

Basic Assessment and Water Use Licence application for the proposed upgrade of an existing low-level bridge crossing the Braamhoekspruit two kilometres downstream of the Ingula Pumped-Storage Scheme

Comment and Response Report

Version 2

This report (version 2) captures all the issues raised by stakeholders during the announcement phase of the Basic Assessment and Water Use Licence application for the proposed upgrade of an existing low-level bridge crossing the Braamhoekspruit. As part of the announcement a Background Information Document (BID) with a comment/registration sheet was distributed, an advertisement was placed in various newspapers during August 2008 and site notices were put up in the area of the proposed development. A Focus Group Meeting was held on 15 August 2008 with stakeholders living adjacent to the proposed development. A second advertisement was placed in September 2008 to announce the Draft Basic Assessment report. A public meeting was held on 23 September 2008 in the Agricultural Hall at Besters to announce the Draft Basic Assessment Report and comments from this meeting have also been included.

This report will be updated as the Basic Assessment process unfolds. A copy of this report will be distributed to everyone who attended the public meeting on 23 September 2008 and it will be appended to the Final Basic Assessment Reports that will be submitted to the decision-making authority, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.

Written and oral submissions from stakeholders are summarised in this report – the full versions of the submissions will also be appended to the Final Basic Assessment Report.

The issues raised will be categorised as the process unfolds.

	COMMENTS, QUESTIONS AND ISSUES	COMMENTATOR(S)	SOURCE	RESPONSE
1.	What side of the existing bridge will the deviation road be built?	Mr Vusumuzi Ephraim Makhowane, resident and farmer on the farm Trekboer that belongs to the Communal Property Association (CPA).	Focus Group Meeting near the proposed site on 15 August 2008.	The specialist studies will indicate which side will have the least impact on the environment. The two alternatives being assessed are either upstream or downstream

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				of the existing bridge. (Section A1, B1, B2(a), 3, B11, E2, E3, E4 and E7)
2.	We are concerned about our livestock, because they drink from the river.	Mr Makhowane, resident and farmer on the farm Trekboer that belongs to the CPA.	Focus Group Meeting near the proposed site on 15 August 2008.	The construction area will be fenced off to protect cattle, goats and sheep (See Appendix E)
3.	Sometimes this whole river around the bridge turns into a lake when we have heavy rains.	Mr Sacramento Msimanga, resident and farmer on the farm Trekboer that belongs to the CPA.	Focus Group Meeting near the proposed site on 15 August 2008.	This information will be passed on to the specialists (See Appendix D)
4.	There is a dip in the road with a small low-level bridge about 400 metres from the existing bridge on the Besters side that is also flooded when the bridge is flooded.	Mr Mphikeleli Johannes Hlongwane, resident and farmer on the farm Trekboer that belongs to the CPA.	Focus Group Meeting near the proposed site on 15 August 2008.	Preliminary investigations have shown that there is no evidence of severe flooding, but that water will push up over the road after a severe rain storm (See Appendix D).
5.	Will we get electricity from Eskom? We have also asked for piped water, but receive nothing from the Government.	Mr Makhowane and Mr Hlongwane, residents and farmers on the farm Trekboer that belongs to the CPA.	Focus Group Meeting near the proposed site on 15 August 2008.	Noted. Electricity in this area is supplied by the municipality of Ladysmith who is supplied by Eskom.
6.	The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport must be kept informed during the whole process and would like to approve the preliminary bridge proposals and final design as well as during the tender and construction phases.	Mr Dave Bryan, Bridge Engineer, KZN Dept of Transport. Private Bag X 9043, PMB, 3200	Written submission, 22 August 2008.	Noted. (Section D)
7.	Design to be approved by the Bridge Division of the KZN Department of Transport. Please supply Paul Dantuma (pauldantuma@kzntransport.gov.za) with co-ordinates in Degrees Minutes Seconds (DMS) format. Thereafter, the preliminary proposals should be discussed with this Division prior to approval to proceed with the working Drawings.	Mr Dave Bryan, Bridge Engineer, KZN Dept of Transport. Private Bag X 9043, PMB, 3200	Written submission, 22 August 2008.	Noted. (Section D)
8.	Were all tribal authorities invited?	Ms Sanelisiwe Mqadi, Eskom Stakeholder Liaison, Ladysmith	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce Draft Basic Assessment Report	Invites were sent out to all and the municipality and the Communal Property Association (CPA) were asked to provide the names of all relevant parties.

