

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)
FOR THE PROPOSED ESKOM ERMELO - UITKOMS 88kV LINE
DEA REF 14/12/16/3/3/1/784 NEAS REF DEA/EIA/0001597/2012

PROPOSED BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT
MARCH 2013

BACKGROUND

ESKOM HOLDINGS (SOC) LIMITED (ESKOM) PLANS TO CONSTRUCT A NEW 20.9 KM 88KV CHICKADEE POWERLINE BETWEEN THE ERMELO AND UITKOMS SUBSTATIONS IN THE MSUKALIGWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCE.

ESKOM APPOINTED TEXTURE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS AS THE INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) TO UNDERTAKE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT.

THE EIA WILL CONFORM TO THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACT 107 OF 1998 AND TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS PUBLISHED IN GN R543/2010 - R546/2010 OF 18 JUNE IN TERMS OF SECTION 24(5) OF THE ACT.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)?

THIS BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID) PROVIDES INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES (I&APs) WITH BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT AND THE BA PROCESS TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN ORDER TO ENABLE THEM TO:

- DETERMINE IF THEY ARE INTERESTED IN AND/OR AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED PROJECT;
- BETTER UNDERSTAND THE PROJECT IN ORDER TO ENABLE THEM TO PROVIDE COMMENT; AND
- UNDERSTAND THE ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION PROCESS SO THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE EFFECTIVELY.

YOU ARE THEREFORE INVITED TO REGISTER AS AN I&AP USING THE ATTACHED COMMENTS AND REGISTRATION FORM IF YOU DEEM YOURSELF AN I&AP AND WISH TO PARTAKE IN THE PROCESS.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THIS PROJECT?

THE ESKOM CONVERSION ACT, 2001 (ACT No. 13 OF 2001) ESTABLISHES ESKOM AS A STATE OWNED COMPANY (SOC) WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA AS THE ONLY SHAREHOLDER, REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF ESKOM IS TO "PROVIDE ENERGY AND RELATED SERVICES INCLUDING THE GENERATION, TRANSMISSION, DISTRIBUTION AND SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY, AND TO HOLD INTERESTS IN OTHER ENTITIES".

THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS PART OF A BROADER SCOPE OF WORK TO IMPROVE ESKOM'S NETWORK PERFORMANCE. THE EXISTING DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS ARE EXCEEDING THEIR MAXIMUM POWER TRANSFER CAPABILITY. CURRENTLY THE NETWORK IS EXPERIENCING UNDER VOLTAGES AND IS INCAPABLE OF HANDLING ADDITIONAL LOADS DUE TO THE CONTINGENCY RESTRAINTS OF THE NETWORK. 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.

A BASIC ASSESSMENT (BA) PROCESS FOR THIS PROPOSED POWERLINE ROUTE IS CURRENTLY BEING UNDERTAKEN BY TEXTURE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS (DEA REF 14/12/16/3/3/1/784).

TO DATE, TWO ROUTE ALTERNATIVES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION. THE PROPOSED LAYOUT AND BEST ROUTE WILL BE DETERMINED THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL AND SPECIALIST STUDIES AS WELL AS PUBLIC OPINION.

THE PROPOSED PROJECT ENTAILS THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW 88KV CHICKADEE POWERLINE FROM THE ERMELO SUBSTATION LOCATED IN ERMELO TOWN TO THE UITKOMS SUBSTATION (APPROXIMATELY 20.9 KM) IN THE MSUKALIGWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCE.

THE FULL SCOPE OF WORK INCLUDES:

- THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW CHICKADEE 88KV POWERLINE FROM THE EXISTING ERMELO SUBSTATION TO THE EXISTING UITKOMS SUBSTATION.

WHERE IS THE PROJECT LOCATED?

TWO ALTERNATIVE ROUTES WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR THE POWERLINE.

THE PROPOSED ROUTE ALTERNATIVE 1 FOR THE LINE IS ON THE FARMS ERMELO TOWN, VAN OUDSHOORNSTROOM 261 IT PORTION 86, 27, 57, 75, 9, REM, 12, 4, 17, 5, 1; JAN HENDRIKSFONTEIN 263 IT PORTION 3, 4, 14; 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.

