

NEXT STEPS

IAPs have until the 27th August 2020 to register as an IAP in the first round of stakeholder engagement and to raise issues about the proposed project.

The next step is the release of the BAR, Copies of the reports will be placed in selected accessible public venues. We will inform registered IAPs copper where to review the report and you will be given 30 days to comment on the report. If you wish to raise any initial issues or concerns regarding the proposed project, or if you would like to register as an IAP, please contact the public participation office, on the details provided below:



**MYEZO ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT SERVICES**
Environmental Stewardship

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MYEZO ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Environmental Stewardship

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Notice is hereby given in terms of section 41 (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) and (3) of National Environmental Management Act (No 107 of 2014) (NEMA): Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations of 2014, which were published in Government Notice (GN) R982 (Government Gazette No. 3822), as amended in 2017 under GN R326.

Interested and affected parties (IAPs) are being notified of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Basic Assessment) process, which is being undertaken for the proposed relocation of dwellers at Ingula Pumped Storage Scheme. This project is located under the jurisdiction of Phumelela and Maluti A Phofung Local Municipalities, within the Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality, Free State Province.



PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document has been compiled as an information sharing tool to facilitate gathering of issues for the Basic Assessment process, which is being undertaken in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998), as amended (NEMA). The purpose of the document is to provide:

- Interested and Affected Parties (IAPs) with background information and an overview of the proposed Ingula Relocation Project;
- An overview of the Basic Assessment Process;
- Details on how IAPs can become involved in the Basic Assessment Process and raise issues, concerns and/or suggestions, regarding this proposed project.

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED & WHERE?

Eskom Holdings SOC Limited (Eskom) intends to embark on a relocation programme for six families at Ingula Pumped Storage Scheme, within the Ingula Nature Reserve.

The Ingula Pumped Storage Scheme is located about 23 km north east of Van Reenen. It straddles the Little Drakensberg escarpment, which forms the border between the Free State and Kwa Zulu-Natal Provinces. It consists of two Catchment areas namely, the Free State Upper Catchment and the Kwa-Zulu Natal Lower Catchment. (See last page for the map of the project area (Figure 1 & 2) and proposed development options (Figure 3).

The proposed sites for relocation are under the jurisdiction of the Phumelela Local Municipality and Maluti A Phofung Local Municipality, within Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. The project relocation area is located approximately 10 km north of the Ingula Pumped Storage Scheme, about 42 km north-east-east of Harrismith, 26 km north-east of Van Reenen and 4.5 km from the Little Drakensberg escarpment. This forms the border between the Free State and Kwa Zulu-Natal Provinces and on the north-western boundary of the Ingula Nature Reserve, in the Free State Province.

MOTIVATION FOR THE PROJECT

Eskom Holdings purchased over 8000 hectares of land around the Ingula Pumped Storage Scheme, which was commissioned in 2016. Some of the above purchased land falls outside the footprint of the Power Station and could be considered for the resettlement purposes. Most of the previous landowners chose not to re-deploy their farm workers elsewhere. After the developments progressed and Ingula area was ultimately proclaimed as a nature reserve, Eskom engaged all the landowners whose land was within the sensitive wetland ecosystems, which are characteristic of the Ingula Nature Reserve and ultimately purchased these farms. Negotiations with the last six households have been concluded and they opt to stay on the property, on a less sensitive area on the Wilger Farm.

During the latter half of 2016, As part of compensating for residual impacts on wetland ecosystems, which were lost during the construction of the pumped storage scheme and as a condition of the environmental authorisation, Eskom was required to purchase farms comprising of key wetlands and grasslands and then ensure that these farms are proclaimed as a nature reserve to provide long-term protection to these ecosystems, which provide habitat to species of global importance.



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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The current dwellings are homesteads consists of mud structures. The villagers practice subsistence stock farming and have gardens for crop production. The new homesteads will be made of cement brick structures with adequate sanitation, utilizing conservancy tanks, solar energy, and borehole water supply. Photographic example of the current structures in relation to the planned final outputs is shown in Photographs 1, 2, 3). The families will be provided with land for crop production and grazing through various options which entail: (See Figure 3):

- **Option 1:** Placing all homesteads within a centralized location and providing a shared grazing land
- **Option 2:** Providing each homestead with plot that would accommodate the homestead, crop garden and a grazing land



