



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PRE-APPLICATION MEETING REQUEST

Request for a pre-application meeting in terms of Regulation 8 of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended (the Regulations)

PROJECT TITLE

Development of the Castle to Hydra Transmission Line near De Aar, Northern Cape Province

Kindly note the following:

1. This form must always be used for pre-application meeting requests where this Department is the Competent Authority.
2. This application form is current as of **April 2021**. It is the responsibility of the Applicant / Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to ascertain whether subsequent versions of the form have been published or produced by the Competent Authority. The latest available Departmental templates are available at <https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms>.
3. The onus on Applicant/EAP to determine all applicable listed activities that would require Environmental Authorisation prior to the commencement of the construction activities. Should any revision of your development comprise any other activities that constitute a listed activity/ies as defined in GN R983, R984 and R98 of 04 December 2014, as amended, it must also form part of the Application for Environmental Authorisation.
4. Be reminded that it is not compulsory in terms of the EIA Regulations that a pre-application meeting must take place prior to an application being lodged with the Department.
5. This form must be lodged with the Department at least **one (1) month** prior to the requested meeting date.
6. Please note that the proposed date and time will be confirmed prior to the meeting.
7. A detailed motivation and agenda must be appended to this meeting request.
8. This form must be marked **“for Attention: Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations”** and submitted to the Department via email.
9. All fields are compulsory.
10. The required information must be typed within the spaces provided in the form. The sizes of the spaces provided are not necessarily indicative of the amount of information to be provided. Spaces are provided in tabular format and will extend automatically when each space is filled with typing. A legible font type and size must be used when completing the form. The font size should not be smaller than 10pt (e.g. Arial 10).
11. **Note that the EAP is required to submit minutes of the meeting to the Department for approval as per the timeframes agreed to in the meeting.**
12. The Department reserves the right to refuse the pre-application meeting based on the information provided in this request.

Departmental Details**Online Submission:**

EIAapplications@environment.gov.za

Please read the process for uploading files to determine how files are to submitted to this Department**Physical address:**

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
 Attention: Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations
 Environment House
 473 Steve Biko Road
 Arcadia

Queries must be directed to the Directorate: Coordination, Strategic Planning and Support at:

Email: EIAAdmin@environment.gov.za

1. APPLICANT CONTACT DETAILS

Name of the Applicant:	Eskom Holdings SOC Limited		
RSA Identity/ Passport Number:	2002/015527/30		
Name of contact person for applicant (if other):	Debbie Harding		
RSA Identity/ Passport Number:	7008010279087		
Responsible position, e.g. Director, CEO, etc.:	Land Development & Environmental Manager		
Company/ Trading name (if any):	Eskom Holdings SOC Limited		
Company Registration Number:	2002/015527/30		
BBBEE status:	Exempt		
Physical address:	DCS Office Block Office 2 Ground Floor Block C 69 Memorial Road Kimberley		
Postal address:	P.O Box 606 Kimberly		
Postal code:	8301	Cell:	084 689 5173
Telephone:	053 830 5774	Fax:	
E-mail:	Debbie.harding@eskom.co.za		

2. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER CONTACT DETAILS

Company of Environmental Assessment Practitioner:	EnviroAgri		
B-BBEE	Contribution level (indicate 1 to 8 or non-compliant)	4	Percentage Procurement recognition 100%
EAP name:	Dirk Pretorius		
EAP Qualifications:	BSc Conservation Ecology & MSc Zoology		

Professional affiliation/registration:	<i>Pr.Nat.Sci.</i> ; Professional Natural Scientist, South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNASP), Reg. no. 400306/15 <i>Reg.EAP</i> ; Environmental Assessment Practitioners Association of South Africa (EAPASA), Reg. no. 2020/1612 IAIAsa; International Association for Impact Assessments South Africa (IAIA), Reg. no. 32425		
Physical address:	163 5 th Street Hermanus 7200		
Postal address:	P.O. Box 3731 Tyger Valley		
Postal code:	7536	Cell:	072 100 27 12
Telephone:	0721002712	Fax:	021 9194048
E-mail:	dirk@enviroagri.com		

3. COMPETENT AUTHORITY

Identified Competent Authority to consider the application:

Reason(s) in terms of S24C of NEMA:

DFFE
In terms of GNR 779 of 01 July 2016, the DFFE has been determined as the Competent Authority for all projects which relate to the Integrated Resource Plan for Electricity (IRP) 2010 – 2030, and any updates thereto.