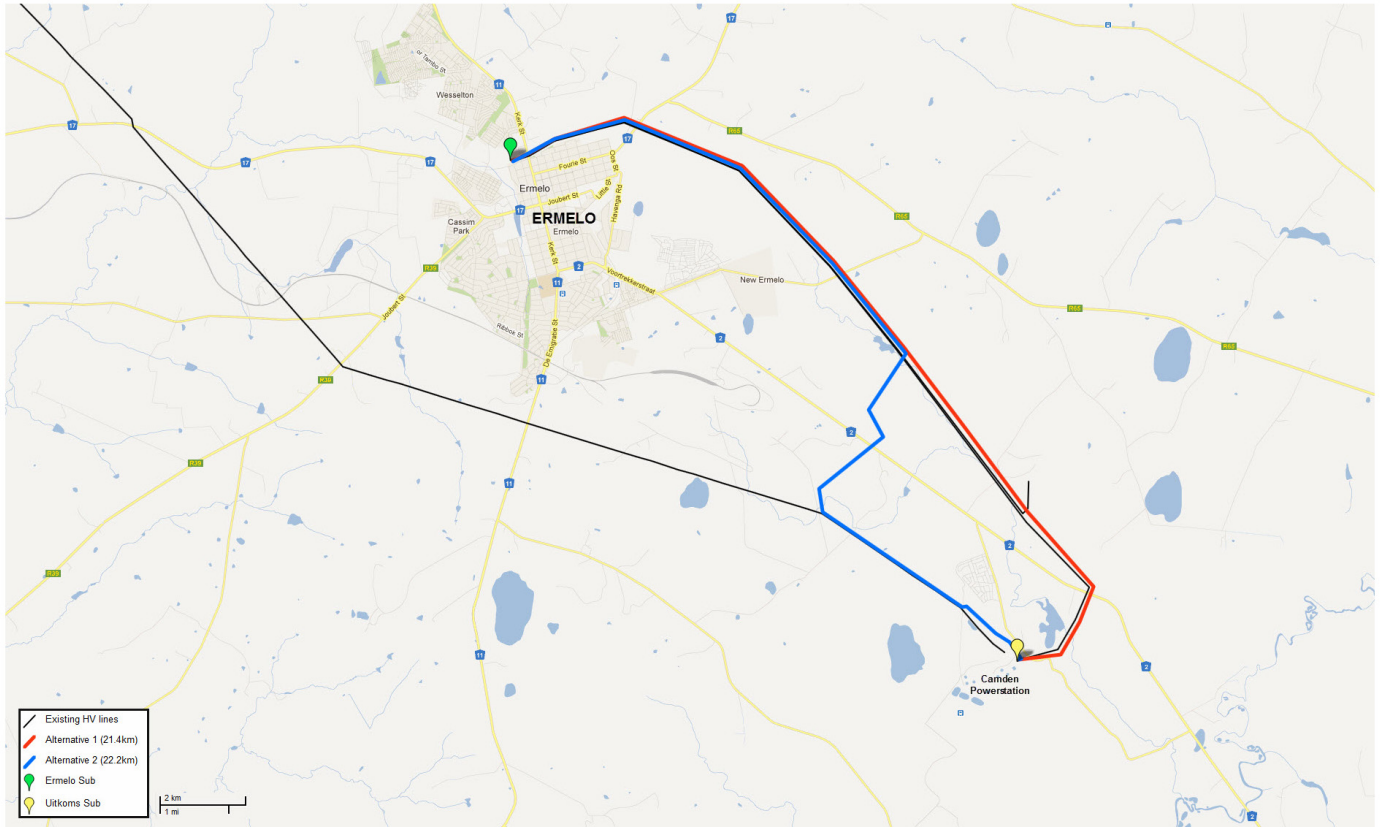
THE PROPOSED ROUTE ALTERNATIVE 2 FOR THE LINE IS ON THE FARMS ERMELO TOWN, VAN OUDSHOORNSTROOM 261 IT PORTION 86, 27, 57, 75, 9, REM, 12, 4, 17, 5, 1; JAN HENDRIKSFONTEIN 263 IT PORTION 3; UITKOMST 292 IT (CONSOLIDATED TO PORTION 18 OF 292 IT) PORTION 3; CAMDEN POWER STATION 329 IT REM; WITPUNT 267 IT PORTION 35 AND 36.

BOTH ROUTES ARE IN THE MSUKALIGWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCE.

THE PRELIMINARY ROUTE ALTERNATIVES FOR THE PROPOSED POWERLINE ARE SET OUT IN THE LOCATION MAP BELOW.



