



BASIC ASSESSMENT (BA) AND WATER USE LICENSE APPLICATION (WULA) PROCESS FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF THE VRYHEID 2X 88 KV TURN-IN POWER LINES IN THE ABAQULUSI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, KWAZULU- NATAL

Background Information Document

May 2021

The increase in demand for South Africa's high-quality coal necessitates the increase in production, which in turn has demands on the railway network infrastructure. To accomplish this, Transnet needs to upgrade power supply to their various traction substations between Ermelo and Richards Bay to facilitate the introduction of the new, larger locomotives that will be added to increase the volume of coal being transported and exported. Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd has been tasked by Transnet to supply the additional energy requirements to these traction substations. **In order to address this request, various projects are proposed by Eskom including the proposed construction of the Vryheid 2x 88kV Turn-In Power lines in the Abaqulusi Local Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal.**

AIM OF THIS BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

This document aims to provide you, as an interested and/or affected party (I&AP), with:

- An overview of the proposed development;
- An overview of the authorisation process and the specialist studies being undertaken to assess the potential impacts, both positive and negative of the proposed project.
- Details of how you can become involved in the process, receive information, or raise issues which may concern and/or interest you.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The increase in demand for South Africa's high-quality coal necessitates the increase in production, which in turn has demands on the railway network infrastructure. In response to the increased demand for South Africa's coal in the global market place, Transnet needs to increase the volume of coal that is being transported between the Mpumalanga coal fields and the Richard's Bay Coal Terminal. This increase will be facilitated through capital expenditure on two fronts, the supporting infrastructure, i.e. the electrical network supplying the locomotives and the locomotives themselves.

In order for Transnet to accomplish the above they need to upgrade their power supply to their various traction substations between Ermelo and Richards Bay to facilitate the introduction of the new, larger locomotives that will be added to increase the volume of coal being transported and exported.

Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd being one of the main suppliers of electrical energy in South Africa has been tasked by Transnet to supply the additional energy requirements to these traction substations.

In order to address this request, various projects were proposed including the Development of the Vryheid Traction Station and the Associated Eskom Turn-In Power Lines in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Environmental Authorisation for this project was secured on 27 October 2015. Land acquisition process has been completed and, in some instances, servitudes have been negotiated outside of approved corridors. Disputes regarding late estates that could not be resolved in time as well as due to encroachment of settlements that needed resettlement of affected landowners, forced Eskom to look for alternative line routes that were technically feasible. The negotiations outside approved corridors necessitates for a new Environmental Impact Assessment Processes to be undertaken for Vryheid 2 x 88kV Powerlines.

The proposed development is situated approximately 4km south-east of the town of Vryheid in Ward 13 of the Abaqulusi Local Municipality on Portion 1, 5, 26, 27, & 32 of the Farm BEAUFORT 286, Portion 4 & 7, Farm BEAUFORT 787 and Portion 19 & 25 of Farm MOOPLAATS 72.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

In terms of Sections 24 and 24D of the National Environmental Management Act (No 107 of 1998), as read with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations GNR R324 to R327 (2017), an EIA process is required for the authorisation of identified Listed Activities. As this is a proposed electricity transmission project and thereby considered to be of national importance, the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE). In addition, a Water Use Licence Process in terms of the National Water Act 1998, (Act No. 36 of 1998) will be undertaken.

An EIA is an effective planning and decision-making tool. It allows the potential environmental consequences resulting from a proposed activity to be identified and appropriately managed during its establishment and its operation. It provides the opportunity for the applicant to be fore-warned of potential environmental issues, and allows for resolution of the issue(s) reported on in the EIA report as well as dialogue with I&APs.

Envirovolution Consulting (Pty) Ltd has been appointed as the independent environmental consultants to undertake the required BA to identify and assess all the potential environmental impacts associated with the project, and propose appropriate mitigation and management measures in an Environmental Management Programme (EMPr). As part of these environmental studies, I&APs will be actively involved through the public involvement process.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECTS?