4. MEETING DETAILS

Purpose of the meeting request	To get case officer assigned. No meeting required.		
Any advice requested before from the Department on this project i.e. from IQ or via email (attached response received)	Yes	No	
Applicant Category	Application by Parastatal		Eskom Holdings SOC Limited
	Organ of State		
	Private Individual/Parties		
Application type	Application for EA		
	Application for Integrated EA		Yes
	Application for Amendment EA		
Proposed meeting date and time-slot. Provide three alternative dates and time-slots (<i>note that the Department requires at least a month due to logistical arrangements</i>)			
Date	Time-slot		
	Start time		End time
1	Not applicable. No meeting required.		
2			
3			
Duration of the meeting			
Estimated number of people attending meeting			

Please attach a proposed agenda as **APPENDIX 1**. If the Applicant or EAP intends to discuss several projects in one meeting, separate agendas must be drafted for each proposed project and the project details for each project. Please note that a detailed agenda is required.

5. PROJECT DETAILS

<p>Project description</p>	<p>The Proponent, Eskom Holdings SOC Limited (Eskom), proposes to construct an overhead transmission line (OHL) of 132kV to 400kV to connect to the authorised Castle Wind Energy Facility (WEF), to the existing national Eskom electricity grid via the Hydra Main Transmission Substation (MTS), on farms near De Aar in the Northern Cape. The site of the Castle WEF which the proposed transmission line will connect to is located approximately 26 kilometres (km) east of De Aar and the existing Hydra MTS approximately 7 km southeast of De Aar. The site is bordered in the west by the N10 from where access can be gained through unsurfaced roads and jeep tracks. The proposed transmission line would consist of a 132kV to 400kV (single or double circuit) OHL. Associated infrastructure will include permanent access/service tracks (where no existing roads exist). Temporary laydown areas and site camps associated with the Castle WEF will be used, no additional areas have been applied for.</p> <p>The proposed infrastructure is expected to be permanent and will remain in place for the duration of the lifespan of the associated Castle WEF (20 years or more). The construction of the proposed grid connection infrastructure is dependent on the construction timelines of the associated Castle WEF, which are not yet known. If/when the WEF are decommissioned at some point in the future, the grid connection infrastructure may also be decommissioned, in part or entirely. The owner of the grid connection infrastructure (Eskom, or their successor in title) would be responsible for the decommissioning phase.</p> <p>The proposed development site is located within the Electricity Grid Infrastructure Central Strategic Transmission Corridor as per Government Notice 113 of 16 February 2018, National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998). GN 113 makes the provision that facilities which trigger Activity 9 of LN 2 (and the greater part of the proposed facility occurs in a Strategic Transmission Corridor), the application must follow a basic assessment procedure. Since the application seeks authorisation of up to 400kV OHL a BA procedure will be followed.</p> <p>Technical details for each proposed transmission line and substation provided below.</p> <p>Technical details for the up to 400kV Castle to Hydra MTS OHL</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Component</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Overhead Powerline (OHL)</td> <td> <p>132kV to 400kV single- or double-circuit</p> <p>Extending from the authorised Castle WEF collector substation to the Eskom Hydra MTS.</p> <p>OHL will be located within a servitude of up to 32m wide to be positioned within a 300m wide corridor (a 300m wide corridor assessed as part of the BA to allow micro-siting).</p> <p>Total Length ≈25,8km</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section A≈13,1km new OHL Section B ≈12,4km upgrading existing 132kV OHL from the De Aar South WEF to an up to 400kV maximum capacity. Section C ≈300m from Section A to the proposed De Aar 2 South Switching Station (132kV) <p>Temporary 132kV OHL of ≈12,4km to be constructed alongside the existing De Aar South OHL to be upgraded as temporary bypass (up to 18 month period), details provided below.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>OHL Pylons</td> <td> <p>Up to 45m in height (most structures will be up to 32m tall, only increasing to up to 45m when crossing the railway line, existing overhead transmission line and public road (all adjacent the Hydra MTS), depending on the minimum clearance specified by the road, OHL and rail authorities).