

***“Valka” wind farm construction in the
parish of Valka in Valka municipality***

*Environmental Impact Assessment Report version
for Public Consultation
Summary*

Riga, August 2026



INSPIRING
ENVIRONMENT

Information about proposed activity

Name of the proposed activity: "Valka" wind farm construction in the parish of Valka in Valka municipality

Project developer: SIA "EWE Neue Energien 1", registration No. 40203559480, address: Marijas street 2, Riga, LV-1050

Location: Valka Parish, Valka Municipality

Up to 14 wind turbines

Wind turbine height up to 252 m

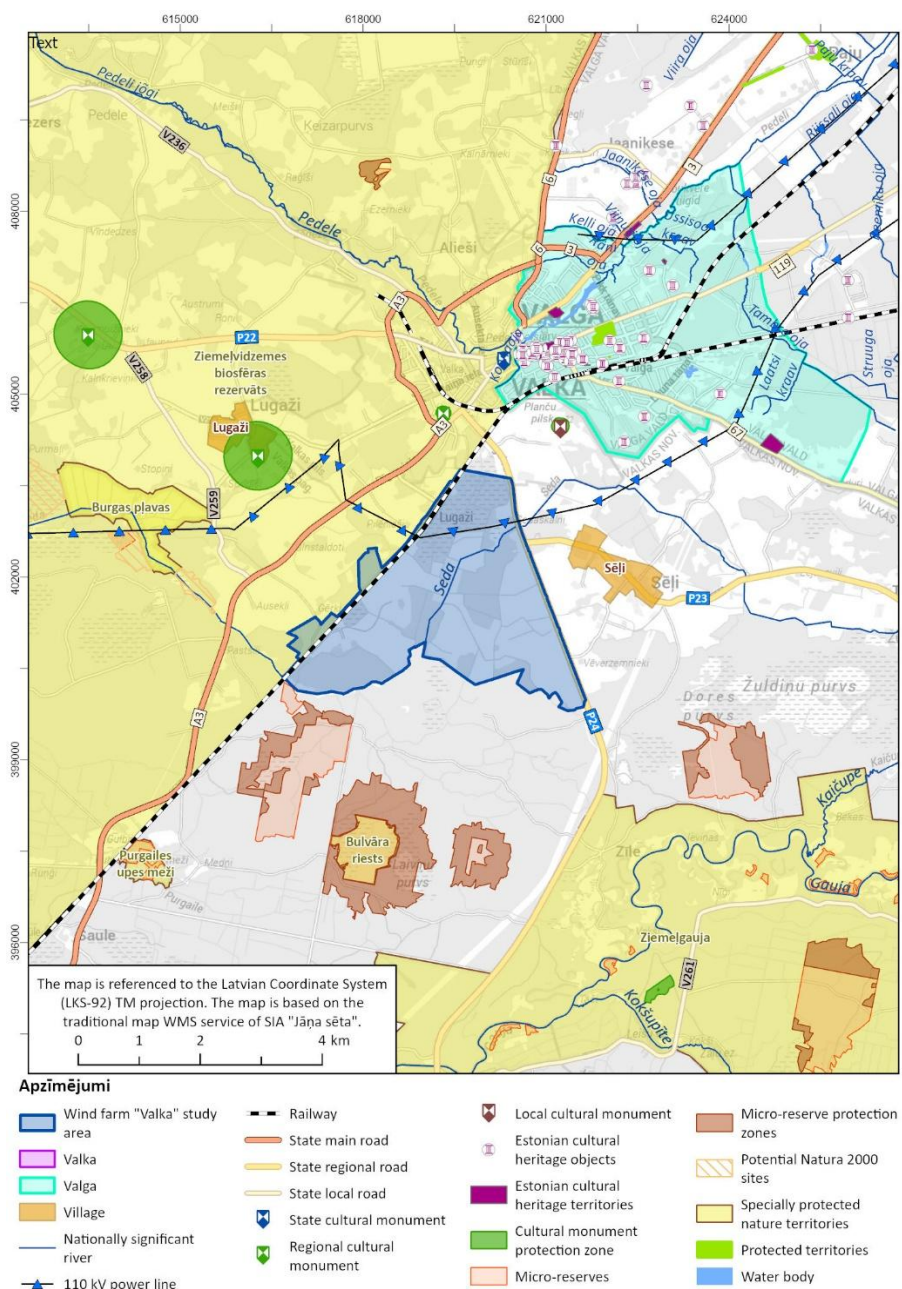
Three substation and battery location alternatives are evaluated

