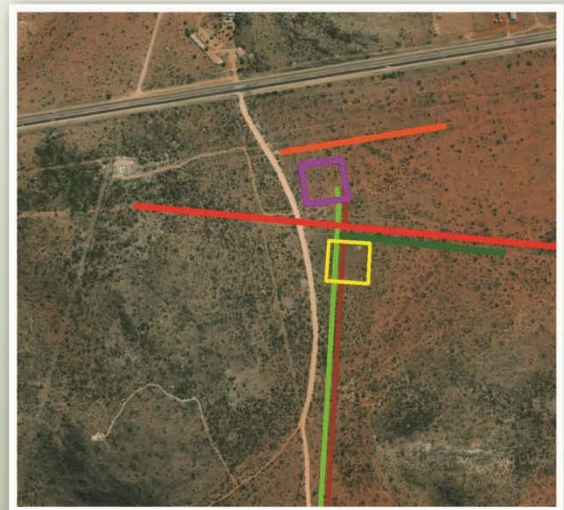




GA Environment



ESKOM NEW ALOE SUBSTATION AND POWERLINES – NOTIFICATION LETTER

BASIC ASSESSMENT AND WATER USE AUTHORIZATION FOR THE ESKOM NEW ALOE SUBSTATION AND LOOP-IN LOOP-OUT (LILO) POWERLINES, POLOKWANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY WITHIN CAPRICORN DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

JULY 2020



Environmental best practice, safety and sustainability

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KEY ABBREVIATIONS

BA	Basic Assessment
CA	Competent Authority
CBA	Critical Biodiversity Area
DEFF	Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
EA	Environmental Authorisation
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
LILO	Loop-in Loop-out
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998)
NWA	National Water Act, 1998 (Act 36 of 1998)
PPP	Public Participation Process
WUA	Water Use Authorisation

1. Background to the project

GA Environment (Pty) Ltd has been appointed by Eskom Limpopo Operating Unit (LOU) to undertake a Basic Assessment (BA) and possible Water Use Authorisation (WUA) for the proposed construction of a 132kV New Aloe substation and associated and parallel 132kV Silica-Aloe loop-in and Thabamoopo-Aloe loop-out powerlines. The intention of the proposed project is to secure supply of electricity in order to cater for proposed new developments in the area.

The New Aloe substation and associated powerlines are proposed within Ward 5 and Ward 6 of the Polokwane Local Municipality on Portion 1005 of Farm Majebas Kraal LS. As indicated in **Figure 1**, The existing Aloe Substation is located approximately 350m of the proposed New Aloe substation. The eastern edge of the village of Orange Grove is located west of the proposed substation site and powerlines and the Diep River is located east of the site. The preferred alternative site for the substation is located adjacent to the proposed substation and is about 250m south of the surfaced R71 and is directly accessible from a gravel road off the R71. The approximate centre coordinates of the preferred substation site are 23°53'57.97"S; 29°37'22.02"E and those of the alternative site proposed approximately 100m south of the preferred site are 23°54'5.33"S; 29°37'24.18"E. The proposed substation will cover an extent of 2 hectares and will also include an access road, feeder bays, transformers and a communication tower.

The Silica-Aloe and Thabamoopo-Aloe Loop-in loop out (LILO) powerlines will run parallel and in a southerly direction for a distance of ±3.6km from the proposed New Aloe substation to connect to the existing Silica- North 132kV line. The approximate coordinates of the connection point will be 23°56'0.34"S; 29°37'22.77"E. Other powerlines run in the vicinity of the proposed project as indicated in **Figure 1**.