The development site will be assessed by specialists to identify the potential for environmental impacts. Specialist studies that are to be conducted include the following:

- Agriculture
- Heritage
- Palaeontology
- Biodiversity (Fauna, Flora, Avifauna)
- Visual Impact Study

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The sharing of information forms the basis of the public participation process and offers you the opportunity to become actively involved in the EIA Process from the outset. Comments and inputs from

I&APs are encouraged in order to ensure that potential impacts are considered within the ambit of the study. The public participation process aims to ensure that:

- Information that contains all the relevant facts in respect of the application is made available to I&APs for review.
- I&AP participation is facilitated in such a manner that they are provided with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed project.
- Adequate review periods are provided for I&APs to comment on the findings of the draft BA Report.

In terms of the EIA Regulations, your attention is drawn to your responsibilities as an I&AP:

- In order to participate in this EIA process, you must register yourself on the project database.
- You must ensure that any comments regarding the proposed project are submitted within the stipulated timeframes.

HOW TO BECOME INVOLVED

- By responding by phone, fax or e-mail to the invitation for your involvement which has been advertised in newspapers.
- By contacting the consultants with queries or comments.
- By reviewing and commenting on the draft BA Report within the stipulated 30-day review periods.

If you consider yourself an I&AP for this project, we urge you to make use of the opportunities created by the public participation process to provide comment, raise issues and concerns which affect and/or interest you or request further information. Your input into this process forms a key element of the EIA process.

By completing and submitting the accompanying reply form, you automatically register yourself as an I&AP for this project, and are ensured that your comments, concerns or queries raised regarding the project will be noted.

COMMENTS AND QUERIES

Direct all comments, queries, or responses to:

Envirolution Consulting

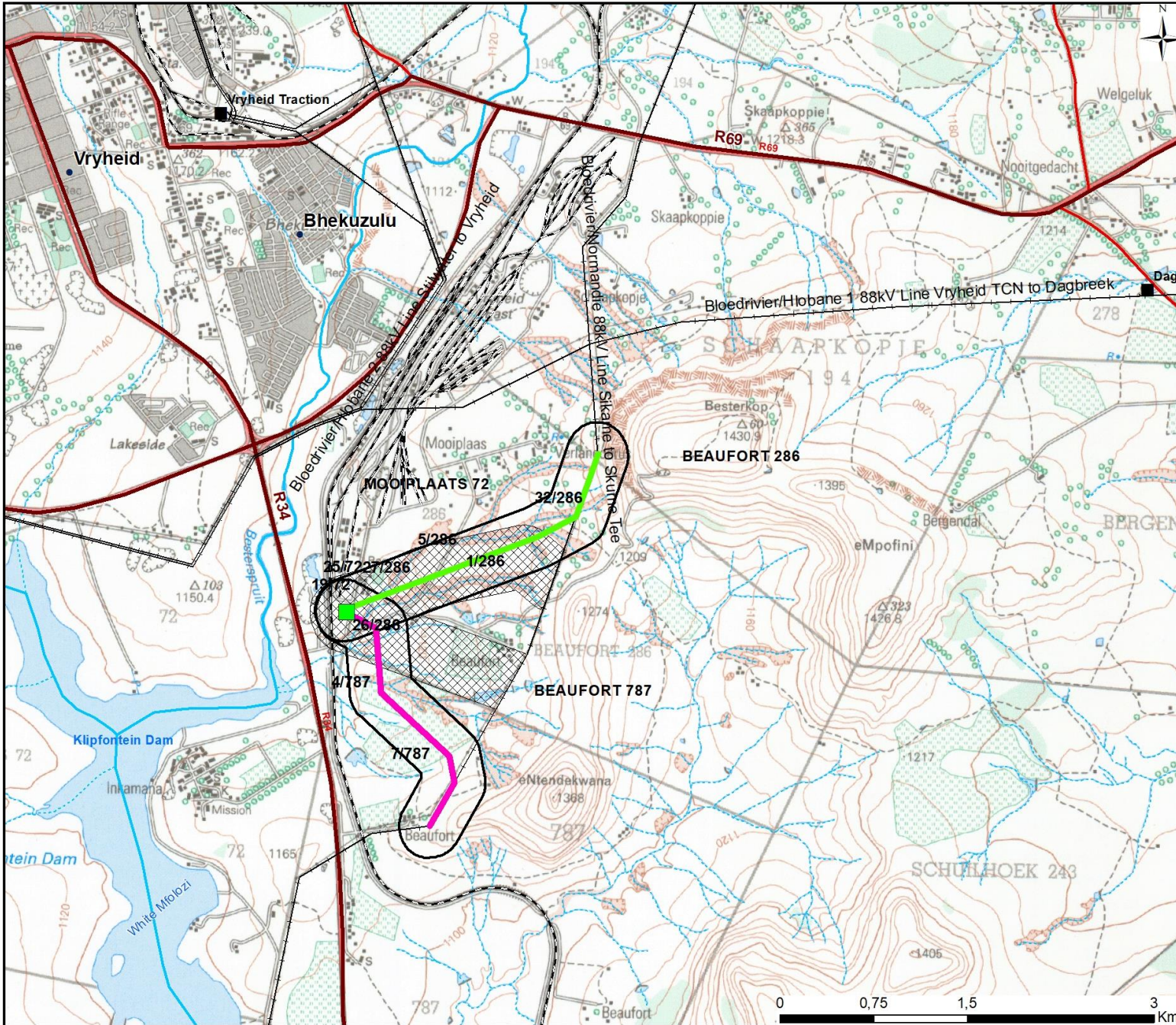
Contact person: Ms Sheila Bolingo

Postal Address: P.O.Box 1898, Sunninghill, 2157

Telephone Number: 0861 44 44 99

Fax Number: 0861 62 62 22

Email: sheila@envirolution.co.za



Transnet Coal Link Upgrade Projects:
Proposed Vryheid 2x 88kV Turn-In Power Lines
 LOCALITY MAP

- Legend**
- Approved Substation
 - Existing Substations
 - Existing Powerline
 - Regional Road
 - Main Road
 - - - Railway Line
 - - - Non-Perennial River
 - Perennial River
 - Previously assessed corridor
 - Farm Portions

- Proposed 88kV PowerLines:**
- Bloedrivier-Vryheid East
 - Nzalo-Vryheid East
 - 500m study corridor

Envirolution CONSULTING
 Environmental & Geotechnical Consulting

Projection: LO31
 Scale: 1:30 000

REPLY FORM

**BASIC ASSESSMENT (BA) AND WATER USE LICENSE APPLICATION (WULA)
PROCESS FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF THE VRYHEID 2X 88 KV TURN-IN POWER LINES IN THE ABAQULUSI LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY, KWAZULU-NATAL**

Please provide your complete contact details:

Name & Surname:			
Organisation & Designation:			
Postal Address:			
Telephone:	Cellphone:		
Fax:	E-mail:		

Would you like to register as an interested and affected party (I&AP)? YES
(please tick the relevant box) NO

Note: You are required to register as an I&AP to receive further correspondence regarding the EIA process for the project.

Please state your interest in the project (add additional pages if necessary):

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Please list your questions, views or concerns regarding the project (add additional pages if necessary):

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Please provide contact details of other persons who you regard as a potential interested or affected party:

Name & Surname:			
Organisation & Designation:			
Postal Address:			
Telephone:	Cellphone:		
Fax:	E-mail:		

Return completed **reply form** to: **Sheila Bolingo of Envirolution Consulting (Pty) Ltd** at Tel: 0861 44 44 99 /Fax: 0861 62 62 22 /E-mail: sheila@envirolution.co.za Postal Address: PO Box 1898 • Sunninghill 2157