

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT

ESKOM ERMELO-UITKOMS 88kV LINE  
DEA Ref nr 14/12/16/3/3/1/784  
NEAS Ref DEA/EIA/0001597/2012

Appendix E3  
Comments and Responses Report



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## Appendix E3 Comments and Responses Report

### *The affected properties for the Route Alternative 1:*

The Farms Nooitgedacht 268 IT, Van Oudshoornstroom 261 IT portion 86, 27, 57, 75, 9, Rem, 12, 4, 17, 5, 1; Jan Hendriksfontein 263 IT portion 3, 4, 9, 14, 15; Transutu 257 IT portion 0; Jan Hendriksfontein 263 IT portion 6; Witpunt 267 IT portion 9, 22, 34, Witpunt 267 IT (Consolidated to portion 40 of 267 IT) portion 1, Witpunt 267 IT portion 35 and 36; Camden Power Station 329 IT Rem.

### *The affected properties for the Proposed Route Alternative 2:*

The farms Nooitgedacht 268 IT, Van Oudshoornstroom 261 IT portion 86, 27, 57, 75, 9, Rem, 12, 4, 17, 5, 1; Jan Hendriksfontein 263 IT portion 3; Uitkomst 292 IT (Consolidated to portion 18 of 292 IT) portion 3; Camden Power Station 329 IT Rem; Witpunt 267 IT portion 35 and 36.

Both routes are in the Msukaligwa Local Municipality in the Mpumalanga Province.

*The objective of this report is to supply all proceedings, findings and recommendations pertaining to the Public Participation Programme.*

## **Introduction and Scope of Report**

Eskom Holdings SOC (Pty) Ltd. (Eskom) proposes the upgrading of the electricity infrastructure in the Ermelo area in the Mpumalanga Province. The current demand for electricity periodically exceeds the supply thereof in the area, and for this reason the electrical infrastructure needs to be upgraded. Furthermore, at present when a fault occurs along the exiting line, many areas are devoid of electricity, causing negative socio-economic impacts on households and businesses in these areas. The current Environmental Impact Assessment application is part of a broader scope of work to improve Eskom's network performance.

As part of its assessment of a range of electricity supply options, Eskom is investigating the feasibility of constructing a new Chickadee 88kV powerline between the Ermelo and Uitkoms Substations.

Eskom has appointed *Texture Environmental Consultants* to undertake the following activities as part of the proposed electrification project:

- Identification of potential alternative corridor routes for a 20.9km 88kV chickadee power line between the existing Ermelo substation to the existing Uitkoms substation;
- The project involves identification of a 100m corridor within which Eskom would be able to locate a 31m servitude for the powerline between Ermelo substation and Uitkoms substation. The servitude is required for maintenance purposes.

- Identification of potential corridors to construct an access/ construction road of 8 meters wide for the line.

The applicant is Eskom Distribution, Mpumalanga Operating Unit, Land Development with contact person Ms. Betty Ngobeni, Environmental Management in Witbank.

As part of the BA process, this report (i.e. Public Participation Report) is attached as Appendix E3 to the Final Basic Assessment Report (FBAR). Texture has taken cognisance of the requirements for public participation in terms of the current 2010 EIA Regulations, and has ensured that the public participation principles are upheld. A successful Public Participation Programme (PPP) is one that is inclusive, actively engages the public and provides ample opportunity for the public to participate in the process. This document provides an overview of the PPP undertaken as part of the BA process for the proposed project.

The purpose of the PPP is to ensure that the issues, inputs and concerns of Interested and Affected Parties (IAPs) are taken into account during the decision-making process. This requires the identification of IAPs (including authorities, technical specialists and the public), communication of the process and findings to these IAPs and the facilitation of their input and comment on the process and environmental impacts, including issues and alternatives that are to be investigated. The steps taken during the execution of the PPP undertaken for this project are detailed in the section that follows.

## 1. ADVERTISEMENTS AND NOTICES

### 1.1 Advertisements

In fulfilment of the EIA Regulations, G.N. R543 Section 54, advertisements were placed in the following newspapers:

- Hoevelder on 8 March 2013 to notify of the proposed project.