</p> <p>Monopole (Self-supporting or stayed) and/or lattice may be used.</p> <p>Disturbance footprint per pylon of up to 10m by 10m (100m²)</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Component	Description	Overhead Powerline (OHL)	<p>132kV to 400kV single- or double-circuit</p> <p>Extending from the authorised Castle WEF collector substation to the Eskom Hydra MTS.</p> <p>OHL will be located within a servitude of up to 32m wide to be positioned within a 300m wide corridor (a 300m wide corridor assessed as part of the BA to allow micro-siting).</p> <p>Total Length ≈25,8km</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section A≈13,1km new OHL Section B ≈12,4km upgrading existing 132kV OHL from the De Aar South WEF to an up to 400kV maximum capacity. 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	OHL footprint	Length ≈25,8km Construction road / service track (jeep track) width ≈4m (or less) OHL footprint ≈10,32ha (25,8km x 4m), (consideration must be given that part of this road will use existing farm roads and/or WEF roads) Approximate number of pylons (based on average 150m average between pylons) ≈172 Pylon's disturbance footprint ~1,72ha (172 x 100m ²)
	Laydown Areas	Temporary laydown area of ≈5000m ² will be required (authorised Castle WEF Laydown areas to be utilised).
	Site Access	The existing approved access roads to the Castle WEF substation will be used to access the proposed Section A adjacent the authorised Castle WEF. Section A and C may require a service track (jeep track) along the OHL route for construction and maintenance purposes. Section B (upgrade section) and the bypass OHL will use existing tracks as far as possible.
Technical details for the temporary bypass 132kV De Aar 2 to Hydra MTS OHL		
	Component	Description
	Overhead Powerline (OHL)	132kV single-circuit Extending from the approximate centre of the proposed Castle to Hydra MTS OHL where the existing De Aar OHL aligns with the existing Eskom Roodekuil to Hydra 220kV OHL. No servitude will be required for the OHL and it will be within the same 300m wide corridor assessed as part of this BA to allow micro-siting.
	OHL Pylons	Up to 45m in height (most structures will be up to 32m tall, only increasing to up to 45m when crossing the railway line, existing overhead transmission line and public roads, - depending on the minimum clearance specified by the road, OHL and rail authorities). Monopole (Self-supporting or stayed) and/or lattice may be used. Disturbance footprint per pylon of up to 10m by 10m (100m ²)
	OHL footprint	Length ≈12,4km Construction road / service track (jeep track) width ≈4m (or less) OHL footprint ~4,96ha (12,4km x 4m), (consideration must be given that part of this road will use existing farm and service roads) Approximate number of pylons (based on average 150m average between pylons) ≈83 Pylon's disturbance footprint ~0,83ha (83 x 100m ²)
	Site Access	Section B (upgrade section) and the bypass OHL will use existing tracks as far as possible.
Indicate if any screening has taken place on site	Yes, web based environmental screening tool was used to generate a Screening Report referred to in Regulation 16(1)(v) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2014. The EAP and specialist have also undertake site verification and specialist studies. Specialist studies undertaken include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avifauna (birds) • Aquatic Ecology • Terrestrial Ecology (Fauna and Flora) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual • Agricultural potential • Heritage (incl. Archaeology and Palaeontology) 			
Physical Address where the development will take place	As per Farms below. De Aar Northern Cape Province.			
Farm name(s)/ Erf No	Erf number	21-digit SG code	Name of farm	Farm Size (ha)
	Portion 13 of Farm 165	C03000000000016500013	Vendussie Kuil	152,18
	Portion 12 of Farm 165	C03000000000016500012	Vendussie Kuil	758,19
	Portion 3 of Farm 5	C0300000000000500003	Wagt en Bittje (Hydra)	179,77
	Portion 1 of Farm 5	C0300000000000500001	Wagt en Bittje	21,72
	Remainder of Farm 5	C0300000000000500000	Wagt en Bittje	2425,42
	Remainder of Farm 144	C03000000000014400000	Hydra	37,84
	Portion 3 of Farm 3	C0300000000000300003	Carolus Poort	1807,06
	Portion 4 of Farm 3	C0300000000000300004	Carolus Poort	888,49
	Portion 2 of Farm 3	C0300000000000300002	Carolus Poort	1724,89
	Remainder of Farm 2	C0300000000000200000	Slingers Hoek	4209,31
	Portion 2 of Farm 2	C0300000000000200002	Slingers Hoek	1273,11
	Local Municipality	Emthanjeni Local Municipality and Renosterberg Local Municipality		
District Municipality	Pixley ka Seme District Municipality			