ErmeLO-Uitkoms 88kV line - Locality Map



WHY AN EIA?

THE EIA IS A PROCESS CREATED BY LEGISLATION WHICH IS USED TO ENSURE THAT THE POTENTIAL NEGATIVE IMPACTS THAT MAY OCCUR DUE TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ARE AVOIDED OR MITIGATED. A BASIC ASSESSMENT (BA) IS APPLIED TO ACTIVITIES THAT ARE CONSIDERED LESS LIKELY TO HAVE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND, THEREFORE, UNLIKELY TO REQUIRE A FULL-BLOWN AND DETAILED SCOPING AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA).

THREE LISTING NOTICES HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS (PUBLISHED IN GN R543/2010 OF 18 JUNE IN TERMS OF SECTION 24(5) OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACT 107 OF 1998 (THE ACT)). THE THREE LISTING NOTICES (GN R544/2010 - GN R546/2010) SET OUT THE ACTIVITIES WHICH REQUIRE ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION BEFORE THEY CAN PROCEED.

LISTING NOTICE ONE (GN R544/2010) STIPULATES THE ACTIVITIES REQUIRING A BA. THESE ARE TYPICALLY ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO IMPACT NEGATIVELY ON THE ENVIRONMENT BUT DUE TO THE NATURE AND SCALE OF SUCH ACTIVITIES, THESE IMPACTS ARE GENERALLY KNOWN.

LISTING NOTICE THREE (GN R546/2010) CONTAINS ACTIVITIES THAT WILL ONLY REQUIRE AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION THROUGH A BA PROCESS IF THE ACTIVITY IS UNDERTAKEN IN ONE OF THE SPECIFIED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS INDICATED IN THAT LISTING NOTICE.

A BASIC ASSESSMENT (BA) IS A MORE CONCISE ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY THAN A SCOPING AND EIA. HOWEVER, A BA STILL REQUIRES PUBLIC NOTICE AND PARTICIPATION, CONSIDERATION OF THE POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE ACTIVITY, ASSESSMENT OF POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES, AND AN ASSESSMENT OF WHETHER THERE ARE ANY SIGNIFICANT ISSUES OR IMPACTS THAT MIGHT REQUIRE FURTHER INVESTIGATION.

THE BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT (BAR) MUST PROVIDE THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS (DEA) WITH SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO CONSIDER THE APPLICATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION (BA PROCESS) AND TO REACH A DECISION. IF DEA IS HOWEVER UNABLE TO DECIDE THE APPLICATION BASED ON THE BAR ALONE, THE DEA MAY REQUEST AN APPLICANT TO SUBJECT THE APPLICATION TO THE MORE THOROUGH SCOPING AND EIA PROCESS.

THE LISTED ACTIVITIES FOR THE PROPOSED ERMELO - UITKOMS 88KV POWERLINE PROJECT ARE THE FOLLOWING:

LISTED ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

<p>GN R544/2010 ITEM 10 THE CONSTRUCTION OF FACILITIES OR INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTRICITY OUTSIDE URBAN AREAS WITH A CAPACITY OF MORE THAN 33kV BUT LESS THAN 275kV.</p>	<p>CONSTRUCTION OF THE 88KV POWER LINE FROM ERMELO SUBSTATION TO UITKOMS SUBSTATION</p>
<p>GN R546/2010 ITEM 4 THE CONSTRUCTION OF A ROAD WIDER THAN 4 METRES WITH A RESERVE LESS THAN 13,5 METRES. (ACTIVITY TO BE CONFIRMED).</p>	<p>CONSTRUCTION OF AN ACCESS OR CONSTRUCTION ROAD OF 6 METERS WIDE.</p>
<p>GN R546/2010 ITEM 14 THE CLEARANCE OF AN AREA OF 5 HECTARES OR MORE OF VEGETATION WHERE 75% OR MORE OF THE VEGETATIVE COVER CONSTITUTES INDIGENOUS VEGETATION. (ACTIVITY TO BE CONFIRMED)</p>	<p>CLEARANCE OF INDIGENOUS VEGETATION OF A 31M WIDE SERVITUDE X 21 000M OF POWERLINE = 651 000m² = 6,51HA</p>

WHAT DOES THE BA PROCESS ENTAIL?