Refer to Appendix E1a: Proof of newspaper ads.

### 1.2 Public Notices (Poster)

A2 laminated on-site notices/posters informing IAPs of the application were placed at key points. These posters, in English and Afrikaans, were placed, at the following locations:

(Refer to Appendix E1b: Proof of site notices)

<b>Publication name</b>	Hoevelder		
<b>Date published</b>	8 March 2013		
<b>Site notice position</b>		Latitude	Longitude
	1. Corner of R65 with Witbank	26° 31'40.1" S	30° 04'30.7" E
	2. Position where Alternative 2 crosses the N2	26° 34'19.5" S	30° 03'48.3" E
	3. At the Uitkoms substation	26° 37'08.7" S	30° 06'12.3" E
	4. At the Ermelo substation	26° 30.732' S	29° 58.692' E
<b>Date placed</b>	28 February 2013		

## **2. DETERMINATION OF APPROPRIATE MEASURES**

- *Provide details of the measures taken to include all potential I&APs as required by Regulation 54(2)(e) and 54(7) of GN R.543.*
- *Include proof that the key stakeholder (other than organs of state), identified in terms of Regulation 54(2)(b) of GN R.543, received written notification of the proposed activities - as Appendix E2.*
- *Include proof that the Authorities and Organs of State identified as key stakeholders received written notification of the proposed activities - as Appendix E4.*

### **2.1 Public notification**

A consultation process was undertaken with the intent of informing key community stakeholders, comprising any Tribal Authorities, the Municipal structures and the local communities (directly affected people) about the proposed development and the Basic Assessment process underway.

#### **2.1.1 Identification of Interested and Affected Parties**

The PPP for the project was initiated with the development of a comprehensive IAP database. The list of IAPs was updated on a regular basis during the course of the project. Refer to Appendix E5a: Register of Interested and Affected Parties for a complete list.

- Regional Department of Water Affairs: Water Resources & Water Quality Management
- South African Heritage Resources Authority (submitted via SAHRIS)
- Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism: Environmental Services
- Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture: Land Use and Soil Management
- Mpumalanga Department of Mineral Resources
- SA National Road Agency Ltd
- Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads And Transport
- Mpumalanga Department of Rural Development and Land Reform: Land Claims Commissioner
- Mpumalanga Department of Rural Development and Land Reform: State Land Administration
- Department of Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs
- Department of Community Services
- Agri Mpumalanga/ Mpumalanga Landbou
- Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency
- Endangered Wildlife Trust
- Landbou Unies
- SA Civil Aviation Authority
- Gert Sibande District Municipality
- Msukaligwa Local Municipality
- Eskom Transmission
- Eskom Distribution
- Landowners

#### **2.1.2 Background Information Document**

A Background Information Document (BID) was compiled, which provided a description of the proposed project and information on the BA process to be followed. The purpose of this document was to inform all IAPs about the project and afford them an opportunity to comment.

Copies of the BID were emailed to the relevant authorities, affected landowners and relevant organisations on 11 March 2013 with due date for comment by 28 April 2013. Copies of the notification letters to key stakeholders are included as Appendix E2.

#### **2.1.3 Landowner notification**

Eskom relies on the goodwill of landowners and interested and affected parties to obtain rights of way, or servitudes for power lines. Hence, the landowners throughout the project area play an important roll in assisting with the identification of potential powerline corridors and substation site locations.

Contact details of all landowners impacted by the project were obtained using Windeed or by investigation by foot of the power line route corridors. In January 2013 several visits to affected landowners took place. On 6 March 2013 a meeting with Vunene Mining (farms Jan Hendriksfontein 263 IT Portions 6, 14 and Transutu 257 IT Portion 0) took place to notify the mine of the project.

In addition all landowners/homeowners, not directly affected by the powerline route corridor, but living within a 100 meters from the powerline route, were identified. On 14 May 2013 these homeowners/properties were visited, and notified of the project. Letters with project information and a request for comment were hand delivered. Registration forms were also delivered to all these houses with a request to register as IAP. Letters were left at these premises and/or handed to neighbours for delivery.

