

# Tõrva wind farm special plan and SIA public hearing

## Minutes of the Meeting

Meeting topic: Tõrva Wind Farm Special Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment

Date: 03 November 2025

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Languages: Estonian and Latvian (translation)

Recorder: Piret Toonpere

Basis: Microsoft Teams transcription

Note: *The meeting was held bilingually through an interpreter; only the content of questions and answers is recorded, not the full text or translations.*

### 1. Opening and Introduction

The meeting was attended by planning consultant Heiki Kalberg and Strategic Environmental Assessment lead expert Piret Toonpere, who presented the planning solution and the studies and conclusions made during the environmental assessment respectively (the presentation, with Latvian translation, is attached).

### 2. Questions and Answers

**Question:** : Is it possible to move the wind farm further from the border, since a biosphere reserve is located on the Latvian side where such activities are prohibited?

**Answer:** Clarified that according to the information obtained, the biosphere reserve has a mild protection regime, but indeed, wind turbines are prohibited in Latvia side. On the Estonian side, no significant environmental restrictions or values have been identified.

**Question:** : Explained that the issue lies in the contradiction – wind turbines are prohibited on the Latvian side, but are planned right next to the border in Estonia.

**Answer:** : Pointed out that based on various studies, the border area is less sensitive environmentally than the Õhne River region to the north. The border area does not contain natural values that would exclude the construction of turbines.

**Question:** : Emphasized that the purpose of the biosphere reserve is to protect not only nature but also cultural heritage and landscapes. The proposed wind farm could hinder Latvia's ability to achieve these goals and recommended that the turbines not be visible from Latvia.

: Explained that with modern wind turbines, this is not possible – in open landscapes, turbines are visible from tens of kilometers away.

: Asked whether surveys were also carried out on the Latvian territory.

: Explained that nature surveys were conducted within a 500 m buffer zone around the initially planned areas, thus partly covering Latvian territory as well.

: Asked whether bird movements related to Lake Burtnieks were considered.

: Explained that an ornithological study was conducted in the area, including migration observations; no significant migration corridor was identified.

: Asked whether cumulative impacts were assessed, taking into account the Valka and Valka-Valmiera wind farm plans.

: Confirmed that these parks are approximately 25 km away, and at that distance, no significant cumulative effect was identified.

: Suggested that shadow flicker mitigation measures should be made mandatory.

: Explained that in the Estonian system, recommendations from environmental assessments are written into the planning documents as binding requirements for the developer.

: Asked about the impact of forest clearance in terms of noise, visual and vibration effects.

: Explained that only the turbine site and access roads will be cleared; the assessment assumes the worst-case scenario (bare ground). The presence of forest is not considered in noise and shadow calculations, as forest conditions may change over time.

: Proposed to include a landscape assessment in the environmental evaluation, as the area lies within a biosphere reserve.

: Requested that the proposal be submitted in writing, with references to the specific values and objects in the area whose landscape change should be assessed.

: Asked whether residents on the Latvian side are entitled to compensation payments.

: Explained that Estonia has a compensation system for residents, but it does not extend to another country's territory.

: Informed that participants may submit written proposals by 21 November regarding the transboundary environmental impact assessment.

: Requested that proposals be as specific as possible and include detailed information and sources so that additional analyses can be carried out based on them.

### **3. Closing of the Meeting**

The meeting concluded with thanks to all participants for their active discussion and input. All verbal comments and proposals will be documented and taken into account in the further assessment process.

The Latvian Environment Agency awaits proposals from the Latvian public and institutions by 21 November 2025 to [pasts@vvd.gov.lv](mailto:pasts@vvd.gov.lv).

The Republic of Latvia's official written proposals regarding the Strategic Environmental Assessment Report of the Tõrva Municipality Special Plan are expected by 1 December 2025.