



BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT:

**SCREENING ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED
GROMIS-NAMA-AGGENEIS 400KV INDEPENDENT
POWER PRODUCERS (IPP) INTEGRATION POWER
LINE, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE**

August 2020

Prepared for:



Today's Impact | Tomorrow's Legacy

1. BRIEF PROJECT OVERVIEW

Eskom proposes to develop a new power line from Gromis substation via Nama substation towards Aggeneis substation in the Northern Cape Province.

In order to ensure that the Namaqualand network is compliant and that there is sufficient line capacity to accommodate potential Independent Power Producers (IPPs) within the Namaqualand area, the construction of the new Gromis-Nama-Aggeneis 400 kV line and establishment of a 400/132 kV yard at Nama substation is proposed.

Eskom appointed Enviroworks, a professional Environmental Compliance consultancy, to conduct the Screening Assessment of various alternative route options for the proposed power line.

The relevant legislation and process for assessing route alternatives for power lines is described further in **Sections 1.1** and **1.2**.

1.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment for Strategic Electrical Grid Infrastructure Corridors

In 2016 a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was undertaken by CSIR. The purpose of the SEA was to identify strategic Electricity Grid Infrastructure (EGI) Corridors to support electricity transmission up to 2040. The vision for the Strategic EGI was to expand in an environmentally responsible and efficient manner that effectively meets the country's economic and social development needs.

The final EGI Power Corridors assessed as part of the 2016 EGI Strategic SEA were gazetted for implementation on 16 February 2018 in Government Gazette 41445, Government Notice R.113. One of these corridors, was the Northern Corridor – Please see **Figure 1** for the Gazetted Corridors. The proposed new power line will be constructed within the Northern Corridor.