(Refer to Appendix E2c for proof of notification to these landowners living within 100m of the proposed powerline, but not directly affected as landowners. In addition refer to Appendix E5c1 for a register of these landowners/properties. In Appendix E5c2 a google map shows these properties within the 100m corridor.

## **2.2 Meetings and site visits**

### **2.2.1 Public meeting/ open day**

Notification of an information meeting/ open day was sent to all IAPs on 8 April 2013. The open day was conducted on 24 April 2013 at the Ermelo Country Club, Hendrina Road, Ermelo. The purpose of the meeting was to furnish all interested parties with information regarding the extent of the project, the proposed alternatives, the process of negotiations for servitudes, and the extent of the Environmental Impact Assessment Process. Project posters with information and maps of the routes were presented at the open day. Written comment was requested at the information meeting. The information meeting was conducted in the format of an open day with an invitation for attendance between 9h30 to 12h30. None of the key stakeholders i.e. provincial government or local municipality attended the open day. The Agri Mpumalanga as well as a landowner attended.

(Refer to Appendix E6a for the registration and comment form, that was provided at the meeting; and refer to Appendix E6b for the attendance register of the open day).

### **2.2.2 Focus group meetings / One-on-one meetings**

Key stakeholders were identified at the beginning of the PPP, these included: Commenting authorities, key stakeholders and landowners. In January 2013 one-on-one meetings were conducted with landowners to assist in the identification of potential powerline corridors and to determine the impact on these landowners. (refer to Appendix E5b for the register of landowners).

## **2.3 Distribution of Draft Basic Assessment Report for comment**

Copies of the Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR), inclusive of the executive summary, were distributed to the following relevant authorities and key IAPs for review and comment (Proof included in Appendices E2 and E4):

- Regional Department of Water Affairs: Water Resources & Water Quality Management
- South African Heritage Resources Authority (submitted via SAHRIS)
- Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism: Environmental Services
- Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture: Land Use and Soil Management
- Mpumalanga Department of Mineral Resources
- SA National Road Agency Ltd
- Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads And Transport
- Mpumalanga Department of Rural Development and Land Reform: Land Claims Commissioner
- Mpumalanga Department of Rural Development and Land Reform: State Land Administration
- Department of Agriculture

- Department of Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs
- Department of Community Services
- Agri Mpumalanga/ Mpumalanga Landbou
- Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency
- Endangered Wildlife Trust
- Landbou Unies
- SA Civil Aviation Authority
- Gert Sibande District Municipality
- Msukaligwa Local Municipality
- Eskom Transmission
- Eskom Distribution
- Landowners

Hard copies of the draft BAR were sent by courier to the following key stakeholders:

- Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism; 13 De Jager Street, Ermelo, 2350. For Attention: Deputy Director: Impact Management; Mr S Marebane
- Department of Water Affairs, Gauteng Region; Bothongo Plaza East 15<sup>th</sup> Floor, 285 Schoeman Street, Pretoria, 0001. For Attention: Mr Marius Keet, Deputy Director Institutional Establishment
- Eskom Distribution Mpumalanga Operating Unit, Land Development, Eskom Park, Main Building, Jelicoe & Water Meyer Streets, Witbank. For Attention: Ms Betty Ngobeni, Environment and Quality Officer
- The Librarian, Msukaligwa Local Municipality: Library, Cnr Smuts and Church Street, Ermelo, 2350. For attention: Ms Chrisna Calitz
- Msukaligwa Local Municipality, Municipal Offices, Corner Taute and Church Street, Ermelo, 2350. For Attention: Mr J Bouwer, Director Town Services, Cc Mr Thami Dlamini, Municipal Manager
- South African Heritage Resource Agency, 111 Harrington Street, Cape Town, 8000. For Attention: Mr Philip Hine. (submitted via SAHRIS)