THE BA CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THE FOLLOWING PHASES:

APPLICATION AND INITIAL NOTIFICATION

DURING THIS PHASE APPLICATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE ACTIVITY IS MADE TO DEA. ONCE DEA ACKNOWLEDGES RECEIPT OF THE BA APPLICATION (WITHIN 14 DAYS), AN INITIAL NOTIFICATION PROCESS TAKES PLACE WHEREBY THE PUBLIC IS INFORMED OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INTER ALIA, NEWSPAPER ADVERTS, NOTIFICATION LETTERS AND ON SITE ADVERTISEMENTS.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS (PPP) PHASE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PHASE IS:

- TO IDENTIFY INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES (I&APs) AND RELEVANT AUTHORITIES
- THE OPENING AND MAINTAINING OF A REGISTER OF ALL I&APs AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS ON THE DATABASE (ON-GOING)
- TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS THROUGH INVESTIGATION AND PPP; AND
- TO DESCRIBE AND INVESTIGATE THE ALTERNATIVES THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED.

BA PHASE

THIS PHASE INTER ALIA INCLUDES:

- ADVERTISING THE BA PROCESS AND AVAILABILITY OF THE BID (LOCAL PRESS)
- CONSULTATION WITH AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION TO I&APs THROUGH THE BID, ONE-ON-ONE CONSULTATION, PUBLIC OPEN DAYS/FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS/KEY STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS
- INVITING I&AP COMMENT AND INPUT ON THE DRAFT BAR (40-DAY COMMENT PERIOD)
- RECORDING ALL COMMENTS, ISSUES AND CONCERNS RAISED BY I&APs IN AN COMMENTS AND RESPONSE REPORT FOR INCLUSION IN THE FINAL BAR.

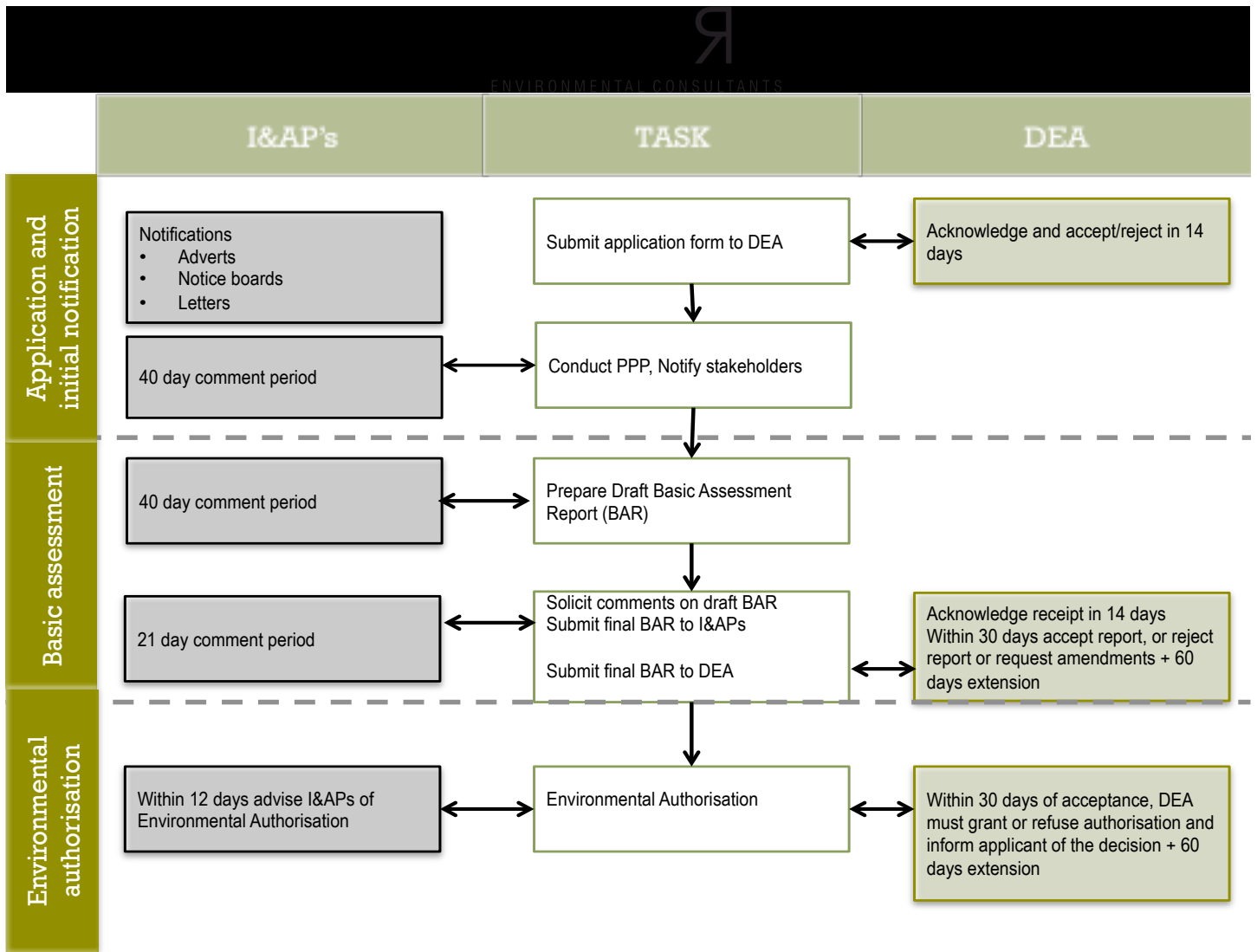
WHERE NECESSARY, MITIGATION MEASURES ARE RECOMMENDED TO REDUCE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS. ONCE THE FINAL BAR HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO DEA, DEA WILL CONSIDER THE APPLICATION.

ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION

AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION (EA) (IN TERMS OF SECTION 36 - 37 OF THE ACT) WILL BE ISSUED TO ESKOM ONCE DEA HAS MADE A DECISION REGARDING THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT. THIS DECISION IS BASED ON INTER ALIA, INFORMATION RECEIVED IN THE PPP PHASE.

THE BA PROCESS IS REPRESENTED DIAGRAMMATICALLY IN SCHEDULE 1 BELOW:

SCHEDULE 1: BA PROCESS



WHAT IS THE PROGRAMME FOR THE BA?

THE FOLLOWING PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME IS ENVISAGED FOR THE BA:

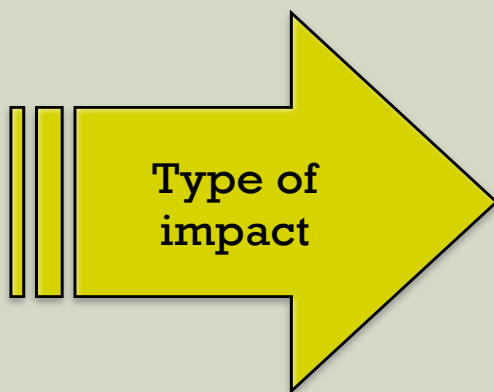
APPLICATION PHASE	PPP PHASE	DEA REVIEW & DECISION-MAKING	ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION
FEBRUARY 2013	MARCH TO JULY 2013	AUGUST 2013 TO JANUARY 2014	JANUARY 2014

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROJECT?

DISTRIBUTION LINES MAY CREATE A NUMBER OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS. A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES HAVE ALREADY BEEN IDENTIFIED AND ARE LISTED HERE TO ASSIST I&APs TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE INVESTIGATIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN AS PART OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS. THE PRELIMINARY LIST OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS INCLUDES:

What are the potential impacts associated with the development?

Distribution lines may create a number of environmental impacts.
Potential environmental issues:



- ◆ BIOPHYSICAL
 - ◆ Fauna and Flora
 - ◆ Avifauna (Birds)
 - ◆ Land capability and agricultural areas
 - ◆ Visual
 - ◆ Waste / Pollution
 - ◆ Surface Water
- ◆ SOCIO-ECONOMIC
 - ◆ Impacts on existing infrastructure
- ◆ SOCIO-CULTURAL
 - ◆ Archaeological and palaeontological sites

ALL SIGNIFICANT ISSUES IDENTIFIED WILL BE COLLATED INTO A COMMENTS AND RESPONSES REPORT AND WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE DRAFT AND FINAL BAR.

SPECIALISTS

THE BA PROJECT TEAM WILL IDENTIFY POTENTIAL ISSUES AND ASSESS THESE IMPACTS IN TERMS OF THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GUIDELINES FOR BA PUBLISHED BY DEA. SPECIALIST STUDIES WILL BE CONDUCTED TO ASSESS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ALL IMPACTS IDENTIFIED.

THE SPECIALIST PROJECT TEAM IS REPRESENTED DIAGRAMMATICALLY IN SCHEDULE 2 BELOW:

SCHEDULE 2: SPECIALIST TEAM



Specialists/Subject matter experts

The EIA project team will assess these impacts in terms of their significance. Specialist studies will be conducted to **assess the significance** of all impacts identified.