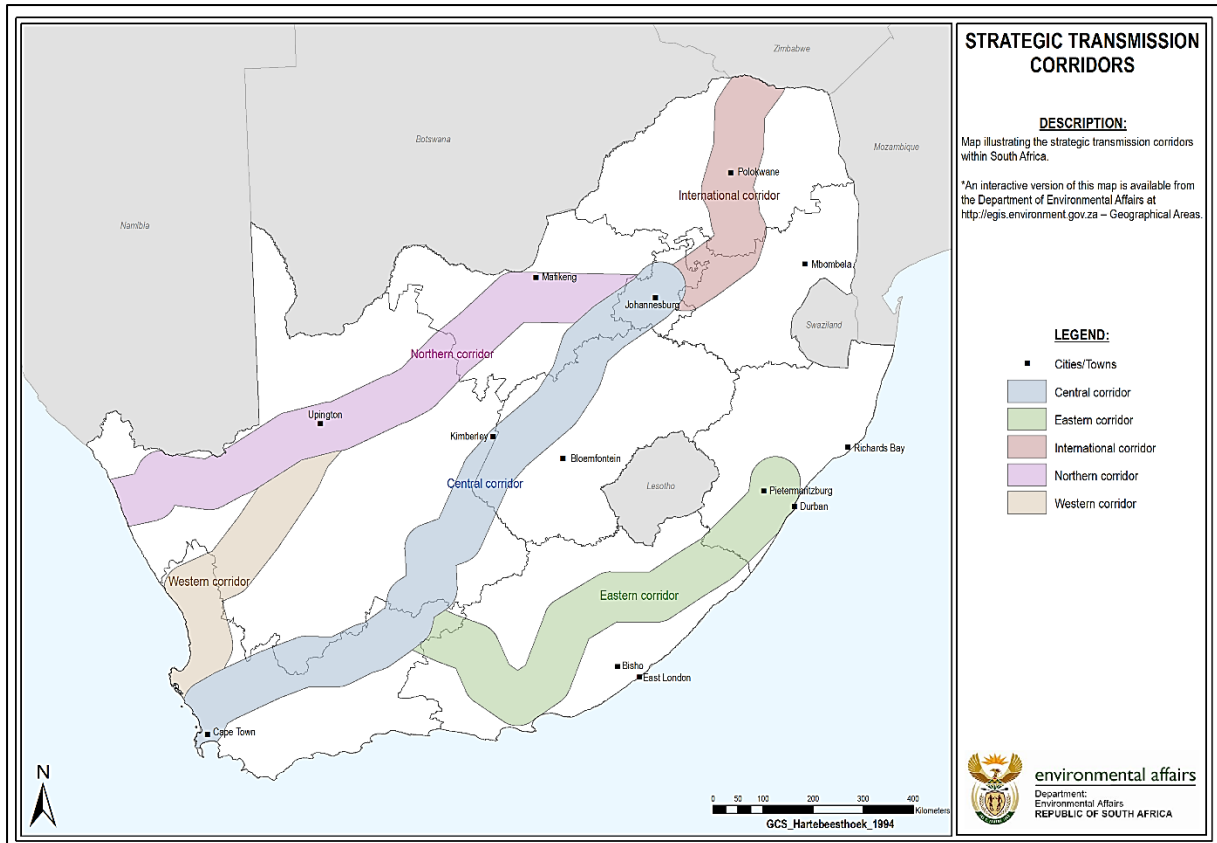


Figure 1: The final Electricity Grid Infrastructure (EGI) Power Corridors assessed as part of the 2016 EGI Strategic Environmental Assessment.

1.2 Alternative Environmental Authorisation procedure to be followed

The above mentioned Gazette provided an alternative procedure to be followed when applying for Environmental Authorisation for the development of large scale electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure (identified in terms of section 24(2)(a) of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998, as amended) (NEMA)) when these activities fall within the identified Strategic Transmission Corridors, such as the Northern Corridor.

The development of large scale electricity transmission infrastructure triggers Listed Activity 9 of Listing Notice 2 of the 2014 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations (as amended), which usually would require a full Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment. However, when such a development is to take place within a Strategic Transmission Corridor, a Basic Assessment (BA) Process in terms of the 2014 EIA Regulations (as amended) is to be followed. This speeds up the Environmental Authorisation process for EGI developments within any of the five Strategic Transmission Corridors. A pre-requisite for the BA process to be followed is however the obtaining of a servitude prior to application for Environmental Authorisation.

One of the objectives of this SEA process was also to provide developers with the flexibility to consider a range of route alternatives within the strategic corridors to avoid land negotiation issues and to submit a pre-negotiated route to the Competent Authority.

As noted above, this has been achieved for the development of EGI within any of the five Strategic Transmission Corridors gazetted in February 2018 (GN 113 in Government Gazette 41445), for which:

(a) a pre-negotiated route must be submitted to the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA); and,

(b) a BA procedure needs to be followed in compliance with the 2014 EIA Regulations (as amended) instead of a full Scoping and EIA process previously triggered by such activities.

1.3 Screening of Alternative Routes

The study is being undertaken in terms of Regulation 15 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 (Government Notice No. R 982, In the Gazette No. 38282 of 4 December 2014), that provides for the procedure to be followed in applying for environmental authorisation for large scale electricity transmission and distribution development activities identified in terms of section 24(2)(a) of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998.

The purpose of the current Screening Assessment is to evaluate alternative routes within the Northern Corridor. Eskom initially identified and provided Enviroworks with four alternative corridors to assess. After the site inspection with Eskom and in consultation with the specialist team, another alternative (Alternative 5) was identified. During the site visit, the specialist team, in consultation with Eskom, concluded that Alternative 1, 4 and 5 were the only viable options for consideration and excluded alternative 2 and 3. Please see the route alternatives, **Figure 2**.

As part of the Screening Assessment, a group of specialists evaluated the alternative routes according to potential sensitive environmental, social and economic issues. The findings of all the specialists were integrated into the Draft Screening Report and were used to make an informed decision on the best route alternative for the proposed power line. These studies included:

- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (including tourism)
- Botanical Impact Assessment
- Fauna Impact Assessment
- Avifaunal Impact Assessment
- Visual Impact Assessment

- Agricultural Impact Assessment
- Geohydrological Impact Assessment

The specialist findings were used to produce the Screening Report that provides the best route alternative based upon NEMA Principles, the Best Available Technology principle and consultation with stakeholders such as Landowners, Organs of State, NGO's and any other Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs).

