
BIO THERM WIND ENERGY FACILITY BETWEEN UITKYK AND EXCELSIOR NEAR SWELLENDAM IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME: APPENDIX F PLANT RESCUE AND PROTECTION PLAN

Prepared for

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PLANT RESCUE AND PROTECTION PLAN

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the plant rescue and protection plan is to implement avoidance and mitigation measures to reduce the impact of the development of the Excelsior Wind Energy Facility project on listed and protected plant species and their habitats and to provide guidance on search and rescue of species of conservation concern.

2. RELEVANT ASPECTS OF THE SITE

The conservation status of species of conservation concern were identified based on the SANBI Red List of South African Plants (2013), while species protected at the provincial level are taken from the Western Cape Nature Conservation Laws Amendment Act of 2000. The Western Cape Nature Conservation Laws Amendment Act provides lists of protected species of plant and animals and in some cases whole plant genera or families may be listed as protected. The reader is referred to the schedules of the Act for a full list of species listed under the act. Of particular relevance are the following, which highlights the plant genera and families most likely to be encountered at the site and along the power line route, but is not intended to be a comprehensive list.

Schedule 4 Protected Flora:

- *Amaryllidaceae* – All species
- *Lachenalia* – All Species
- *Iridaceae* – All Species
- *Mesembryanthemaceae* – All species
- *Orchidaceae* – All species
- *Diascia* – All species

However no listed or protected plant species were observed within the development footprint during a walkthrough. The development footprint is restricted to transformed croplands with no likely impact on intact vegetation. There are some indigenous bushes along some of the fences, but these are likely to have colonised these areas secondarily and no geophytes or other species indicating that these areas are historically intact were present. There are however fragments of intact vegetation along the power line route. These have been avoided as far as possible and no impacts are expected on any protected species, however the following principals also apply for the power line where any impacts on protected species will occur.

3. PRINCIPLES FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE

Successful plant rescue can only be achieved if:

- » Species can be removed from their original habitat with minimal damage to the plant, especially the roots.
- » All plants removed are safely stored and treated according to their specific requirements prior to being transplanted again.
- » They are relocated into a suitable habitat and protected from further damage and all disturbances to aid their re-establishment.
- » Timing of planting activities is planned with the onset of the growing season.
- » Steps are taken where necessary to aid the initial establishment of vegetation, including occasional watering.

The following principles apply in terms of plant rescue and protection:

- » A permit is required to translocate or destroy any listed and protected species even if they do not leave the property. This permit should be obtained prior to any search and rescue operations being undertaken.
- » Where suitable species are identified, a search and rescue operation of these species should be undertaken within the development footprint prior to the commencement of construction.
- » As far as possible, timing of search and rescue activities should be planned with the onset of the growing season.
- » Affected individuals should be translocated to a similar habitat outside of the development footprint and marked for monitoring purposes. For each individual plant that is rescued, the plant must be photographed before removal, tagged with a unique number or code and a latitude longitude position recorded using a hand-held GPS device.
- » The rescued plants must be planted into a container to be housed within a temporary nursery on site or immediately planted into the target habitat.
- » Rescued plants, if re-planted back in the wild, should be placed as close as possible to where they were originally removed. Re-planting into the wild must cause as little disturbance as possible to existing natural ecosystems. The position of the rescued individual/s must be recorded to aid in future monitoring of that plant.
- » During construction, the ECO must monitor vegetation clearing at the site. Any deviations from the plans that may be required should first be checked for listed species by the ECO or Environmental Officer and any listed species present which are able to survive translocation should be translocated to a safe site.
- » Any listed species suitable for translocation observed within the development footprint that were not previously observed be translocated to a safe site.

- » The collecting of plants or their parts should be strictly forbidden. Staff should be informed of the legal and conservation aspects of harvesting plants from the wild as part of the environmental induction training.
- » Sensitive habitats and area outside project development should be clearly demarcated as no go areas during the construction and operational phase to avoid accidental impacts.