### 3. ISSUES RAISED BY INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES

Summary of main issues raised by I&APs	Summary of response from EAP
<p><u>Landowner Van Oudshoornstroom 261 IT Portions 57 &amp; 75. Mr. Hein Mentz</u> 12 March 2013 Comment: Registered as I&amp;AP. The above properties are earmarked for Residential development (an estate). Overhead powerlines will have a significant impact on such an estate.</p>	<p><i>Noted. Mr Mentz is impacted by both Route Alternative 1 as well as Route Alternative 2 and a servitude area of 31m wide will be required. After identification of the preferred alternative, a land valuator will be appointed to value the property(ies). A process of negotiations will follow between landowner(s) and the negotiator to determine the consideration for the servitudes.</i></p>
<p><u>South African National Road Agency SOC Ltd, Northern Region</u> 16 April 2013 Comment: Crossing of the N2 to be done after agreement with SANRAL has been signed. Proposals to be discussed timeously with SANRAL Northern Region Office</p>	<p><i>The appointed negotiator will enter into discussion with SANRAL regarding the mentioned.</i></p>
<p><u>Eskom Transmission</u> Eskom Transmission indicated the Tx services that will be affected by the current application. They have no objection to the application should their rights and services be acknowledged and respected.</p>	<p><i>The appointed negotiator will enter into discussion with Eskom Transmission regarding the mentioned.</i></p>
<p><u>South African Heritage Resources Agency</u> SAHRA indicated that a Heritage Impact Assessment is required. The report should address impacts to archaeological resources as well as to palaeontological resources.</p>	<p><i>The requested studies have been conducted and the findings and recommendations are included in this basic assessment report.</i></p>

## 4. COMMENTS AND RESPONSE REPORT

*The comments and responses must be captured in a comments and response report as prescribed in the EIA regulations and be attached to the Final BAR as Appendix E3.*

The Public Participation Programme allowed for informed and responsible decision-making by all interested and affected parties. A summary of IAP comments and the consultant's responses to these comments is provided below. The original IAP comments are included in Appendix E3.

### **List of authorities from whom comments have been received:**

- Gert Sibande District Municipality registered as an I&AP
- SANRAL Northern Region registered as an I&AP

### **4.1 Comments received in the notification phase**

This section of the report synthesises the issues and concerns identified by interested and affected parties and various stakeholders during the public participation process and can be summarised as follows:

#### **4.1.1 Verbal Comment received**

None

#### **4.1.2 Written Comment received**

(The original IAP comments are included in Appendix E3)

#### **Landowner Van Oudshoornstroom 261 IT Portions 57 & 75. Mr. Hein Mentz**

12 March 2013

Comment:

Registered as I&AP. The above properties are earmarked for Residential development (an estate). Overhead powerlines will have a significant impact on such an estate.

Response:

*Noted. Mr Mentz is impacted by both Route Alternative 1 as well as Route Alternative 2 and a servitude area of 31m wide will be required. After identification of the preferred alternative, a land valuator will be appointed to value the property(ies). A process of negotiations will follow between landowner(s) and the negotiator to determine the consideration for the servitudes*

#### **Gert Sibande District Municipality**

13 March 2013

Comment:

Registered as I&AP.

Response:

*Noted.*

#### **South African National Road Agency SOC Ltd, Northern Region**

16 April 2013

Comment:

Registered as an I&AP. Crossing of the N2 to be done after agreement with SANRAL has been signed. Proposals to be discussed timeously with SANRAL Northern Region Office.

Response:

*Noted.*

*The appointed negotiator will enter into discussion with SANRAL regarding the above mentioned.*

## **Eskom Transmission, Land Management**

13 May 2013

Comment:

Eskom Transmission indicated the Tx services that will be affected by the current application:

- a. Eskom Tx Camden-Komati 400kV overhead power line
- b. Eskom Tx Camden-Duvha 400kV overhead power line
- c. Eskom Tx Camden-Sol 1&2 400kV overhead power lines
- d. Eskom Tx Camden-Tutuka 400kV overhead power line
- e. Eskom Tx Camden-Ncadu 400kV overhead power line and
- f. Eskom Tx vacant servitudes

They have no objection to the application should their rights and services be acknowledged and respected.