Locality map:	<p>A locality map must be attached to the application form, as APPENDIX 2. The scale of the locality map must be at least 1:50 000. For linear activities of more than 25 kilometres, a smaller scale e.g. 1:250 000 can be used. The scale must be indicated on the map. The map must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an accurate indication of the project site position as well as the positions of the alternative sites, if any; • road names or numbers of all the major roads as well as the roads that provide access to the site(s) • a north arrow; • a legend; • the prevailing wind direction; • site sensitivities, including but not limited to vegetation, wetlands, watercourses, heritage sites, critical biodiversity area/s, World Heritage Site, etc. and it must be overlaid by the study area; and • GPS co-ordinates (Indicate the position of the proposed activity with the latitude and longitude at the centre point for each alternative site. • The co-ordinates should be in degrees and decimal minutes. The minutes should be to at least three decimal places. The projection that must be used in all cases is the WGS-84 spheroid in a national or local projection)
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6. ACTIVITIES APPLIED FOR

For an application for authorisation that involves more than one listed activity that, together, make up one development proposal, all the listed activities pertaining to this application must be provided below.

Activity No(s):	Provide the relevant Basic Assessment Activity(ies) as set out in Listing Notice 1 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended (LN 1 GN R327)	Describe the portion of the proposed project to which the applicable listed activity relates.
GN R983 Activity 11	"The development of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity- (i) outside urban areas or industrial complexes with a capacity of more than 33 but less than 275 kilovolts".	The temporary bypass OHL of 12,4km will be 132kV required for the upgrade of the Section B. Section C will also be 132kV. See Locality map indicating Sections A, B and C.
GN R983 Activity 12	The development of – (ii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 100 m ² or more; Where such development occurs – (a) within a watercourse; (c) if no development setback exists, within 32 m of a water course, measured from the edge of a watercourse;	Several drainage lines will be crossed by the proposed construction roads and transmission lines. Several pylon structures will be in or within 32 m of watercourses.
GN R983 Activity 19	The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 10 m ³ into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock of more than 10 m ³ from a watercourse;	Access roads (service tracks) and transmission line pylons (to be avoided as far as possible) will be located within a watercourse (drainage line) which would therefore trigger this activity.
GN R983 Activity 28	Residential, mixed, retail, commercial, industrial or institutional developments where such land was used for agriculture, game farming, equestrian purposes or afforestation on or after 1 April 1998 and where such development: (ii) will occur outside an urban area, where the total land to be developed is bigger than 1 ha.	The transmission line will amount to an area of greater than 1 hectare being cleared within an area utilised for agricultural purposes (i.e. outside an urban area).
GN R983 Activity 47	The expansion of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity where the expanded capacity will exceed 275 kilovolts and the development footprint will increase.	Section B of the proposed OHL will be up to 400kV (up from 132kV) and the development footprint will increase if the existing pylon structures are replaced with larger pylon structures to accommodate the up to 400kV OHL.
GN R983 Activity 48	The expansion of- Infrastructure or structures where the physical footprint is expanded by 100 square metres or more; where such expansion occurs- (a) within a watercourse;	Existing infrastructure such as roads and bridges within 32 m of a watercourse will require expansion. The footprint of the proposed development expansion within 32 m of a watercourse will exceed 100 square metres.