AUTHORISING AUTHORITY

AS ESKOM IS A STATE OWNED COMPANY, AUTHORISATION HAS TO BE GRANTED BY THE NATIONAL DEA IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PROVINCIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES.

AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION WILL BE ISSUED BY DEA BASED ON THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THE FINAL BAR.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (PP) IS A JOINT EFFORT BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS, THE APPLICANT, TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS AND DECISION-MAKERS WHO WORK TOGETHER TO **PRODUCE** BETTER DECISIONS THAN THEY WOULD HAVE DONE HAD THEY ACTED INDEPENDENTLY. THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS (PPP) AIMS TO INFORM A WIDE RANGE OF I&APS ABOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS. IT IS A TOOL TO ALLOW THE PUBLIC TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS AND CONCERNS ABOUT THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM I&APS WILL BE FULLY DOCUMENTED, EVALUATED AND RESPONDED TO IN THE BA.

THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS (PPP) PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR I&APS TO BE INVOLVED RIGHT FROM THE OUTSET OF THE BA.

THE PPP INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING STEPS TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

- STEP 1: REGISTER I&APs AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS ON A DATABASE (ON-GOING)**
- STEP 2: ADVERTISE THE BA PROCESS AND AVAILABILITY OF THE BID (LOCAL AND REGIONAL PRESS)**
- STEP 3: CONSULTATION WITH AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION TO I&APs THROUGH THE BID, ONE-ON-ONE CONSULTATION, PUBLIC MEETINGS/PUBLIC OPEN DAYS/FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS/KEY STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS DURING THE BA PHASE**
- STEP 4: INVITE I&AP COMMENT AND INPUT ON THE DRAFT BAR (40-DAY COMMENT PERIOD)**
- STEP 5: RECORD ALL COMMENTS, ISSUES AND CONCERNS RAISED BY I&APs IN AN ISSUES AND RESPONSE REPORT FOR INCLUSION IN THE FINAL BAR.**

GETTING INVOLVED

YOU CAN GET INVOLVED IN THE BA BY:

- REGISTERING AS AN I&AP USING THE ATTACHED COMMENTS AND REGISTRATION FORM AND RETURNING IT TO THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CONSULTANT BY POST, FAX OR EMAIL USING THE DETAILS PROVIDED BELOW;
- EXAMINING THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS BID OR COMPLETING THE ATTACHED COMMENTS AND REGISTRATION FORM AND RETURNING IT TO THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CONSULTANT BY POST, FAX OR EMAIL USING THE DETAILS PROVIDED BELOW;
- ATTENDING THE MEETINGS THAT WILL BE HELD DURING THE BA SO THAT YOU CAN OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION, INTERACT WITH THE PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS AND RAISE ISSUES AND CONCERNS. SHOULD YOU REGISTER AS AN I&AP YOU WILL BE INVITED TO ATTEND THESE MEETINGS. DETAILS OF THE MEETINGS WILL ALSO BE ADVERTISED IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS;
- CONTACTING THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CONSULTANT BY POST, FAX OR EMAIL SHOULD YOU HAVE A QUERY, WISH TO MAKE A COMMENT OR REQUIRE FURTHER INFORMATION; AND
- REVIEWING AND COMMENTING ON THE DRAFT BAR WITHIN THE 40-DAY REVIEW PERIODS PROVIDED. IF YOU REGISTER AS AN I&AP YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION THAT IS DISTRIBUTED AS PART OF THIS BA AND BE INVITED TO PUBLIC MEETINGS. SHOULD YOU WISH TO COMMENT ON THE DRAFT REPORTS THAT WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU TAKE NOTE OF THE 40-DAY REVIEW PERIOD AND THE DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS. COMMENTS CAN BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING VIA POST, FAX OR EMAIL, USING EITHER THE COMMENT FORM PROVIDED OR YOUR OWN FORMAT, TO RIA PRETORIUS: **TEXTURE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS** USING THE CONTACT DETAILS BELOW.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OFFICE CONTACT DETAILS :

RIA PRETORIUS
TEXTURE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS
 PO BOX 36593, MENLO PARK, PRETORIA, 0102
 LANDLINE 012 361 5763; FAX 086 675 4026; MOBILE 082 568 6344
 RIA@PEOPLETEXTURE.CO.ZA