Up to 14 km new roads

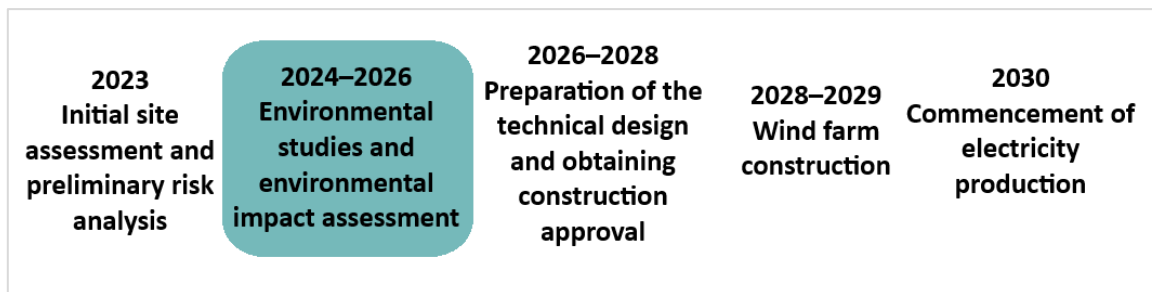
69 residential and public buildings within 2 km of wind turbines

Planned activity complies with municipal spatial plan

Wind farm's operating life is 20 – 25 years



Development stages of the “Valka” wind farm project



Construction Stage

During construction of the “Valka” wind farm, up to 14 wind turbines are planned to be constructed, together with the infrastructure required for their construction and operation – access roads, electricity transmission lines, a substation and battery units for electricity storage.

To construct the wind farm, reconstruction of the municipal road Ausekļi – Liepkalni is planned, as well as construction of approximately 14 km of new roads. Since the existing railway crossing cannot be used for delivery of wind turbine components, construction of a new railway crossing is planned.

The wind turbines, with a total height of up to 252 m and an installed capacity of approximately 7 MW per turbine, are planned to be constructed on monolithic reinforced concrete foundations. The estimated foundation diameter is 25 – 28 m, with a depth of 3 – 4 m. Following completion of the environmental impact assessment process, an engineering geological investigation will be carried out, during which the foundation design solution will be refined.

Electricity transmission cable lines will be constructed to transfer the generated electricity to the national transmission grid of Latvia. A substation will also be constructed to increase the electricity voltage, which is planned to be connected to the 110 kV high-voltage electricity transmission line Valmiera – (EST) Tsirguliina 110 kV.

For storage of the generated electricity and balancing of the production process, an electricity storage facility (BESS) with a total storage capacity of up to 400 MWh is planned.

The wind farm construction process is expected to take approximately two years. During the first year, the infrastructure will be constructed, while during the second year the wind turbines will be installed. Construction of the wind farm, particularly construction of access roads and foundations, will require transportation of large volumes of materials, creating additional load on local and national road infrastructure in Latvia.

Operational Stage

During operation of the wind farm, its operation will be continuously monitored, and specialists will regularly carry out maintenance of the wind turbines to ensure their long-term operation and safety. During operation of the wind farm, land around the wind turbines will remain available for existing land uses – agriculture and forestry. Access to the wind farm area is not planned to be restricted; however, operators will monitor that unauthorised persons do not enter the wind turbines themselves. A civil protection plan will be prepared for the wind farm, defining

procedures and responsible persons for actions in emergency or hazardous situations. In addition, a stakeholder engagement plan will be developed, defining procedures and responsible persons for communication with residents, landowners, municipalities and other stakeholders during operation of the wind farm.

