

**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAJUBA PV SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY NEAR AMERSFOORT, MPUMALANGA
COMMENTS & RESPONSES REPORT**

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COMMENTS RECEIVED: EIA PHASE

No.	Issue	Issue Raised By	Response
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS & I&AP REGISTRATIONS			
1.	Please can I register as an interested and affected party for the proposed solar farm that is located near Majuba Power Station, on the Witkoppies farm.	Bradley Gibbons Field Officer, Threatened Grassland Species Programme Endangered Wildlife Trust Email: 19-08-2015	Bradley Gibbons' details were added to the project's I&AP database.
2.	My name is Elmarie Duvenage. I would like to register in order to obtain more information on the Majuba PV Solar Energy Facility.	Elmarie Duvenage Interested and Affected Party Email: 01-04-2016	Elmarie Duvenage's details were added to the project's I&AP database.
3.	Eskom is requested to present the proposed project to the Municipality's Council once the project receives environmental authorisation.	Mandla Shabangu Office of the Speaker	Comment noted, Eskom has been informed of this request.
4.	Please can you send a CD copy of the draft EIA Report to the new Municipal Manager, Mr Malebye.	Dr Pixely Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality Focus Group Meeting: 07-04-2016	A CD copy of the draft EIA Report was sent to Mr Sam Ngwenya on 24 March 2016. A copy of the report was sent to the new Municipal Manager and his details will be included on the project's database.

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PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES, EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND LOCAL PARTICIPATION			
5.	Will there be employment opportunities for people from the local communities?	Mandla Shabangu Office of the Speaker Dr Pixely Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality Focus Group Meeting: 07-04-2016	The project will create employment opportunities for people from the local communities. Approximately 250 – 300 employment opportunities will be created for the project in total during the construction phase of the project. 45% of the opportunities will be available for low-skilled workers, 22% will be available to semi-skilled workers and 33% will be available to skilled personnel. The project will also provide skills development opportunities and benefits for local businesses. It should be noted, however, that these figures are likely to vary depending on the final design on the project.
6.	Our main interest is the creation of employment opportunities through this project. How many jobs will there be during the construction phase of the project? Will the contractor employ people from the local community? How many jobs will there be during the operation of the facility.	Issue raised at Public Meeting held on 07-04-2016	Approximately 250 – 300 employment opportunities will be created for the project in total during the construction phase of the project. 45% of the opportunities will be available for low-skilled workers, 22% will be available to semi-skilled workers and 33% will be available to skilled personnel. The contractor will be required to employ people from the local communities, this has been stipulated in the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr). It should be noted, however, that these figures are likely to vary depending on the final design on the project. There will be few jobs available during the operation phase as highly skilled people are required to oversee the operation of the solar facility. However, occasionally general workers will be required for cleaning and maintenance purposes.
7.	The skills required to work on projects of this nature are lacking within the local communities. Will Eskom implement skills development programmes?	Issue raised at Public Meeting held on 07-04-2016	Opportunities for skills development do exist, Eskom and the appointed contractors will confirm the nature of the programmes to be implemented in due course.

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HERITAGE IMPACTS			
8.	<p>Eskom Holdings (SOC) Limited is proposing to establish a 65MW photovoltaic solar energy facility named the Majuba Solar Energy Facility. The project involves the construction of PV solar panels mounted on rammed steel with pre-manufactured concrete footings, an internal transformer, switching station and power line from the substation to Majuba Power Station, internal access roads and workshop admin area. The total project area is 96.9ha and lies adjacent to the existing Majuba coal fired power station. The Majuba Solar Energy Facility is located on Portions 1, 2 and 6 of the farm Witkoppies 81 HS, Seme Local Municipality, Mpumalanga Province.</p> <p>Thank you for submitting the Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) and Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) to SAHRA as requested in the Interim Comments dated 23 April 2015 and 14 June 2015.</p> <p><i>Van der Walt, J. September 2015. Archaeological Impact Assessment for the Proposed Establishment of the Majuba Solar PV Facility, Mpumalanga Province.</i></p> <p>The author undertook a field assessment of the proposed solar facility and found there were no archaeological material, graves or historical structures older than 60 years of age, as mentioned to be a possibility in the heritage scoping report by the same author (2014). SAHRA noted that the</p>	<p>Nokukhanya Khumalo Heritage Officer</p> <p>South African Heritage Resources Agency</p> <p>Letter: 26-04-2016</p>	<p>It is noted that SAHRA has no objection to this proposed development on the condition that the chance finds procedures described in the EMPr are adhered to.</p>