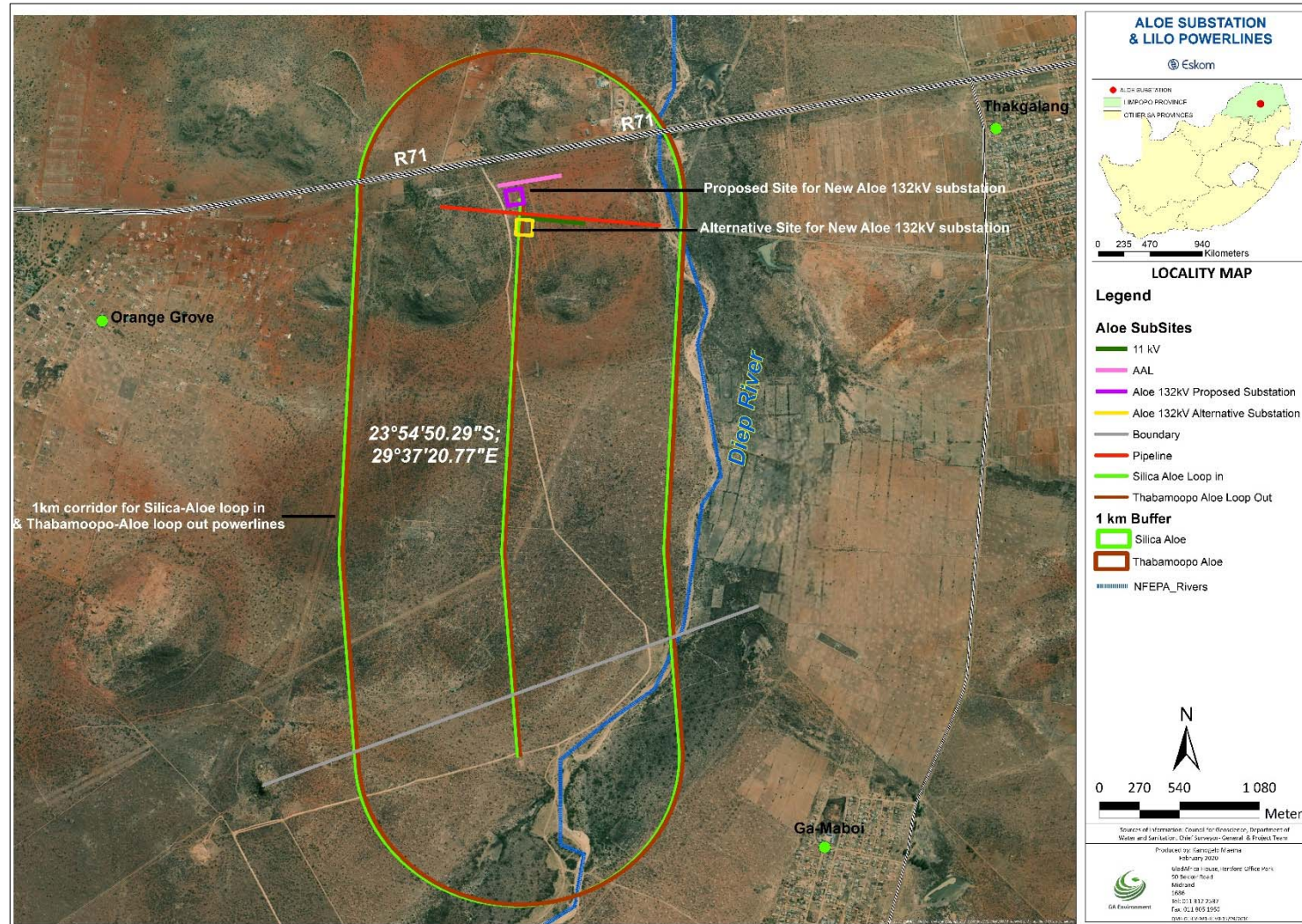


Figure 1: Locality of proposed New Aloe substation and LILo powerlines)

2. Purpose of this Notification Letter

The Public Participation Process (PPP) forms an integral part of any environmental application. This Notification Letter provides basic information regarding the project and offers the reader an opportunity to obtain further information on the project so as to make informed comments, raise issues of concern and generally contribute positively towards the realisation of the project. The distribution of this document is a crucial step in advising the reader on how to become involved in the PPP. This document includes the following:

- A brief introduction to the project, including location and the proposed infrastructure;
- An overview of the proposed activities and the environmental legal framework in which the project will be executed; and
- An explanation of the Public Participation Process (PPP) to be followed.

3. Proposed Development

The proposed development will comprise of the following key infrastructure:

- 100 X 100 m (2 Hectare) 132 kV Substation with ± 30 m access road;
- 132kV Aloe-Thabamoopo loop-out line;
- 132kV Silica-Aloe-in loop-in line;
- 132/22kV 1x40MVA transformer and 132/11kV 1x40MVA;
- 2x 22kV feeder bays ,3x11kV feeder bays and 2x22kV feeder bays; and
- Communication tower.

4. Need and Desirability for the project

Eskom's mandate is to provide electricity in an efficient and sustainable manner through the generation, transmission, and distribution processes. The Polokwane area has experienced good economic growth, due to urban growth, electrification, mining and industrialization. Eskom has had to support this growth Limpopo by strengthening the transmission and distribution network to add power supply options to the South African electricity grid. The construction of the New Aloe Substation and LILO powerlines will further increase distribution capacity to ensure power supply for new developments in Polokwane.

