragement of involvement and participation in the environmental study and authorisation/approval process.

As such, the purpose of the PPP and stakeholder engagement process is to:

- Introduce the proposed project and process for the authorisation project;
- Explain the environmental authorisation;
- Determine and record issues, concerns, suggestions, and objections to the project;
- Provide opportunity for input and gathering of local knowledge;
- Establish and formalise lines of communication between the I&APs and the project team;
- Identify all significant issues for the project; and
- Identify possible mitigation measures or environmental management plans to minimise and/or prevent negative environmental impacts and maximise and/or promote positive environmental impacts associated with the project.

This Public Participation Report (PPR) lists all verbal and written issues raised by I&APs during the call to register period from the 12th of February 2025 to date. A breakdown of the PPP is given within the remaining sections of this PPR.

3 LEGAL COMPLIANCE

The PPP must comply with all environmental legislation that requires public participation as part of an application for authorisation or approval; namely, the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, Act No. 107 of 1998).

Adherence to the requirements of the above-mentioned Act will allow for an Integrated PPP to be conducted, and in so doing, satisfy the requirements for public participation referenced in the Act. The details of the Integrated PPP are provided below.

4 IDENTIFICATION OF INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES (I&APS)

An initial I&AP database has been compiled from historic projects in the area, and Windeed searches were conducted to obtain the contact details of the surrounding landowners. The I&APs referred to in the PPR include:

- Pre-identified and registered landowners and surrounding landowners;



- Pre-identified and registered key stakeholders;
- Regulatory authorities;
- Specialist interest groups; and
- All I&APs who responded to the initial notifications and requested to be registered.

Efforts to pre-identify key I&APs involved various avenues such as consultation with the proponent and known landowners within the study area, review of related previously conducted studies, and identification of key interest groups and authorities within the vicinity of the study area and municipality. Refer to Appendix 1 for the Key Stakeholder/I&AP Database.

4.1 LIST OF ORGANS OF STATE IDENTIFIED AND NOTIFIED

The following key I&APs, but not limited to, were notified of the proposed project and invited to participate in the public participation process:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Agricultural Research Council | • National Department of Environmental Affairs, Forestry and Fisheries. |
| • Department of Environment & Nature Conservation (DENC) Northern Cape | • National Department of Human Settlements |
| • Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment | • National Department of Rural Development and Land Affairs |
| • Department of Mineral Resources & Energy (DMRE) | • National Department of Tourism |
| • Department of Science and Technology | • National Department of Transport |
| • Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) | • National Department of Water and Sanitation |
| • Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) Upper Orange WMA | • National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) |
| • DFFE Biodiversity Conservation | • National House of Traditional Leaders |
| • DWS (Allocation Equity) | • National Transmission Company of South Africa (NTCSA) - Eskom |
| • DWS (Compulsory Licensing) | • National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform And Rural Development |
| • DWS (Water Abstraction and Instream User) | • Northern Cape Department of Health |
| • Eskom | • Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Land Reform and Rural Development |
| • Eskom SOC LTD | • Northern Cape Provincial Heritage Resource Agency |
| • South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) | • Northern Cape Department of Agriculture |
| • National Department Of Agriculture, Land Reform And Rural Development | • Northern Cape Department of Co-operative Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs (NC COGHSTA) |
| • "National Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs" | |



- Northern Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism (NCDEDAT)
- Northern Cape Department of Environment and Conservation
- Northern Cape Department of Roads & Public Works (NC DR&PW)
- Northern Cape Department of Social Development (NCDSD)
- Northern Cape Department of Water and Sanitation
- Northern Cape Economic Development Agency
- Northern Cape Economic Development, Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (NCEDA)
- Northern Cape Heritage Resources Authority (NCHRA)
- Northern Cape Protech and Agri Revolution (Pty) Ltd
- Northern Cape Tourism Authority
- Northern Cape Wetland Forum
- Northern Cape: Department of Transport, Safety and Liason
- Petroleum Agency of South Africa
- PetroSA (SOC) Limited
- SANBI
- Sol Plaatje Local Municipality
- South African Civil Aviation Authority
- South African Department of Defence
- South African National Defence Force (SANDF)
- South African National Parks (SANParks)
- South African National Roads Agency Ltd (SANRAL)
- South African National Roads Agency Ltd: Northern Region
- Transnet SA SoC Ltd

4.2 LIST OF OTHER KEY I&APS IDENTIFIED AND NOTIFIED

- Pre-identified and registered landowners and surrounding landowners.
- AgriCulture South Africa (AgriSA).
- Agri Northern Cape.
- BirdLife South Africa.
- Botanical Society.
- Centre for Environmental Rights.
- Conservation South Africa (CSA).
- Council for Geoscience.
- Earth Life Africa
- Endangered Wildlife Trust
- Federation for a Sustainable Environment
- GroundWork SA
- Natural Justice
- Northern Cape Wetland Forum
- Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA)
- World Wildlife Fund

5 NOTIFICATION OF INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES

This section provides details on the notifications that were distributed as part of the consultation process to date.



5.1 INITIAL NOTIFICATION OF KEY I&APS

The PPP commenced on the 12th of February with an initial call to register notification. Notification during this initial consultation was given in the manner described below.

5.2 FAXES, REGISTERED MAIL AND EMAILS

Notification letters (in English, Afrikaans, and Setswana) were distributed to pre-identified I&APS through either faxes, SMSs, registered mail, and/or emails on the 12th of February.

The notification documents included the following information:

- Authorisations required;
- Sufficient detail of the proposed development to enable I&APS to assess/surmise what impact the development will have on them or the use of their land;
- The purpose of the proposed project;
- Details of the application processes associated with proposed activities;
- Details of the affected properties;
- Details of the South African environmental legislation that must be adhered to;
- Contact details of the EAP.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for initial notification and proofs.