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	<p>chance finds procedure provided in the HIA was incorporated into the EMPr.</p> <p><i>Butler, E. September 2015. Palaeontological Impact Assessment Report-Eskom Holdings (SOC) Limited's proposed Majuba Solar Energy Facility near Amersfoort, Mpumalanga Province.</i></p> <p>A field assessment as requested in the desktop palaeontological study by Millstead (2014) was conducted to assess the potential impacts by the proposed development on a potentially sensitive outcrop of the Volkrust Formation. No fossils or palaeontological sensitive zones were identified due to dense vegetation cover throughout the study area. Although this formation is listed as Highly Sensitive to fossilised glossipterids, cordaitaleans and other seed ferns, this type of development has a low impact on fossiliferous rocks also because the area has been disturbed by previous agricultural activities. SAHRA noted that the chance finds procedure provided in the PIA was incorporated into the EMPr.</p> <p>Final Comment</p> <p>SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit agree with the recommendations made in the HIA and PIA reports. As such SAHRA has no objection to this proposed development on the condition that the chance finds procedures in the EMPr will be adhered to.</p>		

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	<p>If any newly discovered heritage resources prove to be of archaeological or palaeontological significance a Phase 2 rescue operation might be necessary, and a permit will be needed before mitigation is carried out. You may contact SAHRA APM Unit for further details: (Nokukhanya Khumalo/Phillip Hine 021 202 8652). If any unmarked human burials are uncovered then please contact the SAHRA BGG Unit (Mimi Seetelo 012 320 8490).</p>		
GENERAL			
9.	Will this project reduce the electricity price?	Issue raised at Public Meeting held on 07-04-2016	The price of electricity will not be impacted by this project. The purpose of the project is to reduce Eskom's self-consumption at the Majuba Power Station.

COMMENTS RECEIVED: SCOPING PHASE

No.	Issue	Issue Raised By	Response
ACKNOWLEDGMENT LETTERS FROM ORGANS OF STATE & I&APS			
10.	In Principle it is OK, but wait for an official answer. Engineers have to reflect on this first. Solly, the Engineering Manager will come back to you.	Gladman Mkwai Power Station Manager – Majuba Power Station Eskom Email: 10-12-2014	Comment noted. Engineering is happy with the project. A system engineer has been allocated for the project.
11.	The Department of Energy acknowledges receipt of the Environmental Impact Assessment Process for the proposed Majuba Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Energy Facility, Mpumalanga Province. We would like to confirm that the Department is still inviting Independent Power Producers to submit proposals for the generation of electricity from renewable energy sources under the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP). We have gone through the report and wish to inform Savannah Environmental that we are satisfied with the report. We further wish you all the best in securing a positive Environmental Authorization from the Department of Environmental Affairs. The Department would appreciate being kept informed of progress with this project.	Pheladi Masipa Project Coordinator: Renewable Energy Initiatives Department of Energy Letter: 17-01-2015 and 27-03-2015	Acknowledgment noted, no response required.
12.	After due consideration of the contents of the	Dr. A. De Lange	Comment noted, no response required.

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	<p>Environmental Impact Assessment Report (Draft Scoping Report) for the abovementioned project received on 25 March 2015, the department is satisfied with the information in the report and therefore has no objection to the proposed development.</p>	<p>Acting Chief Director: Environmental Services Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs Letter: 30-04-2015</p>	
13.	<p>Cognisance is taken of the above mentioned notice in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2010, National Environmental Management Act (Act No 107 of 1998) and Section 22 of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 that interested and affected parties have the opportunity to comment on the proposed project.</p> <p>The Department has no comments or objections as the land is privately owned and no Provincial state owned properties are situated in close proximity.</p>	<p>Mr MC Morolo DDG: Public Infrastructure Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport Letter: 12-05-2015</p>	<p>Acknowledgment noted, no response required.</p>
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & I&AP REGISTRATION			
14.	<p>I hadn't noticed that these sites are on existing power stations. I don't think BirdLife SA needs to register as an I&AP.</p>	<p>Simon Gear Policy & Advocacy Manager</p>	<p>Comment noted. BirdLife SA was removed as I&APs from the project's database.</p>