The Final Screening Report will be used by Eskom to negotiate a servitude with landowners. These negotiations will take place after the Screening Assessment and will not form part of the current study. After negotiations with landowners Eskom will proceed with the next stage which is to conduct a Basic Assessment in order to obtain an Environmental Authorisation from the competent authority for the pre-negotiated route. Stakeholder consultation will be done again during this phase. Ample time will be provided for the public to comment. All information gathered during the screening process will be used in the BA process and application for authorisation.

1.4 Locality and Description Alternatives

The proposed route alternatives that were assessed are situated within the Northern Corridor. The five alternative routes can be seen in **Figure 2**.

Coordinates of the starting point

Longitude: -29° 35' 58.50" S

Latitude: 17° 10' 45.85" E

Coordinates of the end point

Longitude: -29° 17' 48.28" S

Latitude: 18° 48' 11.06" E

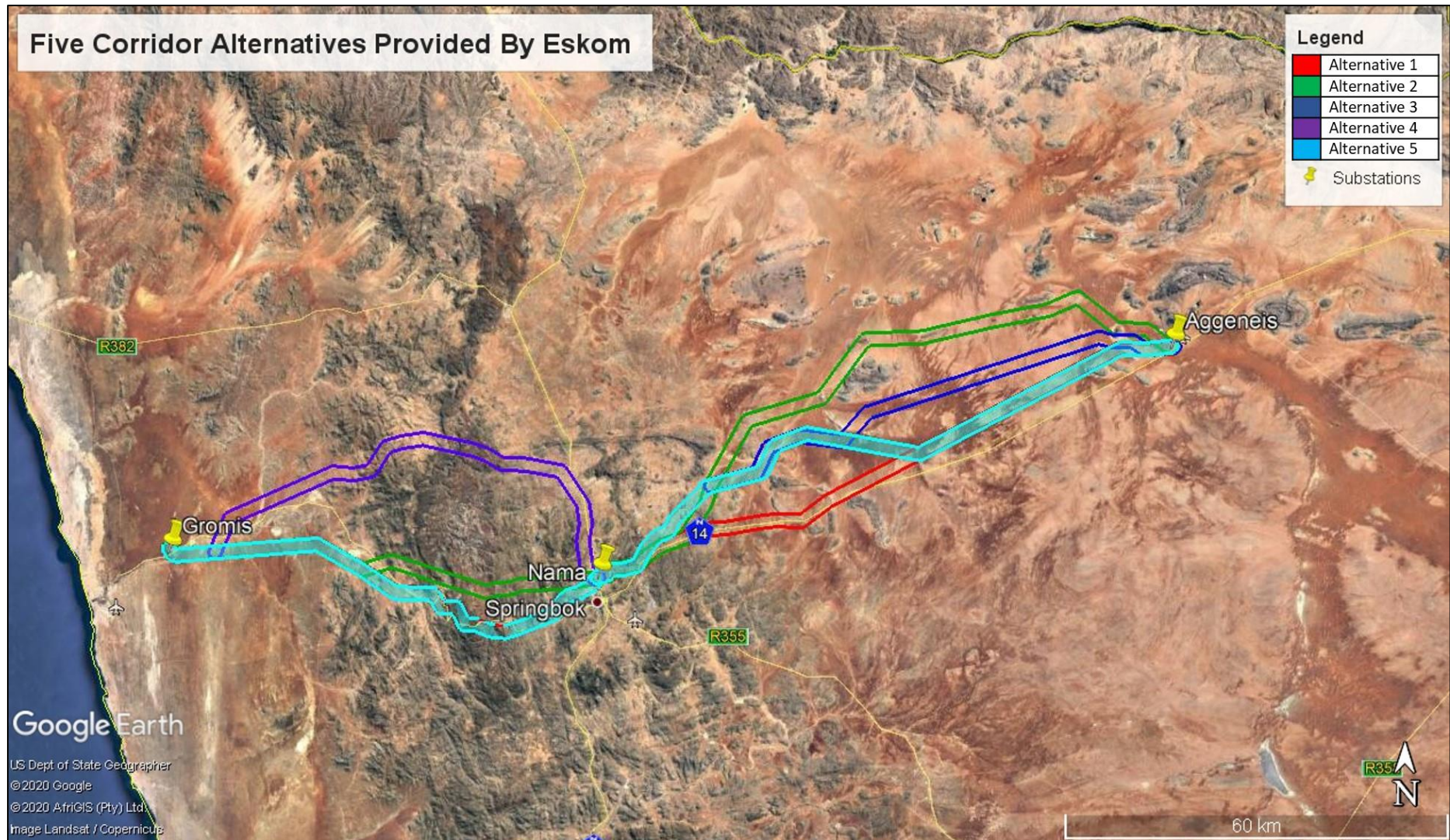


Figure 2: - Layout of the five route alternatives for the proposed 400k kV IPP integration power line.

2. NEED AND DESIRABILITY

EGL is required to provide grid access to electricity producers, in order to be able to distribute the electricity they generate to users. Independent Power Producers (IPPs) have rapidly become key electricity producers and this has increased the demand for grid access and hence the need to construct more EGL.

3. PROJECT SCOPE AND MAIN OBJECTIVES

- Undertake a site visit with Eskom and all the specialists involved in the project – **Completed**;
- Undertake an EIA screening process and produce a report based on which Eskom can negotiate a power line route for the construction of the project. The report will be used to determine any fatal flaws along the proposed route to be negotiated – **Completed**;
- Provide ample time for a public involvement process to notify the public of the proposed project and give the public an opportunity to raise possible issues and concerns – **Ongoing**;
- Identify all the relevant stakeholders, Government Departments at all levels, NGO's and general public that needs to be involved. Where possible landowners in the affected corridors will be identified and included in the process – **Ongoing**;