Decommissioning Stage

The operational lifetime of a wind farm is typically approximately 20 – 25 years; however, through timely maintenance and keeping the turbines in good working condition, this period can be extended, reaching even 35 – 40 years. At the end of the wind farm operational period, a decision will be made either to refurbish or dismantle the wind turbines. If the wind turbines are refurbished, new turbines will be installed in their place. If a decision is made to dismantle the wind farm, the wind turbines and infrastructure that is no longer required will be dismantled. Already at present, most materials used for construction of wind turbines are recyclable, and waste generated during dismantling of the wind farm can be transformed into new products.

Information on the Environmental Impact Assessment

On 14 June 2024, the State Environmental Service of the Republic of Latvia issued Decision No. 5-02-1/33/2024 regarding application of the environmental impact assessment procedure and, taking into account the proximity of the wind farm to Estonia, also regarding the transboundary environmental impact assessment procedure for the “Valka” wind farm development proposal. The Environmental Impact Assessment Report has been prepared by SIA “Estonian, Latvian & Lithuanian Environment”, involving experts from relevant fields. The scope of work for the environmental impact assessment procedure is described in Programme No. 5-03/29/2024 issued by the State Environmental Service.

Alternatives

The following alternatives were assessed within the environmental impact assessment process:

- five technological alternatives for wind turbines;
- 14 wind turbine construction locations (maximum number of turbines), with each location assessed as an alternative;
- two access road layout alternatives;
- three alternatives for substation and battery storage unit construction locations.

Scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment and Transboundary Impact

A total of 22 specialists were involved in preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. In accordance with the programme issued by the State Environmental Service, the specialists assessed the existing environmental conditions and values within the proposed activity area, analysed expected changes if the wind farm is constructed, and provided recommendations for reducing impacts caused by the wind farm and, where necessary, for further monitoring. The Environmental Impact Assessment Report includes expert recommendations regarding the conditions under which construction of the wind farm would be acceptable, ensuring that significant adverse environmental impacts are avoided.

During preparation of the Report, scientific studies on impacts caused by wind farms were analysed, desktop and field surveys were carried out, and various calculations and modelling were performed to predict possible changes in environmental conditions.

Considering that this version of the Report is being prepared to support the public consultation and transboundary consultation process in Estonia, it has been determined that the main impact in the Estonian part is on the landscape (particularly considering the visibility of the planned wind farm from locations within Estonia). Impacts such as environmental noise and risk, flickering effect do not extend to the territory of Estonia. For general information purposes the Report for transboundary consultation process with Estonia includes:

- description of the proposed activity;
- impacts from wind farm noise and shadow flicker;
- changes to the landscape;
- impacts on natural values occurring in the surrounding area;
- environmental risks.

Existing Environmental Conditions

The proposed activity area of the planned “Valka” wind farm is predominantly characterised by agricultural land, with individual forest areas, while a larger forest massif is located south of the wind farm. The area is crossed by the Seda River, along which wet floodplain grasslands have historically developed. The nearest wind turbine of the planned “Valka” wind farm is located 1.3 km from the city of Valka. The Latvia – Estonia border and the city of Valga are located approximately 2.8 km from the nearest wind turbine. The closest village areas to the wind farm are Sēļi and Lugaži, and a relatively large number of farmsteads are located in its surroundings. The national main road A3 Inčukalns – Valmiera – Estonian border and the regional state road P24 Smiltene – Valka are located near the wind farm. The railway line Rīga – Valka is located along the boundary of the wind farm, and the Lugaži railway station is located nearby.

