



South African National Research Network (SANReN)  
Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)  
NextGen Enterprises and Institutions Cluster  
PO Box 395  
Pretoria  
0001  
South Africa

Attention: Mr. Zuki Makalima  
CC: Mr. Mlungisi Majola  
Ms. Luanita Snyman-van der Walt

**APPROVAL IN TERMS OF SECTION 50 (5) OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: PROTECTED AREAS ACT (ACT NO. 57 OF 2003, AS AMENDED) FOR THE INSTALLATION OF OVERHEAD FIBRE OPTIC CABLES IN THE KAROO NATIONAL PARK, FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE SQUARE KILOMETRE ARRAY (SKA) RADIO-TELESCOPE**

The South African National Research Network (SANReN), hosted and implemented by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is tasked with constructing fibre optic cable between Beaufort West and Carnarvon (via Loxton). The purpose of the fibre optic cable is to connect the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO) core site hosting the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) and MeerKAT telescopes to transport radio astronomy measurements to the SARAO Science Data Processor (SDP) that will be located in Cape Town.

The fibre optic cable will follow the Ni, R381 and R63 roads between Beaufort West and Carnarvon. Where the cabling needs to traverse difficult terrain, for example the Molteno Pass on the eastern side of the Karoo National Park ("the Park"), it would need to be installed overhead within the Park on a combination of timber and concrete poles between 7.5 and 9 m high at intervals of 20 - 80m. SANParks acknowledges that the SANReN fibre route to be constructed for SARAO would encroach the identified properties, which have been declared as part of the Park, where it is not possible to remain within the road reserves:

- Erf 3545 of the Beaufort West region [C00900010000354500000];
- Erf 1707 of the Beaufort West Region [C00900010000170700000]; and
- Portion 9 of the Farm Alwins Gate 186 [C009000000000186000009].

Section 50 (5) of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act no. 57 of 2003, as amended) (NEM:PAA) stipulates:

addo elephant  
agulhas  
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bontebok  
golden gate highlands  
karoo  
kgalagadi transfrontier  
knysna lake area  
kruger  
mapungubwe  
marakele  
mountain zebra  
namaqua  
table mountain  
tankwa-karoo  
tsitsikamma  
|ai-|ais/richtersveld  
vaalbos  
west coast  
wilderness

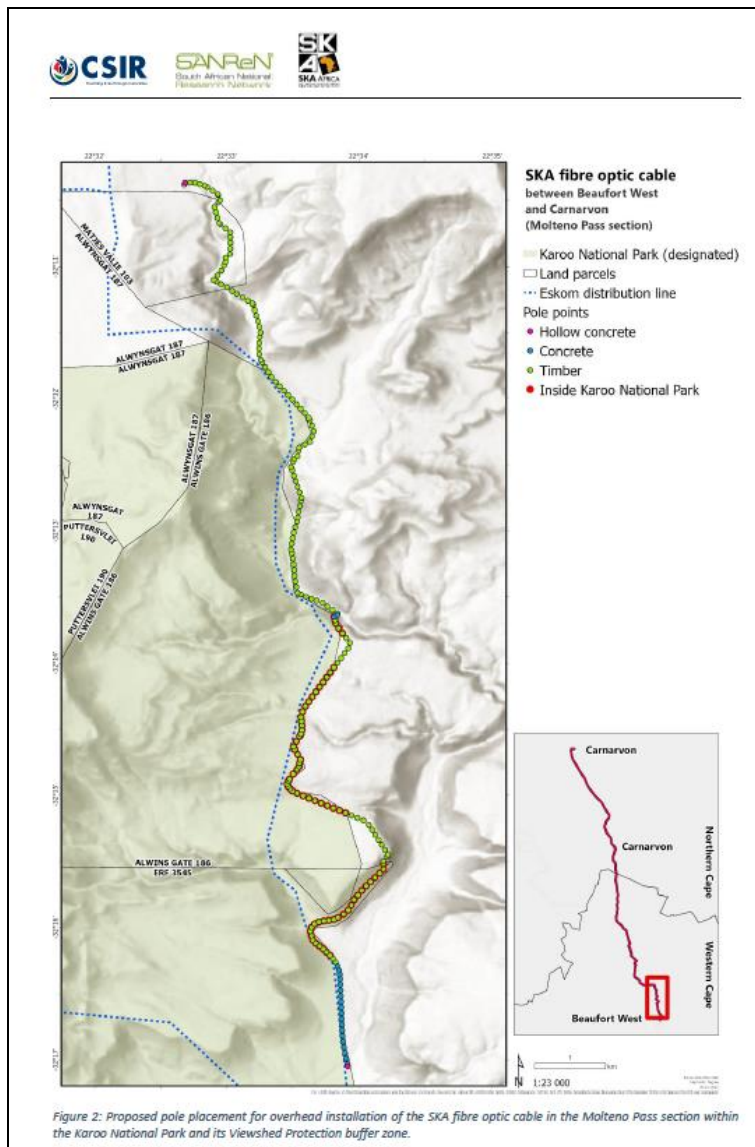
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*No development, construction or farming may be permitted in a national park, nature reserve or world heritage site without the prior written approval of the management authority.*