	(c) if no development setback exists, within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse.	
Activity No(s):	Provide the relevant Basic Assessment Activity(ies) as set out in Listing Notice 3 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended (LN 3 GN R324)	Describe the portion of the proposed project to which the applicable listed activity relates.
GN R985 Activity 4	The development of a road wider than 4 metres with a reserve less than 13,5 metres. g. Northern Cape ii. Outside urban areas: (ee) Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans;	The transmission line roads will cross areas mapped as CBAs according to the Northern Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (Oosthuysen & Holness 2016). Although roads will be approximately 4m or less some sections will exceed the 4m threshold.
GN R985 Activity 12	The clearance of an area of 300 square metres or more of indigenous vegetation except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan. g. Northern Cape ii. Within critical biodiversity areas identified in bioregional plans;	Vegetation exceeding the threshold of 300m ² will be cleared where roads associated with the transmission lines cross areas identified as CBAs according to the Northern Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (Oosthuysen & Holness 2016).
GN R985 Activity 14	The development of – (ii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 10 square metres or more; where such development occurs— (a) within a watercourse; (c) if no development setback has been adopted, within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse; (g) Northern Cape ii. Outside urban areas: (bb) National Protected Area Expansion Strategy Focus areas; (ff) Critical biodiversity areas or ecosystem service areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans	Roads associated with the transmission lines will be constructed within 32 m of a watercourse. The proposed site lies outside of an urban area and the transmission lines traverses CBAs.
GN R985 Activity 18	The widening of a road by more than 4 m, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 km. (g) Northern Cape (ii) Outside urban areas: (ii) Areas within a watercourse or wetland; or within 100 metres from the edge of a watercourse or wetland.	Access tracks for the proposed development, which will include extensions of existing farm tracks will be lengthened by more than 1 km within 100m from the edge of a watercourse. Existing roads would be used as far as practically possible and feasible. Some of these roads will traverse drainage lines or fall within 100 m from the edge of a watercourse or wetland.
GN R985 Activity 23	The expansion of— (ii) infrastructure or structures where the physical footprint is expanded by 10 square metres or more; where such expansion occurs— (a) within a watercourse; (c) if no development setback has been adopted, within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse; (g) Northern Cape i. Outside urban areas: (bb) National Protected Area Expansion Strategy Focus areas; (ee) Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans;	The expansion of existing infrastructure such as roads that are located within 32 m of a watercourse, within an CBAs will be undertaken.
Activity No(s):	Provide the relevant Basic Assessment Activity(ies) as set out in Listing Notice 2 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended (LN 2 GN R325)	Describe the portion of the proposed project to which the applicable listed activity relates.
GN R983 Activity 9	The development of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity with a capacity of 275 kilovolts or more, outside an urban area or industrial complex	Authorisation is required for an up to 400kV transmission line to connect to the national grid.

Be reminded that the onus is on the applicant to ensure that all applicable listed activities are included in the application. Environmental Authorisation must be obtained prior to commencement with each applicable listed activity.

7. ADDITIONAL INFO, IF ANY

Please attach any additional information as **APPENDIX 3**.

