

**30 February 2025**

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING MINUTES:**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING ASSESSMENT (ESA) FOR THE PROPOSED WATER TREATMENT PLANT ACTIVITIES LOCATED IN OPUWO, KUNENE REGION.**

**Date:** Tuesday, 25 February 2025

**Time:** 12:00 – 15:00

**Venue:** Opuwo open Market, Kunene Region.

The public consultation meeting was attended by forty-eight (48) people, including two (2) Environmental Consultants, one (1) Archaeologists from Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd (EDS) - **Please refer to the attached attendance register.**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOMING REMARKS**

The meeting was formally convened by the Chairperson of the Opuwo Management Committee, who commenced the proceedings by extending a warm welcome to all attendees, including the traditional authorities, conservancy leaders, consultants, and Offices, Ministries, and Agencies (OMA's).

Excel dynamic Solution the environmental consultants gave an introduction of the team, who they are, and why they are consulting affected parties of the proposed water treatment plant. The meeting attendance register was then circulated for the attendees to write down their names and contact details so that they could be added to the list of interested and affected parties (I&APs) and receive further information on the ESA process.

## **2. MEETING AGENDA AND PRESENTATION**

The agenda of the meeting included the following main points:

### **2.1 Brief Description of the Project**

The Environmental Scoping Assessment (ESA) and the reason that the Proponent appointed Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd (EDS), an independent Environmental Consultant to carry out the ESA and apply for the Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC).

### **2.2 Explanation of what an ESA is, its Process, and the Public Role in the Process**

Ms. Aili lipinge explained to the attendees the purpose of the meeting and why they were invited (with reference to the Environmental Management Act (EMA) No. 7 of 2007 and its 2012 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations on Public Consultation). Ms. Aili lipinge further explained what an ESA is and that the proposed water treatment plant is one of the listed activities in the 2012 EIA Regulations of the EMA that cannot be undertaken without an ECC from the Environmental Commissioner.

### **2.3 Presentation of Potential Project Impacts**

To ensure transparency and that the attendees understand both sides of the proposed project activities, the Environmental Consultants also presented the potential pre-identified potential positive & negative environmental and social impacts.

### **2.4 Public Open Discussion (Interactive Session)**

Ms. Aili lipinge allowed the meeting attendees to raise their concerns, issues and/or comments on the proposed project activities. The concerns/issues and comments recorded are presented in **Table 1** below.

### **2.5 Presentation of Water treatment plant**

The ALV Engineering Consultants commenced their presentation by introducing their team and providing an overview of their professional background. They proceeded to deliver a comprehensive explanation of water treatment plants, including their purpose, the various types of water treatment systems, and the rationale behind the design of a new water treatment plant. Furthermore, they provided a detailed technical description of the operational mechanisms and processes involved in the proposed water treatment plant.

**Table 1: Comments and issues raised during the public consultation meeting, 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2025**

Comment/ issue No.	Commenter name & issue/comment/question	Response and name of responder:
1.	<p><b>Commenter 1:</b> I am not objecting the proposed activity because it's of our interest however we would like to be accorded the opportunity to visit other plants in the country to witness how it would look like.</p> <p>We also came up with a list of names that we want to propose for the naming of the plant.</p>	<p><b>Mr. Aili lipinge (AI):</b> Well, Noted.</p> <p><b>Mr. AI:</b> Well, noted.</p>
2.	<p><b>Commenter 2 (Engineering consultants):</b> I just want to know from the Environmental consultant if they can incorporate other proposals that come with the waste treatment plant e.g. access road, in case we will need to reinstate to avoid water bodies</p> <p>I wanted to inquire on the change in the size of the allocated land given the reduction from 24-Ha to 8-Ha, because our design requires at least 20-ha.</p>	<p><b>Mr. AI:</b> Yes, we will be working together on this project, as I highlighted the Engineers will need to share the layout and the design so we advise from an environmental perspective.</p> <p><b>Opuwo Town Council (OPC):</b> The community complaint that the 24-ha land allocation is too much, so we decided on 8-ha only for the design of treatment plant and exclude the irrigation system. The 8-ha was the only offer from the community.</p>

Comment/ issue No.	Commenter name & issue/comment/question	Response and name of responder:
3.	<p><b>Commenter 3:</b> The 8 Ha being mention is it the one we rectified or does it refer to the another one?</p> <p>Should the project be approved what is the minimum construction period expected to be taken?</p>	<p><b>OPC:</b> It's the one we are rectified.</p> <p><b>ALV Engineers:</b> a project of this kind usually takes between 9 months to 1 year</p>
4.	<p><b>Commenter 4 (Otjiurunga Traditional Authority):</b> We are now talking in terms or Hectare but when we were at the site, we spoke in meters is that a transformation of units?</p> <p>Are we going to have another meeting with the council or is this the last meeting</p> <p>In terms of environment to the plants, stones, animals that will be damaged will they be paid for? And who will pay for it?</p>	<p><b>ALV engineers:</b> Hectares is just another way of measuring an area instead of saying meter square, so 8 ha is 80 000 square meters.</p> <p><b>OPC:</b> There is still a lot of meetings, town council is to work with the community to facilitate the environmental assessment with the Engineers, environmental, community. The meeting will not end here.</p> <p><b>Ms. AI:</b> Environment damage would be the responsibility of the Opuwo Town Council because they are the owners of the project however we will provide environmental</p>

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	<p>I just want to comment on the reduction of the size from 24ha to 8 ha, does these reductions also not affect the advantages because some of the advantages might be lost with the reduction of size.</p>	<p>management plan to which the contractors must adhere to avoid any environmental damage.</p> <p><b>Ms. AI:</b> Well, noted.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Commenter 5 (Oukongo / Otjiuanda Traditional Authority):</b> We have been tenants on this town because the town has been gradually moving us to the periphery of the town, now the town is bringing its projects to where we are living and now, we don't know about the future if we will still be moved again.</p> <p>I have been to other towns and I have seen their oxidation ponds which are not in a good condition and so how is this team different and are we not just going to be left with a deteriorated oxidation plant like other towns I have visited?</p>	<p><b>OPC:</b> With the town's development projects now extending into your current area, it is understandable to feel uncertain about the future. However, the relocation of Waste water to the periphery is part of a strategic effort to accommodate the town's growing population and ensure sustainable urban planning.</p> <p><b>ALV Engineering:</b> The Opuwo Town Council will need to ensure they maintaining the wastewater plant furthermore the plant we are designing we will be incorporating measures for the plant to require minimum maintenance or have limited costs.</p>

Comment/ issue No.	Commenter name & issue/comment/question	Response and name of responder:
6.	<b>Commenter 6:</b> The oxidation ponds are smelly and us that stay nearby the oxidation pond we suffer from this smell and I strongly recommend the oxidation should be moved far from residents.	<b>Ms. AI:</b> Well, Noted.

#### FINAL REMARKS AND CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING

Ms. Aili lipinge thanked the attendees for their crucial input through comments and raising their concerns. She indicated to the attendees that all their comments, concerns, and inputs had been noted down for consideration and addressing in the Environmental Scoping Assessment (ESA) Report as well as incorporating their recommendations into the draft EMP.

Furthermore, Ms. Aili lipinge informed the attendees that the draft meeting minutes, Environmental Assessment Report, and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) will be shared with them for review and further comments. These documents will be made available through emails provided on the attendance register.

Once the review of the draft ESA Report and EMP is done, the documents will be finalized and submitted to the Environmental Commissioner at the Department of Environmental Affairs and Forestry (DEAF) for evaluation and consideration of an ECC.

The meeting adjourned at 15h00.