5.3 NEWSPAPER AND GAZETTE ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements (in English, Afrikaans, and Setswana) describing the proposed project and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process were placed in the Diamond Fields Advertiser with circulation in the vicinity of the study area on the 14th of February 2025. The Gazette Notice was placed in the Northern Cape Provincial Gazette on the 3rd of March 2025. The newspaper and Gazette Notice adverts included the following information:

- Project name;
- Applicant name;
- Project location;
- Nature of the activity;
- Legislative requirements; and
- Relevant EIMS contact person for the project.

Please refer to Appendix 3 for proof of the advert and gazette notice placed.

5.4 SITE NOTICE PLACEMENT

Four (4) A1 Correx site notices (in English, Afrikaans, and Setswana) were placed at 4 locations around the proposed project study area on the 20th of February 2025. The on-site notices included the following information:

- Project name;
- Applicant name;
- Project location;
- Map of proposed project area;
- Project description;



- Legislative requirements; and
- Relevant EIMS contact person for the project.

Please refer to Appendix 4 for proof of site notice and site notice distribution.

6 NOTIFICATION OF INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES OF SCOPING REPORT AVAILABILITY

Notification (in English, Afrikaans, and Setswana) regarding the availability of the Scoping Report for public review and comment was provided to pre-identified and registered I&APs. The notifications were distributed through either email, registered mail, fax, and/or SMS, where contact details are available.

Contact details were provided to I&APs should they require assistance accessing the information or require copies of the reports.

A hard copy of the Scoping Report was placed at the Kimberly Public Library on 22 May 2025 for a period of 30 days. An electronic copy of the Scoping Report was made available on the EIMS Public Participation Website on 22 May 2025.

Please refer to Appendix 5 for proof of Scoping Report Availability notification.

7 NOTIFICATION OF INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES OF EIA REPORT AVAILABILITY

Notification (in English, Afrikaans, and Setswana) regarding the availability of the EIA Report for public review and comment was provided to pre-identified and registered I&APs. The notifications were distributed through either email, registered mail, fax, and/or SMS, where contact details are available.

Contact details were provided to I&APs should they require assistance accessing the information or require copies of the reports.

A hard copy of the EIA Report was placed at the Kimberly Public Library on 3rd of September 2025 for a period of 30 days. An electronic copy of the EIA Report was made available on the EIMS Public Participation Website on 3rd of September 2025.

Please refer to Appendix 6 for proof of EIA Report Availability notification.

8 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

The table below provides a summary of the opportunities provided to I&APs for participation in the public participation process to date.



Table 1: Summary of Public Participation Opportunities

Action	Description	Publication/Place	Date
Initial Call to Register	Notification of landowners, occupiers, and other key I&APs.	Affected landowners and key I&APs were notified via email, fax, SMSs and/or post.	12 February
	Placement of site notices.	Four (4) A1 Correx site notices (in English, Afrikaans, and Setswana) were placed at 4 locations along the proposed project study area.	20 February 2025
	Newspaper advertisement and Gazette Notice.	Advertisements (in English, Afrikaans, and Setswana) describing the proposed project and EIA process were placed in the Diamond Fields Advertiser Newspaper. The Gazette Notice was placed in the Northern Cape Provincial Gazette	20 February 2025 (Newspaper) 03 March 2025 (Gazette Notice)



Action	Description	Publication/Place	Date
Availability of Scoping Report for public review	Placement of hard copy Scoping Report.	One (1) hard copy of the report was placed at Kimberly Public Library where members of the public could access the report.	22 May 2025
	Placement of Scoping Report electronic copy.	An electronic copy of the report will be placed on the EIMS website. A data free service will be made available to anyone who has limitations with respect to data downloads.	22 May 2025
Availability of EIA Report for public review	Placement of hard copy EIA Report.	One (1) hard copy of the report was placed at Kimberly Public Library where members of the public could access the report.	3 September 2025
	Placement of EIA Report electronic copy.	An electronic copy of the report will be placed on the EIMS website. A data free service will be made available to anyone who has limitations with respect to data downloads.	3 September 2025

9 RECORD OF ISSUES RAISED

Comments on the proposed project were solicited from pre-identified and registered I&APs and key stakeholders. To date, the following comments have been received:



- I&AP registration
- Request for project description, shapefile, and locality map.
- Comments from NC DAERL
- Comment from DFFE: Directorate: Forest Resource Protection (NC)
- Request for a site visit from DFFE: Biodiversity and Conservation branch

All comments and/or queries received to date are included in this report and presented in Appendix 7. Please refer to Appendix 8 for proof of correspondence.

10 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The comments received during the initial call to register and Scoping Report Review period were used to inform the compilation of this PPR.



11 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: IAP Database

Please note that in an effort to protect the personal information of the Registered I&AP's the contact information of the I&APs will not be made publicly available. Should you require access to this document for the purposes of fulfilling your obligations under the NEMA EIA Regulations or other lawful right, please feel free to contact the EIMS Information officer at 011 789 7170 or popia@eims.co.za



Appendix 2: Initial Notification Proof

Please note that in an effort to protect the personal information of the Registered I&AP's the contact information of the I&APs will not be made publicly available. Should you require access to this document for the purposes of fulfilling your obligations under the NEMA EIA Regulations or other lawful right, please feel free to contact the EIMS Information officer at 011 789 7170 or popia@eims.co.za



Appendix 3: Newspaper and Gazette Notice Proof



Appendix 4: Site Notice Proof



Appendix 5: Scoping Report Availability Notification

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Appendix 6: EIAR Availability Notification

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Appendix 7: Table of Correspondence



Appendix 8: Correspondence Document

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