Livestock: Grazing land use

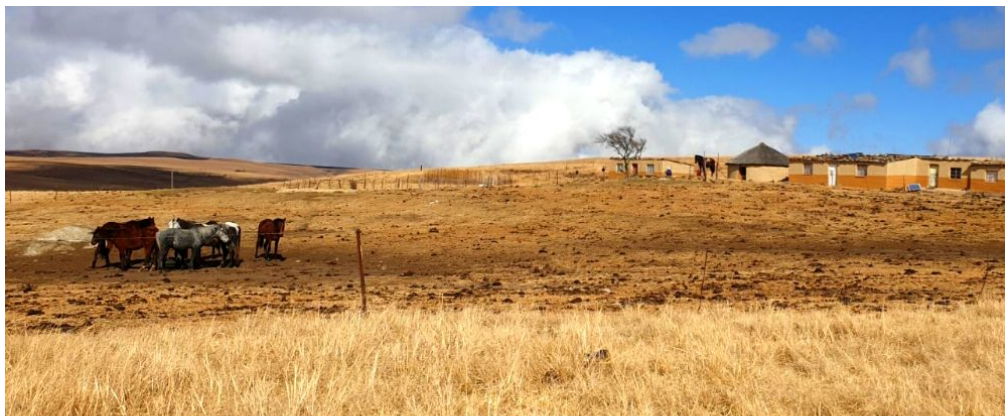


Photo 1: Typical existing structures



Typical example of structures to be built as part of relocation programme.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Environmental setting is provided in Figure 4, as a pictorial representation of the surrounding environment.

WHY ARE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES REQUIRED?

In terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (No.107 of 1998) [NEMA], as amended, and associated EIA Regulations published in 2014, an Environmental Authorisation must be obtained from the relevant decision-making authority, Department of Environmental, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF), prior to the commencement of certain listed activities, that may result in potential negative impacts on the environment. It is for that same reason that the decision to purchase the land as mentioned above, was in done accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment as approved by the Department of Environmental Affairs, at the time. This proposed development is triggering some of the listed activities in terms of NEMA regulations. An application for environmental authorisation must be lodged to the competent authority, who in this instance is the Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA).

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES WILL ENTAIL

- Upgrading of existing access road infrastructure (gravel surface) for access to the housing homestead and village facilities;
- Civil and structural infrastructure design, including foundation structures;
- Borehole sitting and facilities for water supply;
- Water infrastructure including reticulation to the houses, storage and treatment facilities;
- Wastewater and sewage disposal infrastructure including reticulation pipework from houses to septic tank facility;
- Power supply and reticulation - Solar powered external lighting and electrical reticulation for buildings for future electrification.

ROLE PLAYERS IN THE BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

ESKOM SOC has appointed Myezo Environmental management Services (Pty) Ltd, as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP), to undertake the Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed Ingula Relocation Project.



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ROLE PLAYERS IN THE BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION continued...

It should be noted that during this process there are various stakeholders who are key role players in the success of the process. These stakeholders are:

- The developer: who would be required to provide information pertaining to their development plans. This information is then processed and assessed for fatal flaws and risks by the environmental assessment practitioner.
- There is a suite of technical experts who will be providing input into the environmental process by supplying technical information.

Their respective roles are:

- Determination of the most feasible site for the location
- The provision of architectural and civil design in compliance with the required legislation documents.
- Geological investigation to determine soil conditions and bearing capacities.
- The environmental assessment practitioner act as a facilitator to ensure that the information and project plans are scientifically analysed and that the best options are recommended.
- The IAPs are given an opportunity to process the information and provide their comments. Should there be fatal flaws, the developers respond to the comments and re-visit plans to ascertain how certain identified impacts can be best addressed.
- The other key role players are the competent authority, who are the decision makers in this process.

BASIC ASSESMENT PROCESS

Communication about this proposed development, which concerns the relocating of the dwellers at Ingula, was initiated in 2018 with DESTEA, where there was an initial site visits and walk down in 2019. DESTEA is the competent authority for the proposed project and as such an environmental authorisation will be submitted to them through procedures that are prescribed in the EIA regulations, Government Notice R982 and a basic assessment process will be followed.

Basic Assessment Process and Report (BAR): is the environmental impact assessment process, applied to activities listed in Listing 1 and 3 of the EIA regulations, which are smaller scale activities, the impacts of which are generally known and can be easily managed. Typically, these activities are considered less likely to have significant environmental impacts and, therefore, do not require a full EIA process.

The triggered listed activities for this project are The triggered listed activities are indicated below. Listed Activities: 12 (x), (xii), 27, and 28 (ii) (under Listing Notice 1 n GN R983, as amended in 2017 under GN R 327); 12b (i), (ii), ((iii); and 14 (i), (ii), (v), (x), (xii) b i (aa), (bb), (dd), (ff) (gg) (hh) (under Listing Notice 3 n GN R985, as amended in 2017 under GN R324) and therefore, basic assessment procedures will be followed for this application.

The environmental authorization process prescribed for listed activities under Listing Notices 1, 2 and 3 published in Government Gazette Numbers R983, R984 and R985 respectively, are defined in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations which were issued in terms of Section 24 of the National Environmental Management Act, 2008 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA).



POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Preliminary biophysical and socio-economic screening as well desktop review of the existing current studies, identified certain issues that would need to be investigated to ascertain the impacts. Consequently, the following specialist investigations are underway:

- Biodiversity studies,
- Socio-economic studies.

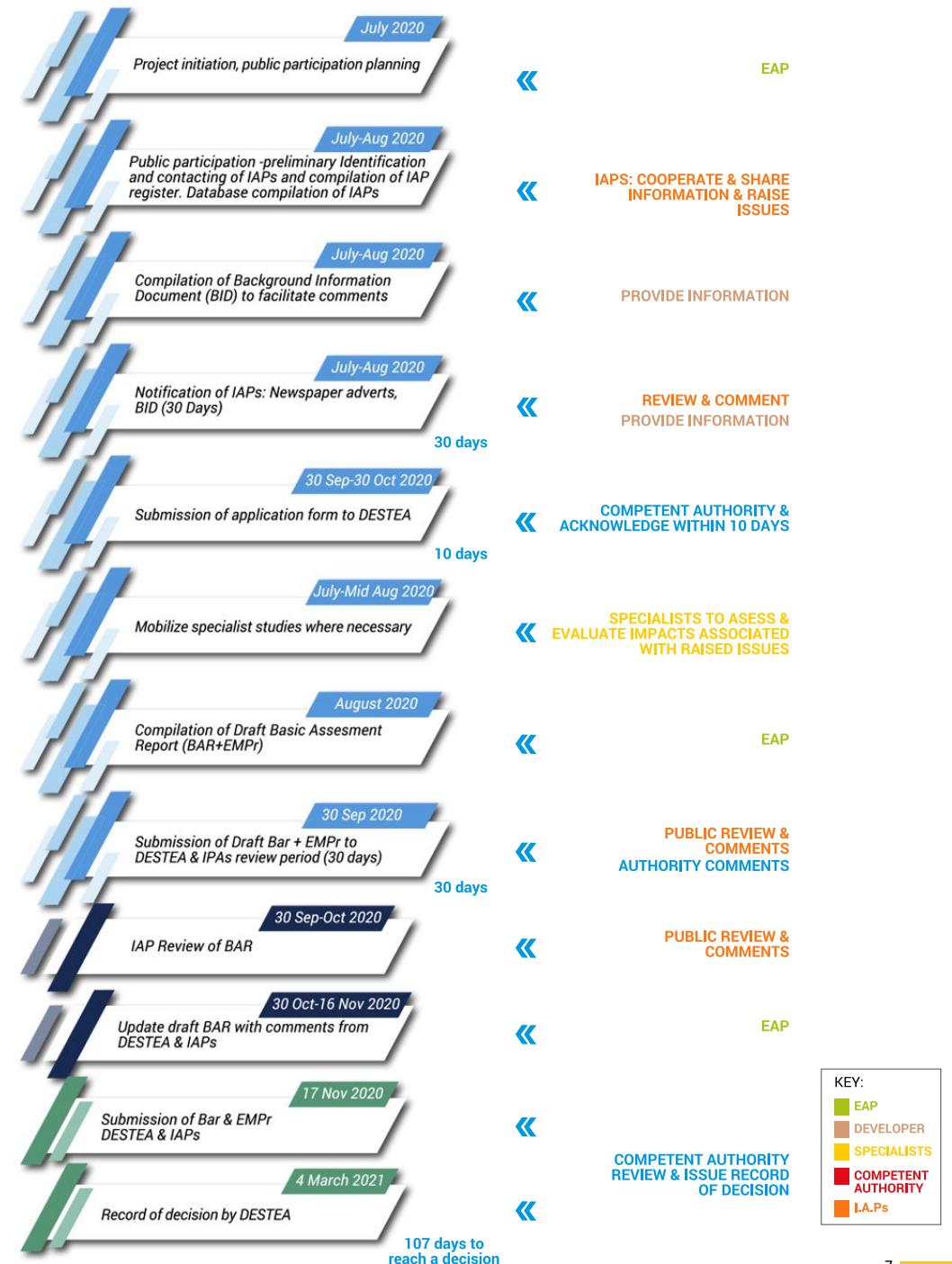
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Public participation is the basic foundation of an EIA process. The principles of the (NEMA) govern most aspects of Environmental Impact Assessments, including public participation. These include the ongoing transparent provision of sufficient information interested and Affected Parties. During the public participation process, IAP's, technical experts, government authorities and the public will be gathered to result in a better understanding of the project for an involved, and more informed decision-making throughout the process. IAPs will be given the opportunity to comment on the findings of environmental and specialist studies during the specified commenting periods.