*Response:*

*The appointed negotiator will enter into discussion with Eskom Transmission regarding the mentioned.*

## **South African Heritage Resources Agency**

14 May 2013

Comment:

SAHRA indicated that a Heritage Impact Assessment is required. The report should address impacts to archaeological resources as well as to palaeontological resources.

*Response:*

*The requested studies have been conducted and the findings and recommendations are included in this basic assessment report.*

## **Homeowners on farm Ermelo Town**

In addition all landowners/homeowners, not directly affected by the powerline route corridor, but living within a 100 meters from the powerline route, were identified. On 14 May 2013 these homeowners/properties, close to the Ermelo substation, were visited, and notified of the project. Letters with project information and a request for comment were hand delivered. (Refer to Appendix E2c for proof of notification to these landowners living within 100m of the proposed powerline, but not directly affected as landowners. In addition refer to Appendix E5c1 for a register of these landowners/properties. In Appendix E5c2 a google map shows these properties within the 100m corridor.

Comment:

Mr Andre Franken of Melrows Place, 35 Jan van Rooyen street, registered as an I&AP.

### **4.2 Written Comment received at the open day**

No new comment was received at the open day.

### **4.3 Conclusion of Public Participation Programme for the Basic Assessment Report**

- The first phase of the **Public Participation Programme (PPP)** commenced in February 2013 and continued until May 2013. It included the identification of key stakeholders, the distribution of **information letters** with a request for comment, as well as advertising of the project in the local press and on site.
- In addition, notification of an **information meeting** on 24 April 2013 was sent to all IAPs on 8 April 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to furnish the landowners and other interested parties with information regarding the extent of the project, the proposed alternatives, the process of negotiations for servitudes, and the extent of the Environmental Impact Assessment Process. Project posters with information and maps of the routes were presented at the meeting. Written comment was requested at the meeting.
- **One-on-one meetings** were conducted with **landowners** to assist in the identification of potential powerline corridors and site locations.



- A **draft Basic Assessment Report** was compiled with the main aim to identify issues, potential impacts and potential alternatives associated with this project. It included a description of the status quo of all relevant environmental components as well as the proceedings of the PPP and communication with registered Interested & Affected Parties (I&APs).
- In addition, An **Environmental Management Programme (EMPr)** was compiled to ensure that
  - mitigation measures are identified and implemented to avoid or minimise the expected negative environmental impact and enhance the potential positive impact associated with the project;
  - the developer, construction workers and the operational and maintenance staff are well acquainted with their responsibilities in terms of the environment;
  - communication channels to report on environment related issues are in place.
- On **20 May 2013** the **draft Basic Assessment Report was submitted** for comment to the following:
  - Regional Department of Water Affairs: Water Resources & Water Quality Management
  - South African Heritage Resources Authority (submitted via SAHRIS)
  - Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism: Environmental Services
  - Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture: Land Use and Soil Management
  - Mpumalanga Department of Mineral Resources
  - SA National Road Agency Ltd
  - Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads And Transport
  - Mpumalanga Department of Rural Development and Land Reform: Land Claims Commissioner
  - Mpumalanga Department of Rural Development and Land Reform: State Land Administration
  - Department of Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs
  - Department of Community Services
  - Agri Mpumalanga/ Mpumalanga Landbou
  - Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency
  - Endangered Wildlife Trust
  - Landbou Unies
  - SA Civil Aviation Authority
  - Gert Sibande District Municipality
  - Msukaligwa Local Municipality
  - Eskom Transmission
  - Eskom Distribution
  - Landowners
- The **due date for comment** to the draft Basic Assessment Report is **3 July 2013**. This allows for a comment period of 40 days.
- Subsequently, a **final Basic Assessment Report (BAR)** will be compiled.

## 5. AUTHORITY PARTICIPATION

*Authorities and organs of state identified as key stakeholders.*

*Proof that the Authorities and Organs of State received written notification of the proposed activities is attached as Appendix E4.*

## 6. CONSULTATION WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

*A list of registered I&APs is included as Appendix E5.*

*Copies of correspondence and minutes of meetings held are included in Appendix E6.*