- All information gathered during the Public Participation process and the specialist studies will be compiled into a final screening report that will provide the preferred route alternative – **Ongoing**.

4. Draft Screening Report

Following the site inspection, specialist investigations and a 30 day Public Participation Process, the Draft Screening Report was compiled. The Draft Screening Report took into account the various findings and integrated them to provide the corridor alternative which will be the best option. Due to the scope and scale of the study (large spatial scale and resource limitations), the alternatives were largely assessed using a desktop-based approach.

The potential impacts that the proposed power line could have were identified and their significance rated using a standard impact rating methodology. The impact ratings for each of the specialist studies were mapped and combined to produce a map which provided the overall impact rating map for each of the alternatives. Based on the significance ratings of each alternative and considering the environmental, social and economic aspects, Alternative 5 was selected as the Preferred Alternative corridor. Please refer to **Figure 2**, which shows the five different route alternatives, including the Preferred corridor, Alternative 5. Further information on the findings of the specialist investigation and the reasoning for selecting Alternative 5 can be found in the Draft Screening Report.

5. Public Participation

It is a legal requirement to engage with Interested and Affected Parties (I&AP's) as part of the screening process.

The benefits of engaging with I&AP's are:

- It creates a platform where project-related issues can be debated and possible solutions can be sought;
- It reveals "hidden" knowledge of the wider community and their key concerns; and
- It encourages transparency and accountability.

The first step of the Public Participation Process (PPP) was to identify the key stakeholders and I&APs, and to create a registration database, which will be used for ongoing communication during the course of the screening process. The identified stakeholders and Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) are encouraged to register their interests, concerns and issues in writing, so that all comments and/or concerns can be included in the Final Screening Report.