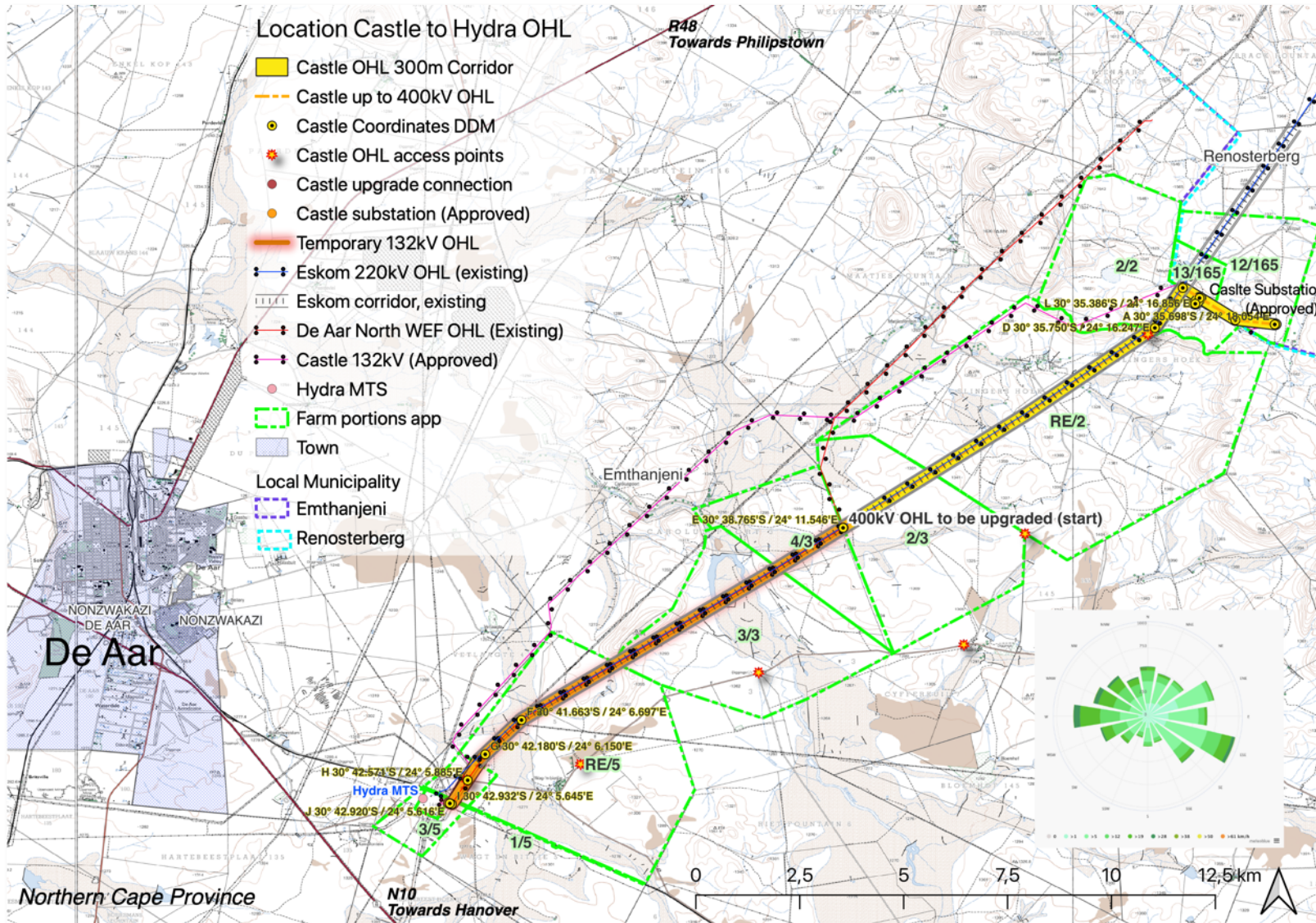
8. LIST OF APPENDICES

		SUBMITTED	
APPENDIX 1	Proposed Agenda	YES	NO
APPENDIX 2	Locality map	YES	NO
APPENDIX 3	Additional info	YES	NO

APPENDIX 1
PRE-APPLICATION MEETING AGENDA
(Please note that a generic agenda will not be accepted. Please submit a detailed agenda)

Not applicable, no meeting requested.

