

8.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OBJECTIVES

Public consultation is an inclusive and culturally appropriate process which involves sharing information and knowledge, seeking to understand the concerns of others and building relationships based on collaboration. It allows stakeholders to understand the risks, impacts and opportunities of the Project in order to achieve positive outcomes.

The public participation process is designed to provide information to and receive feedback from interested and affected parties (I&AP) for use throughout the EIA process, thus providing organisations and individuals with an opportunity to raise concerns and make comments and suggestions regarding the proposed project. By being part of the assessment process, stakeholders have the opportunity to influence the Project layout and design, and provide input into mitigation measures, technical solutions, and the Plan of Study for the EIA.

The main objectives of public participation are:

- i. to ensure that adequate, accessible and timely information is provided to those potentially affected by the Project;
- ii. to provide these groups with sufficient opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns;
- iii. to ensure that comments are received in a timely manner; and
- iv. to demonstrate that comments received are responded to and taken into account in Project decisions.

8.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Public participation with regards to EIAs in South Africa is determined by the principles of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (Act 107 of 1998, as amended) and elaborated upon in 'GN 657: Guideline 4: Public Participation' (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 19 May 2006), which states that: *"Public participation process means a process in which potential interested and affected parties (I&APs) are given an opportunity to comment on, or raise issues relevant to, specific matters."*

Public participation is required for an environmental authorisation process in terms of the EIA Regulations GN R.982 (December 2014).

Table 8.1 details the public participation tasks that have been undertaken to date.

Table 8.1 Public Participation Tasks

| Activity | Description and Purpose |
|---|---|
| Pre-Application | |
| Preparation of a preliminary stakeholder database | A preliminary database has been compiled of authorities (local and provincial), Non-Governmental Organisations, neighbouring landowners and other key stakeholders (refer to <i>Annex B</i>). This database of registered I&APs will be maintained and updated during the ongoing EIA process. |
| Preparation and Distribution of a Background Information Document (BID) | BIDs were distributed via email and post to all I&APs on the stakeholder database. See <i>Annex B</i> . The BID provides an introduction to the Project and the EIA process. |
| Advertisement of the Project and Open House Meeting | The Project was advertised on 21 January 2016 in the local newspaper the <i>Weslander</i> (English) and regional newspaper <i>Die Burger</i> (Afrikaans). See proof of Advertisement in <i>Annex B</i> . |
| Open House Meeting | An open house meeting was held at Hoedjiesbaai Hotel, Saldanha Bay on 16 February 2016 to present the proposed Project and solicit input from stakeholders into the scoping process. Presentation, attendance registers and meeting notes are included in <i>Annex B</i> . |
| Development of an Initial Comments and Response Report | All comments received during the initial consultation period and at the open house meeting were recorded in a Comments and Response Report. See included in <i>Annex B</i> . |
| Post-Application | |
| Erection of Site Notices | Site notices have been placed at the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Saldanha Bay Public Library; • The Saldanha Bay Municipality Office notice board; • At the entrance to the project site. |
| Release of draft Scoping Report for Public Comment | The draft Scoping Report was released for a 30 day public comment period: 4 March 2016 – 6 April 2016 (including three public holidays). Notifications were sent to all stakeholders on the database and the report was made available online (www.erm.com/saldanhasteel) and in the Saldanha Bay Public Library. |
| Development of a Comments and Response Report | All comments received during the Scoping consultation period were recorded into a Comment and Response Report. See included in <i>Annex B</i> . |
| EIA Phase | |
| Release of draft EIR and EMP for Public Comment | The draft EIR and EMP document was made available to stakeholders and the relevant authorities for a 30-day comment period (22 July – 25 August 2016). A notification letter was sent to all registered I&APs on the project database. The letter invited I&APs to comment on the draft EIR, and included details of the public meeting (see below). All comments received, along with responses, have been included in the final EIR in <i>Annex B</i> . |

| Activity | Description and Purpose |
|--|--|
| Public Meeting | A public meeting was held at the Hoedjiesbaai Hotel, Saldanha Bay on 11 August 2016 in order to present the EIA findings to stakeholders. A copy of the presentation, attendance register and meeting notes are included in <i>Annex B</i> . |
| Reminder Notification | A notification to inform stakeholders that the presentation from the public meeting was available on the Project website, and to remind stakeholders when the comment period closed was distributed to I&APs on the Stakeholder Database. <i>See proof of distribution in Annex B.</i> |
| Re-release of draft EIR and EMP for Public Comment | Based on comments received on the Draft EIA Report, the report was revised and made available for comment for a further 30 days, from 16 September to 18 October. A notification letter was sent to all registered I&APs on the project database and the report was available online on the Project webpage (www.erm.com/saldanhasteel) and in the Saldanha Bay Library. All comments received, along with responses, have been included in the final EIR in <i>Annex B</i> . |
| Notification of Environmental Authorisation | I&APs will be notified of the Environmental Authorisation and the statutory appeal period. An advertisement will be placed to advertise the Environmental Authorisation. |

A summary of the main concerns raised through the public participation process to date is provided in *Table 8.2*. Detailed comments and responses are included in the Comments and Response Report in *Annex B*.

Table 8.2 *Summary of Key Comments raised during the EIA*

| Topic | Issue |
|--------------------|--|
| Air Emissions | <p>Stakeholders noted that the Project will generate dust and exhaust emissions which could be of concern from health and nuisance perspective. It was noted that the Project must comply with the National Dust Control Regulations of 1 November 2013 (GNR No. 827) in terms of the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 2004 (Act No. 39 of 2004) (NEM:AQA).</p> <p>It was further noted that the air quality study must identify appropriate management and mitigation measures to address the emission sources from the proposed CCGT plant and traffic.</p> |
| Noise Emissions | <p>There is a concern that Project will generate noise which may affect surrounding land users.</p> <p>It was noted that noise generated during the construction and operational phases of the development must comply with the Western Cape Noise Control Regulations (Provincial Notice 200/2013) of 20 June 2013.</p> |
| Impact on Avifauna | There is concern that the Project site lies across one of the main flyways for water birds and migrant waders, travelling between St. Helena Bay/Lower Berg River and Langebaan Lagoon. |

| Topic | Issue |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Impact on Flora and Flora | Stakeholders raised concerns regarding the potential impact on flora and fauna as some of the site falls within a CBA. It was noted that poor vegetation management and development in the area has put pressure on natural vegetation. Stakeholders requested that this issue be investigated in the botanical study. |
| Impacts on the Marine Environment | There is a concern that the marine environment is excluded from the scoping report, noting that the Project will increase shipping traffic in the Saldanha Bay marine environment and may impact on marine fauna and flora. |
| Socio-economic Impacts | Stakeholders wanted to know what kind of employment opportunities would be available to locals, and how many employment positions would be available. It was further noted that local employment should be prioritised. It was suggested that a partnership with the municipality should be developed to address possible pressure on the municipal infrastructure, especially basic services. |
| Water | There is a concern that the Project will increase pressure on stressed water resources within the area. Stakeholders noted that alternative sources of water must be considered. |
| Cumulative Impacts | Stakeholders pointed out that there are at least two other EIA processes being undertaken for gas turbine power plants within close proximity to the proposed site and that the potential cumulative impacts of the proposed must be assessed. |
| Traffic | Stakeholders noted that the Project will increase traffic volumes in the area and that a Traffic Study must be included as part of the EIA. |