Several specially protected nature areas are located in the vicinity of the study area. The closest is the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve, the boundary of which is located approximately 317 m from the nearest planned wind turbine. The next closest specially protected nature area is the protected landscape area “Ziemeļgauja”, located approximately 2.1 km from the nearest planned wind turbine. The “Bulvāra riests” micro-reserve, established for the protection of the Western Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), is located approximately 2.5 km from the nearest planned wind turbine, while the nature reserve “Burgas pļavas” is located approximately 3.2 km away. During the surveys, a relatively large number of protected bird species were recorded within the wind farm area, and new protected habitat areas, species occurrences and previously unidentified veteran trees were identified.

Several Latvia state-protected cultural heritage monuments are also located in the vicinity of the planned wind farm. The closest one is a regional level cultural monument – the historical event site “Vidzemes Teachers’ Seminary” in Valka, located approximately 2.5 km from the nearest planned wind turbine. Approximately 3 km away is the local level cultural monument “Planču hillfort”, while the national level cultural monument “Lugaži Lutheran Church” is located approximately 3.7 km from the nearest wind turbine. Several protected cultural heritage

monuments are also located across the border in the city of Valga. Prior to commencement of the environmental impact assessment process for the wind farm, several visually valuable landscape areas had been identified in its surroundings and described in planning documents of different levels.

Main Expected Impacts

Although a wide range of different impact types has been analysed within the environmental impact assessment process, in the opinion of the Report authors, some impacts can be highlighted as more significant compared with the other assessed impacts. The table summarises the most significant impacts associated with implementation of the proposed activity. Taking into account the implementation of mitigation measures, the impact on the territory of Estonia is expected only from the aspect of the impact on the landscape. More detailed information on these impacts is provided in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

Environmental aspect	Potential impact and mitigation solutions	Significance	
		Without mitigation measures	With mitigation measures
Environmental noise and low-frequency noise	Operation of the wind farm will result in increased environmental noise and low-frequency noise levels. At present, there are grounds to prohibit construction of one wind turbine model, while experts do not recommend construction of three other models unless compliance with the limit value recommended by the World Health Organization is ensured.	High	Medium
Landscape	Wind turbines will be visible from a wide surrounding area; however, no factors preventing implementation of the activity arising from planning documents have been identified. Experts recommend reviewing the wind turbine layout during the design stage to comply with landscape design principles and improve the visual appearance of the wind farm when viewed from the city of Valka.	High	Medium
Birds	The wind farm creates a risk of bird mortality and impacts on bird habitats. Therefore, experts recommend implementing a range of mitigation measures, including camera systems, restrictions on the timing of deforestation works, etc., to reduce these adverse impacts.	High	Medium
Bats	The wind farm creates a risk of bat mortality and impacts on bat habitats. To reduce bat mortality, experts recommend stopping wind turbine operation during periods of high bat	High	Low

Environmental aspect	Potential impact and mitigation solutions	Significance	
		Without mitigation measures	With mitigation measures
	activity.		
Protected species and habitats	Construction of wind turbines and infrastructure may affect sensitive species habitats and habitats of protected species. Although these impacts have been reduced through optimisation of the wind farm layout, precautionary measures to avoid impacts on sensitive areas shall be implemented during wind farm construction.	Medium	Low
Shadow flicker effect	The wind farm will cause shadow flicker effects, which may disturb nearby residents. To reduce or prevent these impacts, experts recommend temporary shutdown of certain wind turbines during periods when shadow flicker may occur.	Medium	Low
Risks and emergency situations	Various types of accidents may occur at the wind farm, and icing of wind turbines is possible during winter conditions. The Report identifies the potential hazard level and recommends reducing risks and carrying out a more detailed assessment during preparation of operational procedures and the civil protection plan.	Medium	Low

Cumulative Impact

Other wind farm development proposals are also known in the vicinity of the planned wind farm, both in Latvia and Estonia. At present, more detailed information is available regarding the wind farm proposal assessed for potential construction within the forest massif south of the planned “Valka” wind farm. The Environmental Impact Assessment Report assesses the cumulative impact of the planned “Valka” wind farm with the “Valmiera – Valka” wind farm B layout alternative, as well as the cumulative impact of the planned “Valka” wind farm with nearby roads and railway infrastructure in terms of environmental noise and environmental risks.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures have been defined for the environmental impacts identified during the environmental impact assessment process. The main measures are summarised below; their implementation during the planning, construction and operation of the proposed activity is essential to reduce or prevent potential adverse impacts.

