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# Tony Barbour

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING AND RESEARCH

10 Firs Avenue, 7708, South Africa  
(Tel) 27-21-761 2355 - (Fax) 27-761 2355- (Cell) 082 600 8266  
(E-Mail) [tbarbour@telkomsa.net](mailto:tbarbour@telkomsa.net)

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### RIETKLOOF WIND FARM FACILITY

#### ADDENDUM LETTER

#### COMMENT ON NEED FOR SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR OFF-SITE 132 KV POWER LINES

July 2016

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

Tony Barbour was appointed by EOH Coastal and Environmental Services to undertake a specialist Social Impact Assessment (SIA) as part of the EIA process for the 140 MW Rietkloof Wind Farm located near Matjiesfontein and Laingsburg in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. The closest towns to the site are the small railway siding at Matjiesfontein, situated 30km south of the project area, and Laingsburg, which is located a further 30km east of Matjiesfontein, along the N1 national road. The proposed WEF is located in the Laingsburg Local Municipality, which fall within the Central Karoo District Municipality.

The SIA included an assessment of the 33kV overhead power lines linking groups of wind turbines to onsite 33/132kV substation(s). Based on the findings of the SIA the potential social impacts associated with the 33kV overhead power lines and the associated substation sites will be limited, specifically within the context of the establishment of the wind turbines associated with the proposed WEF. In addition, the majority of the power lines are confined to the site. The significance to the potential social impact as assessed to be **Low Negative** with mitigation.

The SIA did not assess the potential social impacts associated with the 132 kV connecting the site to the Eskom grid as this formed part of separate Basic Assessment process and it not assessed as part of the SIA. The Department of Environment Affairs (DEA) has indicated that a SIA assessment should be undertaken as part of the BA for the proposed 132 kV power line. The location of the proposed 132 kV line is shown in Figure 1.

Tony Barbour has been requested by EOH Coastal and Environmental Services to comment on the need for such a study.

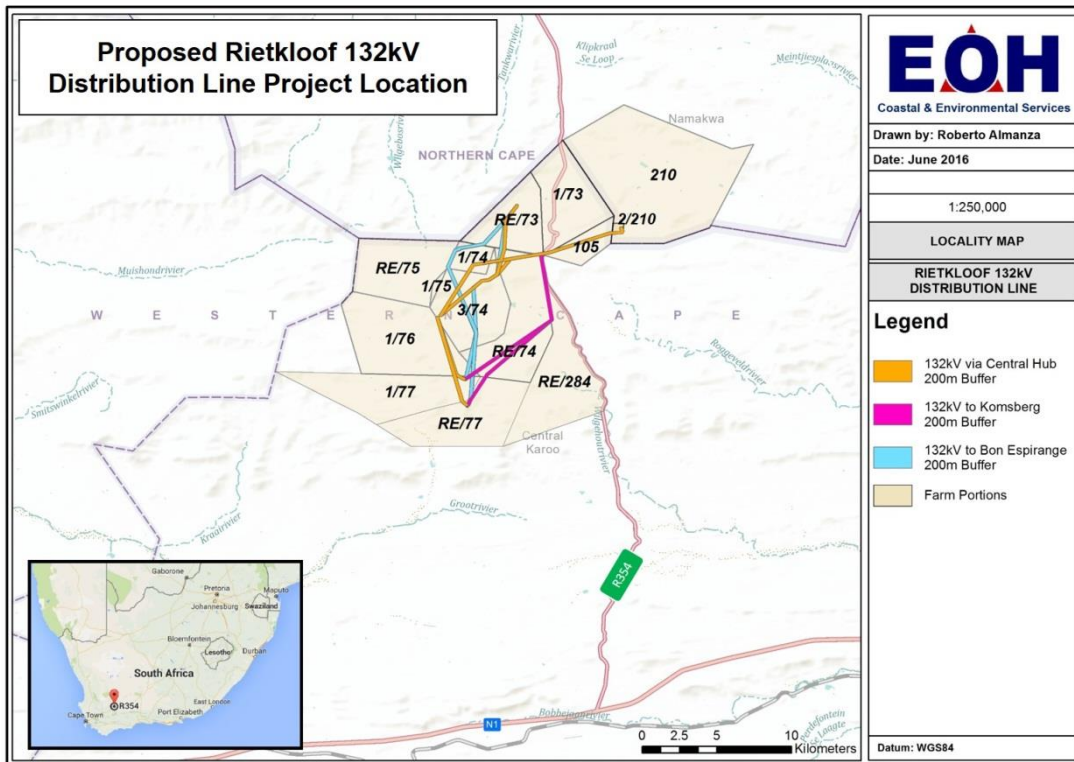


Figure 1: Location of 132 kV power lines for Rietkloof WEF

## 2 COMMENT ON NEED TO SOCIAL ASSESSMENT

As indicated above, the SIA (Barbour and van der Merwe, July 2016) found that the potential social impacts associated with the establishment of 33kV overhead power lines and the associated substations will be limited, specifically within the context of the establishment of the wind turbines associated with the proposed WEF. In addition, the power lines are located on the site.

The proposed 132 kV power line options for the Rietkloof WEF will cross the project footprint approximately 5km from the R354. The connections to the Komsberg substation will follow the existing 400 kV and 765 kV power lines on the site. The visual character of the area has therefore already been impacted by the existing Eskom power lines that traverse the site. The significance of the visual and associated social impacts associated with the establishment of a new 132 kV line that is located adjacent to these power lines is therefore likely to be **Low Negative**. In addition, as indicated in the assessment of the 33kV lines, the impact of a power line should be viewed within the context of the establishment of the wind turbines associated with the proposed WEF. Added to this study area has been identified as a Renewable Energy Development Zone by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for Wind and Solar PV energy in South Africa undertaken by the CSIR (2015). The area has therefore been identified as an area where renewable energy should be concentrated.

Based on this information and the author's experience of the study area a SIA is not required for the proposed 132 kV power line.

Tony Barbour  
July 2016