5. Environmental Legislative Requirements for the Proposed Development

Within the Bill of Rights, Section 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) states that:

“Everyone has the right—

(a) to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing; and

(b) to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that—

(i) prevent pollution and ecological degradation;

(ii) promote conservation; and

(iii) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.”

It is clear that environmental protection is crucial for human well-being and to ensure sustainable development whilst ensuring the protection of the natural environment.

In order to identify potential environmental issues that may arise during the construction and operation of the proposed housing infrastructure, a site visit as well as desktop studies were undertaken. The following are the key environmental characteristics of the site based on site observations as well as desktop studies:

- the site (i.e. proposed substation site and powerlines) is located within a Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA). This is an area deemed important to conserve ecosystems and species and will require protection;
- vegetation around the site is thornveld bush;
- three ridges occur in the vicinity of the site;
- portions of the site where the powerline will transect is used as a communal grazing land; and
- Diep River occurs along the eastern section of the site.

Table 1 is an outline of the key legislation as well as the reasons for the project applicability and implications, therefore.

Table 1: Project key environmental legislation, applicability and implications

Legislation	Applicability to project	Implications
National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA) EIA Regulations 2014 (as amended)	Certain Listed Activities are triggered under The NEMA EIA Regulations which are discussed under Section 5.1 of this of this Notification Letter.	A Basic Assessment (BA) will be undertaken.
National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA), 2004 (Act 10 of 2004)	The site is located within a CBA where vegetation will need to be cleared.	Specialist studies such as a Floral Assessment (i.e. Plant study), a Faunal Assessment (animal study) and an Avifaunal Assessment (bird study) must be undertaken (refer to Section 7 of this Notification Letter).
National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999)	In addition to the information about the rich heritage background of the site as communicated by Eskom officials, the proposed development triggers certain activities under Section 38(1) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999). These are 38(1)(a) and 38(1)(c)(d) which are applicable to the project as the proposed powerline length exceeds 300m and because the proposed activity will exceed 5000m ² respectively.	A Heritage Impact Assessment must be undertaken (refer to Section 7 of this Notification Letter).
National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998)	The Diep River runs along the eastern side of the site and is likely to be	Wetland and riparian assessment and delineation will

Legislation	Applicability to project	Implications
	affected by proposed project activities).	be undertaken. Furthermore, a Water Use Authorisation (WUA) may be required for the project.

The triggered listed activities that are applicable to the project both under the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA) EIA Regulations 2014 (as amended) and the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998) will be presented.

5.1 National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA) EIA Regulations 2014 (as amended)

The NEMA as amended in April 2017 identifies three separate administrative processes for EIAs, depending on the nature of the activity. A Basic Assessment process (Listing Notice 1) is identified for those activities that have less of a possible detrimental impact to the environment. A Scoping and EIA process (Listing Notice 2) is necessary for those activities, which are identified as having more of a possible detrimental impact on the environment, whereas Listing Notice 3 relates to identified activities that would require a Basic Assessment prior to the commencement of those activities in specific identified geographical areas only.

The NEMA EIA Listed Activities presented in **Table 2** are based on the proposed project activities based on information that is currently available. A 'listed activity' refers to any activity that is presented under any of the three Listing Notices that have been published under Government Gazette No 40772 on 07 April 2017 and are an amendment of the 2014 Regulations that were published under Government Gazette No. 38282 on 04 December 2014. **Table 2** presents the NEMA listed activities triggered by the proposed housing project.

Table 2: Triggered NEMA EIA Listed Activities

Project Activities	Listed Activity	Implications
The development of a substation of 2 hectares in support of electricity distribution and the Thabamooop-Aloe Loop-in loop out (LILO) powerlines will run parallel and in a southerly direction for a distance of ±3.6km from the proposed New Aloe substation to connect to the existing Silica- North 132kV line.	Listing Notice 1, Activity 11 <i>The development of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity—</i> <i>(i) outside urban areas or industrial complexes with a capacity of more than 33 but less than 275 kilovolts.</i>	A Basic Assessment is required
Indigenous vegetation will need to be cleared (i.e. permanent removal) in a Critical Biodiversity Area to accommodate the construction of a 2-hectare (20 000m ²) substation.	Listing Notice 1, Activity 27 <i>The clearance of 1 hectare or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation, except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for-</i> <i>(i) the undertaking of a linear activity;</i> <i>or</i>	A Basic Assessment is required