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		BirdLife SA Email: 11-12-2015	
15.	The public's primary interests include job creation, subcontracting opportunities, skills development and information regarding Eskom's social responsibility plan. Eskom would need to provide more information on these issues when consulting the broader community.	Obed Shabangu Ward Councillor Dr. Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality Public Meeting: 9-04-2014	Comment noted. The purpose of consulting the community at this stage of the project is to obtain their input on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. We would like to know whether the community has any concerns regarding the potential environmental impacts as presented by Savannah Environmental. Eskom and the appointed EPC contractor will engage with the public further as the project progresses.
EMPLOYMENT AND PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES			
16.	I would like to be part of this project when it starts. I would be grateful if you can give me a chance. I think this project will be a good initiative for the future because now we have more load shedding. This project maybe it will prevent this load shedding.	Ntonhle Twala Job Seeker Reply Form: 9-01-2015	Savannah Environmental has been appointed to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed Majuba Solar Energy Facility being proposed by Eskom. Eskom are not yet in a position to put the construction of the solar energy facility out on tender as feasibility studies are still being undertaken. Business owners and job seekers who contacted Savannah Environmental during the EIA process have been registered as Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) on the project's database.
17.	What skills will be required in order to work on the project? How many job opportunities would this project create?	Obed Shabangu Ward Councillor Dr. Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality Public Meeting:	An EPC contractor will be appointed by Eskom to manage the construction of the project. The Engineering Procurement Construction (EPC) contractor will determine the type of skills and number of people required to work on the project. Generally, the contractor would employ engineers and technicians. The EPC contractor will determine whether there are sufficient skills available in the contract team and whether support from the local community will be required.

No.	Issue	Issue Raised By	Response
		9-04-2014	Since Eskom is a stated owned company, the appointed EPC contractor will be required to employ low-skilled and semi-skilled labour from the communities surrounding the proposed project site. Subcontracting opportunities will also be provided for local subcontractors. The number of jobs which would be created, the types of skills required for the project and the procurement procedures will be confirmed by Eskom and the appointed EPC contractor at a later stage.
IMPACTS TO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ITC)			
18.	There are no links passing through the proposed farm area.	Coert Loubser Telkom Email: 17-12-2015	Comment noted, no response required.
ISSUES RAISED BY NEIGHBOURING / SURROUNDING LANDOWNERS			
19.	How many hectares will the project cover?	Hennie Moldenhauer	The 65MW solar energy facility will cover approximately 96ha.
20.	When do they intend starting the development?	Interested and Affected Party	Eskom are in the concept phase of this project and are in the process of obtaining the necessary approvals to develop the project. Eskom will announce the construction timeframes at a later stage.
21.	Stock theft is a general problem in the area. I suggest that good security is put in place to avoid theft of solar panels.	Meeting: 20-02-2015	Comment noted. Security systems will be put in place on the site.
22.	Will the electricity generated from the solar facility supply the adjacent farmers directly?		The electricity will be fed into the national Eskom grid.
23.	How many hectares will the project cover?	Mr NJ De Wet	The facility will cover 96ha for a 65MW PV facility.
24.	Will the electricity generated from the solar facility supply the adjacent farmers directly?	Adjacent Landowner Farm Palmietspruit	The electricity will be fed into the national Eskom grid.

No.	Issue	Issue Raised By	Response
		1/68 Meeting: 20-02-2015	
ISSUES RAISED BY THE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY			
25.	How many employment opportunities will be created from the project?	Zonke Siwundla Technical Director Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality	The proposed site will have a generating capacity of 65MW and could potentially create approximately 250-300 employment opportunities during construction phase (18-24 months). However, the local resources involvement depends upon the EPC contractor's skill and resources requirement Approximately up to 10 permanent employment opportunities is expected for the duration of the project (20-25 years).
26.	Would Eskom employ most of the people from the local area for the project or will they be bringing a workforce in?	Meeting: 20-02-2015	The majority of the low- and semi-skilled labour will be sourced from the local area.
27.	When do they intend starting the development?		Eskom are in the concept phase of this project and are in the process of obtaining the necessary approvals to develop the project. Eskom will announce the construction timeframes at a later stage.
28.	I think it's a very good development to bring into the area; it could bring in positive economic benefits which we need. We are available and open to assist in any way that we can. I really hope this development goes ahead with all the challenges that we are currently facing it will be good for the economy.		Comment noted.
GENERAL			
29.	How long will it take for the project to be approved? When will the construction of this project start and what are the construction timeframes?	Obed Shabangu Ward Councillor Dr. Pixley Ka Isaka	The Department will provide its decision by the end of 2015, however Eskom need to obtain other permit and project financing. The construction start date cannot be confirmed at this stage because Eskom are still undertaking the feasibility

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		Seme Local Municipality	studies for the proposed project. Construction time frame is between 18-24 months.
30.	What is the generating capacity of the proposed solar energy facility?	Public Meeting: 9-04-2014	The proposed solar energy facility will generate up to 65 MW.
31.	What is the lifespan of the project?		The lifespan of the solar energy facility is between 25 and 30 years.
32.	We do not have any issues relating to the EIA process at this stage. We are satisfied that no fatal flaws have been identified. We believe that the potential environmental impacts would be negligible since the site is located next to the Majuba Power Station.		Comment noted. The outcome of the specialist studies undertaken during the EIA phase will be presented to Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) in stakeholder consultation meetings that will be held during the EIA phase of the process.