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				(Section D)
9.	Was the Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Wildlife invited to this meeting?	Mr Masuphe Matenjwe, Dept of Agriculture.	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce Draft Basic Assessment Report	All relevant regional departments were sent information with regard to this project. (Section D)
10.	Was the local chief notified, because this area in question falls under the jurisdiction of two local chiefs?	Mr Mphikeleli Johannes Hlongwane, resident and farmer on the farm Trekboer that belongs to the CPA.	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce Draft Basic Assessment Report	Information will be sent out once the contact details of the chiefs have been received. (Section D)
11.	All government departments need to receive this information.	Mr Masuphe Matenjwe, Dept of Agriculture.	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce Draft Basic Assessment Report	All relevant regional departments were sent information with regard to this project. (Section D)
12.	Contractors have a tendency to bring their own workers to construction sites and do not employ local people.	Mr Zweli Mbhele, CPA representative.	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce Draft Basic Assessment Report	It is Eskom policy to give local people an opportunity to work on its projects. There are only a few households in the vicinity of the proposed project and Eskom will try to get at least one person from each family to work on the project, said Mr Mzamo Lephoma from Eskom. (See Appendix D and Section B9 and B14)
13.	Who is going to facilitate the employment of the workers? Will it be Eskom or the contractor that will do the work? The Ladysmith councillors can assist with facilitating this process.	Cllr Victoria Shabalala, Council representative of the area under discussion.	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce Draft Basic Assessment Report	Noted. (See Appendix D and Section B9 and Section B14)
14.	There is a tendency to only appoint people from a specific grouping or political affiliation.	Ms Sanelisiwe Mqadi, Eskom Stakeholder Liaison, Ladysmith	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce Draft Basic Assessment Report	Noted. (See Appendix D and Section B9 and B14)
15.	When the councillors decide who must get work, the people never benefit and the work goes to people that belong to their party.	Mr Zweli Mbhele, CPA representative.	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce	Noted. (See Appendix D and Section B9 and B14)

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			Draft Basic Assessment Report	
16.	The Stakeholder Engagement office in Ladysmith must take this job recruitment process format and find a solution to the problem.	Mr Tobile Bokwe, Eskom	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce Draft basic Assessment Report	Noted. (See Appendix D and Section B9 and B14)
17.	The CPA umbrella organisation was not invited.	Mr Zweli Mbhele, CPA representative.	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce Draft Basic Assessment Report	Mr Mbhele was asked to provide their contact details after the meeting, but we are still waiting for this information. (Section D)
18.	Will Eskom fix the damage to the road one kilometre on either side of the bridge that will be caused by the construction vehicles?	Mr Johan Jooste, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce Draft Basic Assessment Report	Yes, it will be written into the Environmental Management Plan. (See Appendix E)
19.	Will the alignment of the road to the bridge be straightened out?	Mr Johan Jooste, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce Draft basic Assessment Report	No, the new bridge will be exactly on top of the existing bridge. (Section B1 and B11)
20.	Will the relevant road signs be used during construction?	Mr Jooste, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce Draft Basic Assessment Report	Yes, it is the law and Eskom will abide by the law.
21.	Does the Ingula Pumped Storage Scheme pump water to Johannesburg?	Mr Jooste, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport	Public meeting on 23 September 2008, Agricultural Hall, Besters to announce Draft Basic Assessment Report	No, it is used to generate electricity.