Furthermore, Section 19 of the NEM:PAA regulations for the proper administration of special nature reserves, national parks and world heritage sites (Government Notice R1061 in Government Gazette 28181, dated 28 October 2005) stipulates:

- (1) No development contemplated in section 50 (5) of the Act shall be implemented—*
  - (a) in any area other than an area specifically designated for such development in a management plan; and*
  - (b) before a management authority has indicated in writing the nature and extent of the strategic or environmental impact assessment required for the development.*
- (2) No commercial activity or activity contemplated in section 50 of the Act, which requires an environmental impact assessment to be undertaken, either in terms of subregulation (1)(b) or under any other law, may be implemented before a management authority has approved, with or without conditions, the environmental impact assessment before it is submitted to the relevant authority for approval.*

SANParks confirms that it is the management authority of the Karoo National Park. Approximately 4.7 km of the overhead cabling is proposed within the Park in order to traverse the difficult terrain in the Molteno Pass section. The proposed fibre optic cabling will follow the same corridor as the abandoned Telkom telephone line (adjacent to the Eskom power line). The proposed SKA fibre optic cable is a remote zone, in an existing footprint used for linear infrastructure. SANParks has no objection to the proposed fibre optic cable footprint in the Park.



SANParks understands that Environmental Authorisation (EA) is also required for the proposed fibre optic cable development. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process (Basic Assessment (BA)) be conducted in accordance the requirements of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) EIA Regulations in this regard, and Park Management must be included in the Public Participation Process going forward. A Water Use License (WUL) is also required for the proposed fibre optic cable project.

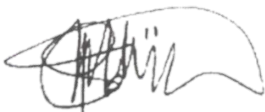
We hereby grant approval in terms of Section 50 (5) of the NEM:PAA and wayleave for CSIR to proceed with the fibre installation within the Karoo National Park (after EA has been obtained).

We further recognize that SANReN is a non-profit initiative for the benefit of South African research, education and innovation communities, and thus waive any payment for the granting of the wayleave.

We trust that the CSIR and all construction, operations and maintenance contractors will:

- To the best of its abilities, endeavour to avoid any possible damage to Park property or services through the installation of the fibre optic cable. CSIR will minimize any inconvenience and also repair any damage that may be caused during the installation.
- Endeavor to arrange for access to the property at mutually agreeable times and to minimize any disruption.
- Ensure that all construction, operations and maintenance activities will be carried out in accordance to the EA (if granted) and associated Environmental Management Programme for the proposed fibre optic cable development.

Yours sincerely



Mr Property Mokoena  
Managing Executive - Parks Division  
South African National Parks

Date: 2 August 2021

CC: Andre Riley  
Nico van der Walt  
Kristal Maze  
Marinda van Graan  
Maretha Alant