APPENDIX 2 LOCALITY MAP



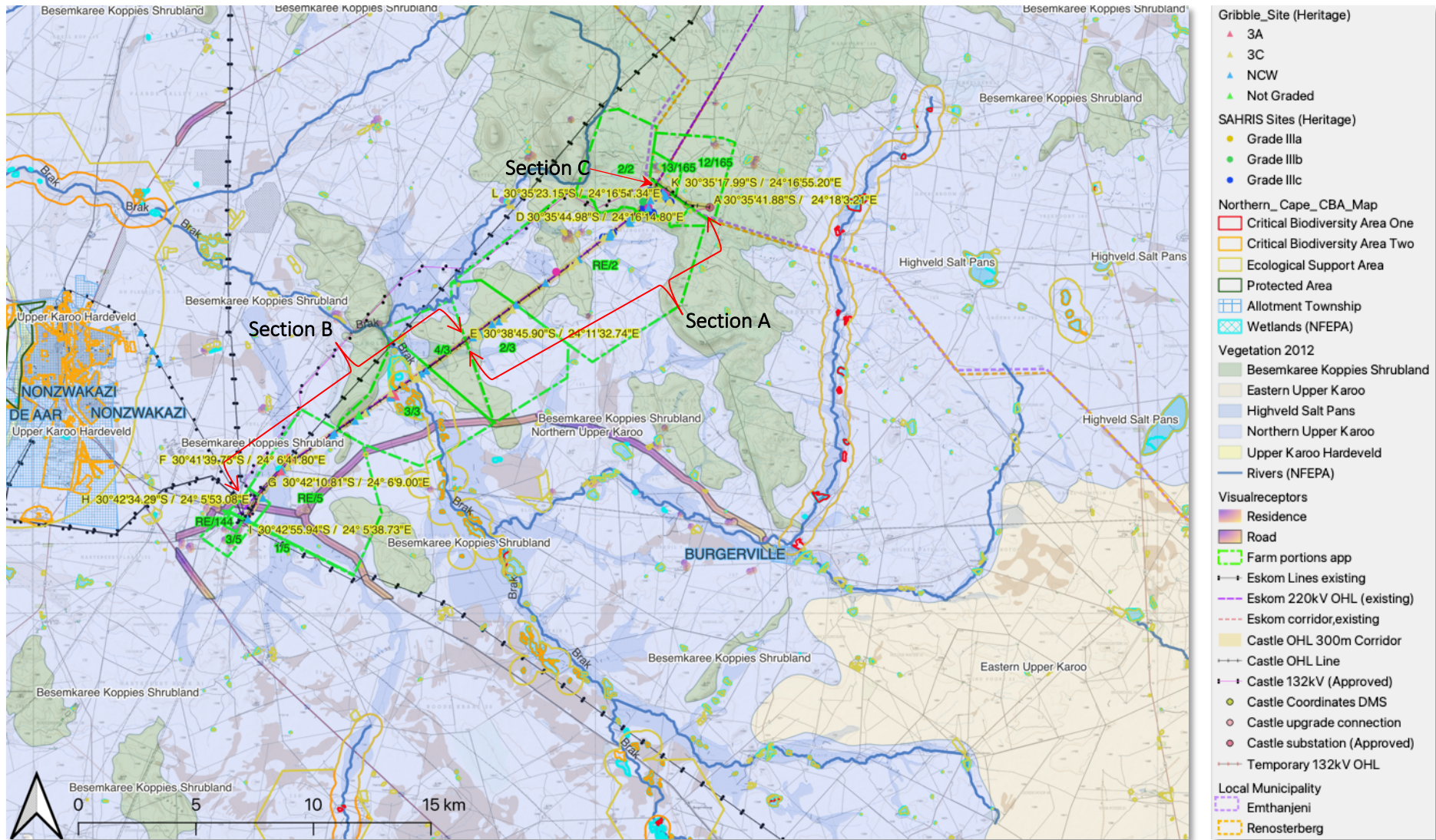


Figure: Combined sensitivity map showing the proposed OHL (Overview), legend on right.

APPENDIX 3 ADDITIONAL INFO, IF ANY

Motivation for no meeting

Environmental Authorisation (EA) for the construction of the Castle WEF and associated infrastructure, near De Aar (DEA ref: 14/12/16/3/3/2/278) was obtained on 8 May 2015. Subsequently the Environmental Authorisation (EA) has been amended several times to account for changes to the proposed project's scope and holder of the EA. Moreover, an EA for a proposed OHL from Castle to the Hydra MTS was obtained (DEA ref: 14/12/16/3/3/1/1351), on 5 October 2018. During the several years ensuing these EAs the number of Renewable Energy (RE) developments and associated infrastructure such as transmission lines planned for around the town of De Aar (specifically the Hydra MTS) has increased significantly. This can mainly be attributed to two factors, the availability of RE resources and ability of RE developments to feed into the national grid at the Hydra MTS. The congestion of RE infrastructure has subsequently led to the OHL authorised (DEA ref: 14/12/16/3/3/1/1351) to evacuate electricity generated from the Castle WEF to become unfeasible. Consequently, a technically feasible alternative OHL route to connect the Castle WEF to the Hydra MTS has been identified.

The new alternative includes in part a new OHL (Section A, which will fall within an existing Eskom transmission servitude) and in part the upgrading of an existing OHL (Section B) as well as a short section that could potentially feed into the planned (authorised but not built) De Aar South WEF substation (Section C). Since the proposed project site has largely been subjected to previous BA process¹ for a similar transmission line development in 2021 and the rest of the site falls within the area assessed for the authorised Castle WEF² and authorised Castle OHL³. A meeting with DFFE and the release of a consultation/pre-application BAR were deemed not to be necessary in context of the proposed developments given that the proposed OHL will largely fall within the parameters of the recently assessed OHL corridor. Most of the properties in question have been subject to rigorous specialist investigations and environmental application which provide a notable amount of baseline information to be called on.

¹ Up to 400kV De Aar 2 South Transmission Line and Switching Station, DFFE Ref: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2330

² Castle WEF and associated infrastructure, DFFE Ref: 14/12/16/3/3/2/278, 8 May 2015.

³ OHL from Castle to the Hydra MTS, DFFE Ref: 14/12/16/3/3/1/1351, 5 October 2018.