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18 April 2023

Dear Stakeholder and/or Interested & Affected Party (ISAP),

**PART 2 ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION (EA) AMENDMENT APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED UPDATE TO THE LAYOUT OF THE EXISTING 765KV GAMMA SUBSTATION AND ASSOCIATED 400KV POWERLINE TURN-IN INFRASTRUCTURE LOCATED ON PORTION 1 OF FARM UIT VLUGT FONTEIN NO.265 AND REMAINDER OF FARM SCHIETKUIL NO.3 IN THE PIXELY KA SEME AND CENTRAL KAROO DISTRICT MUNICIPALITIES, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE AND NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE (DFFE REF: 12/12/20/873/AM2)**

**NOTIFICATION OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT MOTIVATION REPORT AND COMPARATIVE SPECIALIST ASSESSMENTS FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT**

Eskom Holdings SOC Limited (Eskom) received an Environmental Authorisation (EA) (Reference: 12/12/20/873) dated 19 November 2007 for the proposed construction of the 765kV Gamma Substation on Portion 1 of Farm Uit Vlucht Fontein No.265 and Remainder of Farm Schietkuil No.3 in the Pixley Ka Seme and Central Karoo District Municipalities, Northern Cape and Western Cape Provinces. The EA authorised the construction of the Gamma Substation in phases/stages. A further amendment was undertaken to correct the co-ordinates within the EA which was subsequently granted on 22 February 2008.

The first phase of the Gamma Substation commenced with construction in the validity period of the EA, with construction concluding in 2013. The first phase of the Gamma Substation, has been constructed and is currently operational. However, the next phase of the substation located on Remainder of Farm Schietkuil No.3 and Portion 1 of Farm Uit Vlucht Fontein 265 (as authorised) comprising of a 132kV/400kV substation yard, and related 400kV OHL turn-in infrastructure is yet to be constructed.

The holder of the EA, Eskom, now proposes to commence construction of the next phase of the authorised development, specifically the development of a 132kV/400kV yard at the existing Gamma Substation and turn-ins of the existing 400kV overhead powerlines (OHL), as provided for in the current EA. The next phase of construction activities associated with the EA is directly linked to the increased demand for grid infrastructure which is linked to upcoming Renewable Energy projects in the Northern Cape and Western Cape Provinces. Importantly, the 132kV/400kV yard and 400kV OHL turn-ins are needed to enable the connection of the authorised Umsinde Emoyeni Wind Farm (DFFE Ref: 14/12/16/3/3/2/686), which has been selected as a preferred bidder with a private off-taker and has been registered as a Strategic Integrated Project (SIP).

A Part 1 Amendment Application had been submitted on the 16 September 2022 to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) to update the proposed layout, however, following a submission for additional information



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on the 25 October 2022, it was determined that a Part 2 Amendment application would need to be undertaken in order to update the of the existing 765kV Gamma Substation and associated powerline turn-in infrastructure. Therefore, the Part 1 Amendment Application was withdrawn on the 11 January 2023. A Part 2 Amendment process is being followed for the update to the layout of the existing 765kV Gamma Substation and will consist of the following infrastructure:

- A substation yard with a step-up voltage of 132kV/400kV on Remainder of Farm Schietkuil No.3 and Portion 1 of Farm Uit Vlucht Fontein 265 (as authorised); and
- In addition, the existing Eskom 400kV overhead powerline that currently bypasses the existing Gamma Substation (i.e. the "Droerivier- Hydra No. 2" 400kV OHL) will be reconfigured to turn-in and turn-out of the new substation yard.

In terms of Chapter 5 of the EIA Regulations of December 2014 (as amended on 07 April 2017 and 13 July 2018), it is possible for the holder of an Environmental Authorisation to apply for an amendment of the Environmental Authorisation with the Competent Authority for a change or deviation from the project description to be approved. In terms of Condition 1.4 of the Environmental Authorisation of November 2007, any changes to, or deviations from, the project description set out in this authorisation must be approved, in writing, by the Department before such changes or deviations may be effected.

The update to the Layout of the existing 765kV Gamma Substation and associated Powerline Turn-In Infrastructure is not a listed activity in itself and will not trigger any new listed activities.

Following receipt of the original EA which was issued on 19 November 2007 (DFFE Ref: 12/12/20/873), the proposed 132kV/400kV yard and 400kV OHL turn-ins fall within the scope of the current EA. However – based on further technical analysis and design – it has been identified that the layout of the authorised infrastructure will need to be updated to reflect the updated configuration proposed to be implemented..

Nala Environmental (Pty) Ltd has prepared this Draft Motivation Report in support of the amendment application on behalf of Eskom Holdings SOC Limited. This report aims to provide details pertaining to the impacts and significance of the proposed update to the Layout of the existing 765kV Gamma Substation and associated 400kV Hydra-Droerivier 2 powerline turn-in infrastructure located on Portion 1 of Farm Uit Vlucht Fontein No.265 and Remainder of Schietkuil No.3 in the Pixely Ka Seme and Central Karoo District Municipalities, Western Cape and Northern Cape Provinces (DFFE Ref: 12/12/20/873/AM2) in order for interested and affected parties to be informed of the proposed amendment and provide comment, and for the competent authority to be able to reach a decision in this regard.



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In order to verify the potential of change of the impacts associated with terrestrial ecology, visual, heritage, palaeontology, aquatic, soil & agricultural, and avifauna, various corresponding specialist comparative assessments have been included in the motivation report.

The various specialist assessments provide support and inform the final conclusion of the motivation report and should thereby be read in unison to obtain a complete understanding of the proposed amendment and the implications thereof.

Nala Environmental (Pty) Ltd has been appointed as the independent environmental consultant to undertake the amendment application and to identify and assess all potential environmental impacts as well as to compile the Motivation report and undertake the required public participation process in terms of Chapter 6 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended) for the amendment application.

### **Public Participation**

As a registered Interested and Affected Party (I&AP)/ and/or stakeholder, you are hereby notified that the Motivation Report for the proposed update to the layout of the existing 765kV Gamma Substation and associated powerline turn-in infrastructure located on Portion 1 of Farm Uit Vlucht Fontein No.265 and Remainder of Farm Schietkuil No.3 in the Pixley Ka Seme and Central Karoo District Municipalities, Northern Cape and Western Cape Province (DFFE Ref: 12/12/20/873) is available for your review and comment for a period of 30 days from **Tuesday, 18 April 2023 until Monday, 22 May 2023**. The reports are available for download from our website <https://nalaenvironmental.co.za/projects/part-2-amendment-application-for-the-765kv-gamma-substation-northern-and-western-cape-provinces/>

A digital copy of the Motivation report and associated appendices will also be available in electronic tablet format for the full duration of the review and comment period at the Beaufort West Public Library (15 Church Street, Beaufort West, 6970) and Ubuntu Local Municipality (78 Church Street, Victoria West, 7070) for review and comment.

Please kindly submit your written comments on the Motivation report to us by latest **Monday, 22 May 2023 (by close of business day)** via the following methods:

- Telephone /Whatsapp: 084 2777 074
- Fax: 086 471 4190
- Post: Private Bag X26, Suite 548, Sunninghill, 2157
- E-mail: [publicparticipation@nalaenvironmental.co.za](mailto:publicparticipation@nalaenvironmental.co.za)

All comments received during the 30-day review and comment period will be recorded and included in the Final Motivation Report for submission to the DFFE in line with Regulation 44 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended (GN R326).



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Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require additional information and/or clarification regarding the project. Our team welcomes your participation and look forward to your involvement throughout this process.

Kind regards,

Arlene Singh

Environmental Consultant

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