The first 30-day PPP commenced on the 18th of October 2019 and ended on the 18th of November 2019. A second PPP will be undertaken from **14 August 2020 to 14 September 2020**, during which the Draft Screening Report will be made available to Organs of State, Stakeholders and Interested and Affected Parties.

5.1 How to Participate in the Public Participation Process

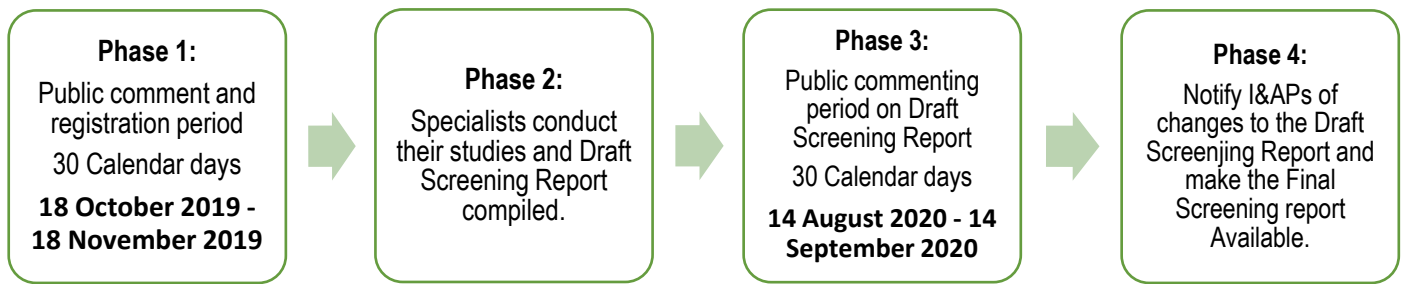
The PPP will be conducted in accordance with the EIA Regulations, 2017, and Guidelines for Public Participation Department of Environmental Affairs, 2017.

The registration for the Public Participation Process will commence on **14 August 2020** and end on **14 September 2020**.

All stakeholders and I&APs are hereby invited to comment on the abovementioned project. All comments and/or concerns (if any) should be communicated to the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP), in order to address the comments and/or concerns of the I&APs.

Any member of the public that wishes to partake in the PPP should register as an I&AP. An I&AP Registration form is attached on the last page of this document. The I&AP registration form should be submitted to Enviroworks before or on **14 September 2020**.

All documentation regarding this process of the proposed project, will be available on the Enviroworks' website: **www.enviroworks.co.za** from **14 August 2020**. All stakeholders, I&APs, Authorities and Governmental Organisations will be informed on the availability all the documentation.



PLEASE SEE THE REGISTRATION FORM ON THE NEXT PAGE. IN ORDER TO BE TO BE REGISTERED AS AN INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTY, TO PARTAKE IN THE PROCESS AND TO HAVE YOUR COMMENTS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

PLEASE INFORM US OF ANY OTHER PERSON/PARTY YOU MIGHT THINK WE SHOULD CONTACT.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOUR VALUABLE INPUT ON THIS PROJECT TO ENSURE RELIABLE ELECTRICITY FOR ALL.

PROPOSED GROMIS-NAMA-AGGENEIS 400KV IPP INTEGRATION POWER LINE, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTY (I&AP) REGISTRATION FORM:

To participate in this public participation process, please complete the following information in the table below.

Name			
Organization			
Telephone			
Fax			
Cell			
Postal Address			
Physical Address			
Email			
Comments or Interests in the matter:			
Any other stakeholders that may have an interest:			
Preferred method of report receipt (Please tick)			
Email	<input type="checkbox"/>	Web	<input type="checkbox"/>
		SMS/Whatsapp	<input type="checkbox"/>

Upon submission of the registration form to Enviroworks, you will be registered as an I&AP, and be included on an I&APs database which will ensure that you receive all future project information.

Please quote following in correspondence, **309 Gromis-Nama-Aggeneis**

Please note that this participation period ends on **14 September 2020**.

The Social Facilitator is Elbi Bredenkamp and Social Specialist is Michael Leach and can be contacted on the following details:

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