Project Activities	Listed Activity	Implications
<p>Indigenous vegetation refers to plant species occurring naturally in an area, regardless of the level of alien infestation and where the topsoil has not been lawfully disturbed during the preceding ten years) that occurs on site</p>	<p>(ii) <i>maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan.</i></p>	
<p>The construction of a 65m Telecommunication tower within the substation footprint but not attached to the substation buildings/roofs.</p>	<p>Listing Notice 3, Activity 3 <i>The development of masts or towers of any material or type used for telecommunication broadcasting or radio transmission purposes where the mast or tower—</i> <i>(a) is to be placed on a site not previously used for this purpose; and</i> <i>(b) will exceed 15 metres in height—but excluding attachments to existing buildings and masts on rooftops.</i> <i>e.Limpopo</i> <i>i.Outside urban areas:</i> <i>(ee)Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans;</i></p>	<p>A Basic Assessment is required</p>
<p>The extent of the project area is located within a CBA1 area, and while the northern portion thereof, within which the Aloe Substation location alternatives are located, comprises secondary bushveld habitat with lowered ecological value due to dominance by woody encroacher species, the southern portion of the project area and surrounding granite outcrops are considered representative of a CBA.</p>	<p>Listing Notice 3, Activity 12 <i>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 in:</i> <i>ii. Within Critical Biodiversity Areas or Ecological Support Areas identified in the Gauteng Conservation Plan or bioregional plans;</i></p>	<p>A Basic Assessment is required</p>

It is important to note that other listed activities may be identified as the project progresses. The Basic Assessment Process is briefly discussed in **Section 6** of this Notification Letter.

5.2 National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998)

Due to the close proximity of the site to the Diep River, it is anticipated that impacts on the river may occur as a result of the proposed development. Any activity that occurs within a regulated area requires an application for a Water Use License Application (WULA) or with the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS). Of the Eleven (11) Water Uses covered under Section 21 of the National Water Act (NWA), 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998), the triggered activities identified for the Aloe Substation development are presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3: NWA Triggered Activities

Proposed Activity	Section 21 Triggered Activity	Implications
<p>Part of the project's 1km corridor of extends into the Diep River.</p> <p>The clearance of vegetation may result in high sediment loads into the Diep River in the absence of good stormwater management and the subsequent discharge of the stormwater into the River. Other construction related matters such as leaking equipment could negatively impact the stormwater and in turn the River.</p>	<p><i>(c) impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse</i></p> <p><i>(i) altering the bed, banks, course or characteristic of a watercourse</i></p>	<p>A Water Use Authorisation is required for the project. Along with these the following Specialist Studies discussed in greater detail in Section 7 of this Notification Letter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetland and riparian assessment and delineation

6. Description and Objective of the Basic Assessment Process and the Water Use Authorisation process

6.1 Basic Assessment Process

The BA process is required for this project as the proposed as already presented under Section 5.1 of this Notification Letter.

A Basic Assessment (BA) process aims to identify and assess potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed housing development as well as any alternatives to the development / activity and to compile appropriate mitigation measures. The key objective of the BA process is for Eskom to obtain the required Environmental Authorisation (EA) for the project from the Department of Environment Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) as the Competent Authority (CA). The CA an organ of state charged by the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) with evaluating the environmental impact of an activity and, where appropriate, with granting or refusing an environmental authorisation in respect of that activity. In the case of the proposed project, the CA is the DEFF. The EA is a decision by a CA to authorise a listed activity in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA). The authorisation means that a project, either in totality or partially, can commence subject to certain conditions. The Competent Authority has a right to refuse to grant authorisation for a project in totality or partially. Should the EA be granted, Eskom will commence with the construction of the proposed development.

A Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) will be issued for Public and CA review for a period of at least 30 Calendar Days. The Final BAR will then be issued to the CA for review and decision making and if satisfactory, an EA will be issued to Eskom.

6.2 Water Use Authorisation Process

A Water Use Authorisation (WUA) process may be required for this project subject to specialist findings and after consultation with the Department of Water and Sanitation. It is important to note that the WUA can either be a General Authorisation (if the proposed National Water Act, Act. No 36 of 1998) Section 21(c) and (i) activities are deemed to have a low rating according to the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) risk matrix) or a Water Use Licence Application (WULA) if the rating is medium or high.

