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

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME: APPENDIX H EROSION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Prepared for

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PRINCIPLES FOR EROSION MANAGEMENT

1. PURPOSE

Exposed and unprotected soils are the main cause of erosion in most situations. Therefore, this erosion management plan and the revegetation and rehabilitation plan are closely linked to one another and should not operate independently, but should rather be seen as complementary activities within the broader environmental management of the site and should therefore be managed together.

This Erosion Management Plan addresses the management and mitigation of significant impacts relating to soil erosion. The objective of the plan is to provide:

- A general framework for soil erosion and sediment control, which enables the contractor to identify areas where erosion can occur and be accelerated by construction related activities.
- An outline of general methods to monitor, manage and rehabilitate erosion, ensuring that all erosion resulting from all phases of the development is addressed.

2. RELEVANT ASPECTS OF THE SITE

According to the 1: 250 000 geology sheet 3420 Riversdale (Council for Geoscience, Pretoria) the proposed BioTherm Wind Energy Facility at the Uitkyk / Excelsior site near Swellendam is largely underlain by Devonian sediments of the Bokkeveld Group (Cape Supergroup). The known fossil record of these rocks is outlined in Table 3.1 (abstracted from Almond & Pether 2008). The palaeontological sensitivity of the Bokkeveld Group is rated as high. Superficial deposits in the area include river alluvium and Neogene (Late Tertiary) silcretes and other pedocretes of the Grahamstown Formation that are of low palaeontological sensitivity.

The soils in the study area are generally derived from Table Mountain sandstone and tend to be shallow, sandy and nutrient poor. Soils are typically loamy, derived from the underlying Bokkeveld group shales. The area's renosterveld flatland soils are generally more nutrient rich and subsequently are heavily exploited for agricultural purposes (Encyclopaedia of the Earth, 2009). Silcrete caps are a prominent feature in this area, and these flat rocky areas often have concave, exposed clay and gravel slopes just below these caps.

No specific areas that may be highly sensitive to erosion were identified in the EIA.

3. EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL PRINCIPLES

The goals of erosion control during and after construction at the site should be to:

- » Protect the land surface from erosion;
- » Intercept and safely direct run-off water from undisturbed upslope areas through the site without allowing it to cause erosion within the site or become contaminated with sediment; and
- » Progressively revegetate or stabilise disturbed areas.

These goals can be achieved by applying the management practices outlined in the following sections.

3.1. On-Site Erosion Management

General factors to consider regarding erosion risk at the site includes the following:

- » Soil loss will be greater during wet periods than dry periods. Intense rainfall events outside of the wet season, such as occasional summer thunder storms can also cause significant soil loss. Therefore precautions to prevent erosion should be present throughout the year.
- Soils loss will be greater on steeper slopes. Ensure that steep slopes are not devegetated and subsequently become hydrophobic (i.e. have increased runoff and a decreased infiltration rate) increasing the erosion potential.
- » Soil loss is related to the length of time that soils are exposed prior to rehabilitation or stabilisation. Therefore the gap between construction activities and rehabilitation should be minimised. Phased construction and progressive rehabilitation are therefore important elements of the erosion control strategy.
- » The extent of disturbance will influence the risk and consequences of erosion. Therefore site clearing should be restricted to areas required for construction purposes only. As far as possible, large areas should not be cleared at a one time, especially in areas where the risk of erosion is higher.
- » Roads should be planned and constructed in a manner which minimises their erosion potential. Roads should therefore follow the contour as far as possible. Roads parallel to the slope direction should be avoided as far as possible.
- » Where necessary, new roads constructed should include water diversion structures present with energy dissipation features present to slow and disperse the water into the receiving area.
- » Roads and other disturbed areas should be regularly monitored for erosion. Any erosion problems recorded should be rectified as soon as possible and monitored thereafter to ensure that they do not re-occur.
- » Compacted areas should have adequate drainage systems to avoid pooling and surface flow. Heavy machinery should not compact those areas which are not intended to be compacted as this will result in compacted hydrophobic, water repellent soils which increase the erosion potential of the area. Where compaction does occur, the areas should be ripped.

- » All bare areas should be revegetated with appropriate locally occurring species, to bind the soil and limit erosion potential.
- » Silt fences should be used where there is a danger of topsoil or material stockpiles eroding and entering streams and other sensitive areas.
- » Gabions and other stabilisation features should be used on steep slopes and other areas vulnerable to erosion to minimise erosion risk as far as possible.
- » Activity at the site after large rainfall events when the soils are wet and erosion risk is increased should be reduced.
- » Topsoil should be removed and stored separately during construction activities, and should be reapplied where appropriate as soon as possible in order to encourage and facilitate rapid regeneration of the natural vegetation on cleared areas (where applicable – not applicable to farmland / agricultural areas).
- » Regular monitoring of the site for erosion problems during construction (ongoing) and operation (at least twice annually) is recommended, particularly after large summer thunderstorms have been experienced.

3.1.1. Erosion control mechanisms

The contractor may use the following mechanisms to combat erosion when necessary:

- Reno mattresses
- Slope attenuation
- Hessian material
- Shade catch nets
- Gabion baskets
- Silt fences
- Storm water channels and catch pits
- Soil bindings
- Geofabrics
- Hydro-seeding and/or re-vegetating
- Mulching over cleared areas
- Boulders and size varied rocks
- Tilling

3.2. Engineering Specifications

A detailed Stormwater Management Plan describing and illustrating the proposed stormwater control measures must be prepared by the Civil Engineers and this should include erosion control measures. Requirements for project design include:

- Erosion control measures to be implemented before and during the construction period, including the final stormwater control measures (post construction).

- The location, area/extent (m²/ha) and specifications of all temporary and permanent water management structures or stabilisation methods must be indicated within the Stormwater Management Plan.
- An onsite Engineer or Environmental Officer to be responsible for ensuring implementation of the erosion control measures on site during the construction period.
- The Developer holds ultimate responsibility for remedial action in the event that the approved stormwater plan is not correctly or appropriately implemented and damage to the environment is caused.

3.3. Monitoring

The site must be monitored continuously during construction and operation in order to determine any indications of erosion. If any erosion features are recorded as a result of the activities on site the Environmental Officer (during construction) or Environmental Manager (during operation) must:

- » Assess the significance of the situation.
- » Take photographs of the soil degradation.
- » Determine the cause of the soil erosion.
- » Inform the contractor/operator that rehabilitation must take place and that the contractor/operator is to implement a rehabilitation method statement and management plan.
- » Monitor that the contractor/operator is taking action to stop the erosion and assist them where needed.
- » Report and monitor the progress of the rehabilitation weekly and record all the findings in a site register.
- » All actions with regards to the incidents must be reported on a monthly compliance report which will be submitted to the Competent Authority (during construction) and kept on file for consideration during the annual audits (during construction and operation).

The Contractor/ Developer (in consultation with an appropriate specialist) must:

- » Select a system/mechanism to treat the erosion.
- » Design and implement the appropriate system/mechanism
- » Monitor the area to ensure that the system functions like it should. If the system fails, the method must be adapted or adjusted to ensure the accelerated erosion is controlled.
- » Continue monitoring until the area has been stabilised.

4. CONCLUSION

The Erosion Management Plan is a document to assist the Developer with guidelines on how to manage erosion. The implementation of management measures is not only good practice to ensure minimisation of degradation, but also necessary to ensure compliance with legislative requirements. This document forms part of the EMPr, and is required to be considered and adhered to during the design, construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the project.

5. REFERENCES

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