



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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DIRECTOR: INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATIONS

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS: PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW 88KV PETRUSDAM SWITCH STATION WITHIN THE RAMOTSHERE MOILOA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, NORTH WEST PROVINCE.

1. PURPOSE

To provide you with comments on Basic Assessment Report for the above mentioned project in Northern Cape Province.

2. COMMENTS ON DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation received and evaluated the final Basic Assessment Report and the following were noted:

- The proposed development falls within Savannah and Grassland biomes, mostly dominated by the Zeerust Thornveld vegetation type.
- The proposed site falls within an Ecological Support Area (ESA) and vegetation community conservation status is classified as the Least Threatened Ecosystem.
- Both alternative site falls outside Important Bird Areas (IBAs), Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas (FEPAS), Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) and National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES) areas.
- It was noted that protected tree species such as *Acacia Erioloba* and *Boscia albitrunca* were found within the preferred alternative.
- Due to the fact that Petrusdam was used for agricultural activities, the ecosystem found is currently in a transformed state.
- Although some natural woodland in the study area has been disturbed by agricultural activity in the past, large expanses of relatively undisturbed woodland still remains in some parts along the proposed alignments thus providing forage and habitat for various fauna.

- The habitat transformation will have a low impact, and should only affect a few non-Red Data species at a local level.
- The proposed development and its infrastructure will pose a medium-high electrocution risk, for avifauna species, in particular to vultures.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

After the evaluation of specialist reports submitted for the proposed development, it is recommended that the following be adhered to during the Final EIA phase:

- Before construction commences, all sensitive habitats, such as wetlands must be clearly demarcated with fencing or orange mesh netting. Barricading measures to be utilized should not restrict the movement of fauna in the area.
- Switching Station and supporting infrastructure should be designed and planned to cater for bird perching and visibility for bird's species to avoid collision and electrocution.
- All identified protected trees species (such as *Acacia Erioloba*, *Prunus Africana* and *Boscia albitrunca*) should be marked within the project footprint and must not be disturbed or removed, prior to obtaining permits from relevant authorities.
- Vegetation clearing must be kept to the minimum to protect the rare trees and other biodiversity important plant and faunal species.
- The development footprint should be kept to a minimum and natural vegetation should be encouraged to return to disturbed areas.
- Immediate rehabilitation/re-vegetation using indigenous vegetation must be done upon completion of construction activities.
- The recommendations and mitigation measures stipulated in all specialist reports must be adhered to.

4. CONCLUSION

The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation has noted that the proposed development impact probabilities are so low to the flora and fauna should the mitigation measures contained herein and other reports be implemented and adhered to. From avifaunal point of view the developments can go ahead on preferred site provided the above recommendations are followed.



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