Mitigation measures during construction

Before commencement of construction works, the construction locations of the wind turbines and associated infrastructure shall be surveyed by a qualified specialist – an archaeologist.

To ensure the protection of protected species and habitats, measures shall be implemented to ensure the protection of identified large-dimension trees, refine access road locations, implement appropriate measures at the Seda River crossing, and maintain the hydrological regime of forest habitats by avoiding construction of new drainage ditches and embankments.

To reduce air pollution, road surfaces shall be moistened or treated with dust suppression materials, and paved roads shall be used as a priority for transportation.

Environmental noise shall not exceed the limit values established in Latvia, while low-frequency noise levels should not exceed the 20 dB(A) limit. The Report authors also recommend following the World Health Organization recommendations and advise against construction of several wind turbine models. The Report includes a requirement to carry out noise level measurements upon commissioning of the wind farm to confirm compliance of the operation with the above-mentioned limit values.

To reduce environmental risks and emergency situations, experts recommend equipping four wind turbines with anti-icing or ice detection systems, preparing a civil protection plan and establishing procedures for actions in emergency situations.

Monitoring

During construction and operation of the wind farm, monitoring is planned as a control mechanism to verify that the actual situation corresponds to the predictions provided in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. The results obtained through monitoring will allow, where necessary, adjustment of wind turbine operating modes or implementation of other required measures. Monitoring will include birds, bats, and environmental noise in residential areas.

Main Conclusions

The results of the Environmental Impact Assessment indicate that implementation of the “Valka” wind farm project is possible, provided that specified conditions are met and mitigation measures are implemented. Currently, two planned wind turbines are located closer than 800 m to

residential buildings; therefore, their construction possibilities are restricted. To reduce impacts on residents, for example, with regard to environmental noise, certain technological alternatives cannot be implemented. In addition, from an environmental safety perspective, wind turbines must be equipped with anti-icing systems or ice detection systems.

From a nature conservation perspective, Substation Alternative B is considered more suitable, as it does not affect the hydrological regime of the nearby habitat. Preference is given to locating wind turbines on agricultural land, thereby reducing the extent of deforestation and potential impacts on biodiversity.

Environmental Impact Assessment Process and Public Participation

On 14 June 2024, the State Environmental Service adopted Decision No. 5-02-1/33/2024 regarding application of the environmental impact assessment procedure and the transboundary environmental impact assessment procedure. The initial public consultation took place from 27 August to 16 September 2024, and public meeting was organised on 5 September 2024 at 18:00 at the Valka Cultural Centre building (Emīla Dārziņa street 8, Valka, Valka Municipality, LV-4701). During the initial public consultation, comments and opinions were received from several institutions, including the Nature Conservation Agency, the Valka Municipality, the State Environmental Service also referred to Estonia (including cross-border consultation), as well as other institutions.

The public consultation on the EIA Report was taking place from 19 May 2026 to 19 June 2026. The public consultation meeting took place on 26 May 2026 at 17:00 at the Valka Cultural Centre building (Emīla Dārziņa street 8, Valka, Valka Municipality, LV-4701). During the public consultation period, the public and institutions had the opportunity to review the prepared Report and submit their comments and opinions to the State Environmental Service until 19 June 2026.

The EIA Report has been submitted for review and provision of opinions to the relevant state and municipal institutions, including the Valka Municipality, Health Inspectorate, National Heritage Board, Ministry of Defence, as well as other institutions according to their respective areas of competence.

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