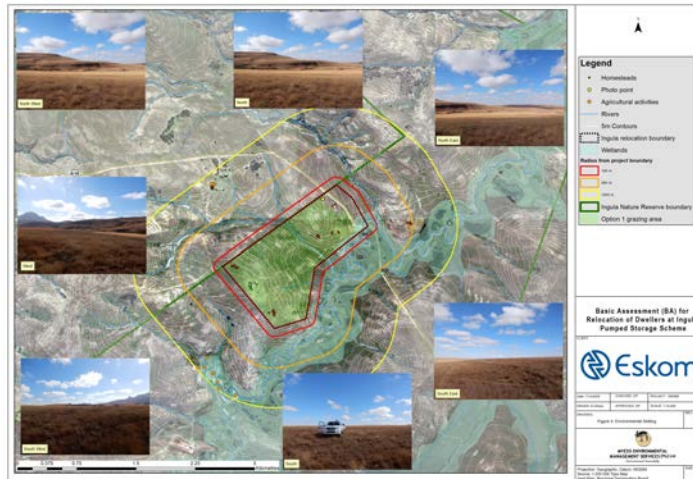
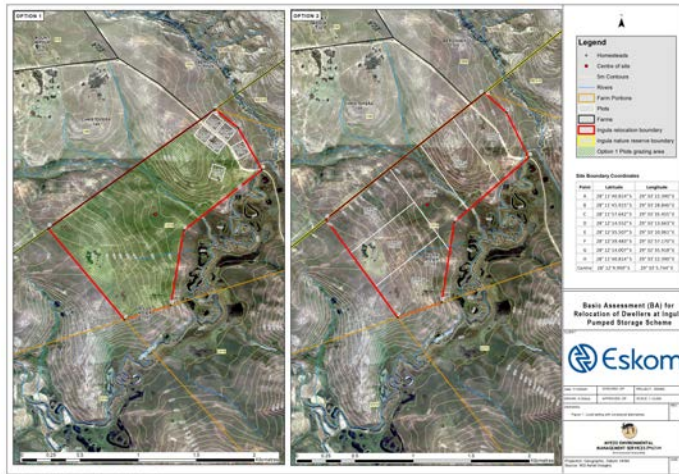
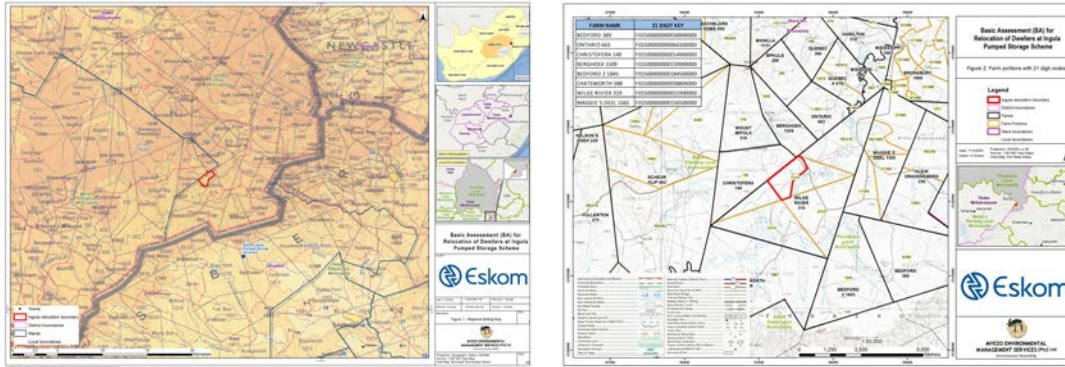
The stakeholder engagement will include media adverts, erection of site notices, consultation with appropriate stakeholders, public notification of IAPs about the competent authority's decision.



BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS TO BE FOLLOWED & ROLES TO BE PLAYED BY VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN THIS PROCESS



PROPOSED LOCATION



HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

The Public Participation Process (PPP) is an integral part of the EIA Process which runs throughout the and assessment phases and only ends after the decision for authorization of the proposed project is finalized.

Anyone who represents an affected organization or organ of state, or anyone who owns or lawfully occupies either the affected property or adjacent properties of the project, are already automatically registered as Interested and/or Affected Parties as (IAPs) on the project database, even though we still request your involvement to ensure that your details are up to date and are accurate.

If you do not fall under these groups, but have an interest in the project, please register as an IAP by the provided comment sheet. You and all other registered IAPs will be notified about the public commenting periods as well as submission of documents to the DEFF of public comment periods and of submission of documentation to the DEFF. These notifications will detail where Myezo are in the process and how and when to submit comments or issues regarding the project and its ESIA process.

Below is an illustration of how you can be involved in this process