7. Environmental Specialist Studies

Environmental specialist studies are required on a project where expertise is required regarding an environmental issue that was either noted on site through desktop and/or site observations. These can either be independent studies, where an EIA is not required, or they may be used to support the EIA as is the case for the proposed development for Aloe Substation.

Some of the key environmental studies that will need to be undertaken for the project are as follows.

- *Floral Assessment*: identify the plants of conservation importance within the site boundaries and clearly presenting any that are protected;
- *Faunal Assessment*: identify any animals that occur within the site boundaries clearly presenting any that are protected;
- *Avifaunal Assessment*: identify the birds that occurs within the site boundaries clearly presenting any that are protected;
- *Heritage Impact Assessment*: determine and assess any objects or places of cultural significance that could potentially occur on site;
- *Geotechnical Impact Assessment*: determine the physical properties of soil earthworks and foundations for proposed structures; and
- *Wetland and riparian Assessment and delineation*: determine the status and extent of the Wetland around the proposed development area.

8. Public Participation Process

In terms of Chapter 6 of the NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations, 2014, as amended, a Public Participation Process (PPP) forms an integral part of an Environmental Impact Assessment Process. The PPP provides Interested and Affected parties (I&APs), including DEFF as the Competent Authority, with an opportunity to provide comments and to raise issues of concern about the project or to make suggestions on the processes and proposed activities. Any I&APs can therefore register on the project to obtain ongoing information about the EIA Process for the proposed development. An I&AP as defined by NEMA, 1998 as:

- “an interested and affected party contemplated in section 24(4)(a)(v), and which includes-*
- (a) any person, group of persons or organisation interested in or affected by such operation or activity; and*
 - (b) any organ of state that may have jurisdiction over any aspect of the operation or activity.”*

The compilation of PPP documents such as *this Notification Letter* is one of the requirements of Chapter 6 of the NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended. Other documents that will be drafted as part of the project notification phase include a Site Notice that will be placed on site and a newspaper advert for placement in a local newspaper. The process also requires the use of any other PPP methods such as Focus Group and/or Public Meetings where the need for these arises.

Upon DEFF's issuing of the Environmental Authorisation (permission to commence with the development), all registered I&APs will be informed of the decision and provided with an opportunity to appeal the decision. The opportunity to register on the project as an I&AP will be kept open from the Initial Notification phase up to the issuing of the Environmental Authorisation. The project I&AP database has been opened and will be maintained by GA Environment.

9. Opportunity to participate

This Notification is also in terms of the directions regarding the measures to address, prevent and combat the spread of the COVID-19 relating to the National Environmental Management Permits and Licenses issued by the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries on 05 June 2020. Should you wish to register as an I&AP on the project or to make suggestions and/or comments on this proposal, kindly provide these together with your name, contact details (preferred method of communication, e.g. e-mail cellphone) and an indication of any interest which you (or the organisation you represent) have in the application to **Name:** Nyaladzi Nleya at **Tel:** 011 312 2537 , 078 329 7918, **Fax:** 011 805 1950, **e-mail:** nyaladzin@gaenvironment.com or environment@gaenvironment.com or **Post:** P.O Box 6723 Halfway House 1685. You may use the attached registration and comment sheet. **Please register your interest in the project by latest 30th September 2020.**

BASIC ASSESSMENT AND WATER USE AUTHORISATION FOR THE ESKOM NEW ALOE SUBSTATION AND LOOP-IN LOOP-OUT POWERLINES, POLOKWANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY WITHIN CAPRICORN DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

**REGISTRATION AND COMMENT SHEET
JULY 2020**

COMMENT/S

Name:.....

Surname:.....

Organisation:.....

Postal or Residential Address:.....

.....

Post Code:

Tel number:.....

Fax number:.....

Cellphone number:.....

E-mail address:.....

OTHER INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES

Please add the following neighbours/interested or affected parties to your mailing list (please provide their names, surnames and telephone numbers):

1).....

2).....

Would like to be registered on the Project database? Yes / No



Please complete and return to GA Environment for:

Attention: Nyaladzi Nleya

E-mail: nyaladzin@gaenvironment.com or environment@gaenvironment.com or, **Fax:** (011) 805 1950/57,

Post: PO Box 6723, Halfway House, Midrand, 1685

You may also call us on (011) 312 2537, 078 329 7918

