ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE 756kV HYDRA SUBSTATION (De Aar) AND THE PROPOSED ADDITIONAL 765kV TRANSMISSION POWER LINE BETWEEN HYDRA SUBSTATION AND GAMMA SUBSTATION (Victoria Wes): NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

DRAFT MINUTES OF A KEY STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

HELD ON
TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2006
AT 09:00
KALAHARI LODGE, KIMBERLEY
ENQUIRIES

BOHLWEKI ENVIRONMENTAL (PTY) LTD

Public Participation Process

Ms Nicolene Venter and Ms Prashika Reddy
PO Box 11784, MIDRAND, 1686
Tel.: (011) 466 3841
Fax: (011) 466 3849
Cell: 083 377 9112 / 082 858 5919
E-mail: hydra-gamma2@bohlweki.co.za

Environmental Impact Assessment

Ms Rebecca Thomas
PO Box 11784, MIDRAND, 1686
Tel.: (011) 466 3841
Fax: (011) 466 3849
Cell: 083 652 4017
E-mail: rebeccat@bohlweki.co.za

YOUR COMMENTS

Your comments on this document would be greatly appreciated. In particular, we request you to verify that your comments during the meeting have been minuted correctly. Please address your written comments to Nicolene Venter or Prashika Reddy at the address given above by not later than MONDAY, 8 JANUARY 2007. Please note however that the minutes are not verbatim.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1

2. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING ............................................................... 1

3. BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT ...................................................... 2

4. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT ............................... 3

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS .................................................... 5

6. TECHNICAL DETAILS (ESKOM) ......................................................... 6

7. DISCUSSION SESSION ........................................................................ 8

7.1 General Comments and Issues ........................................................ 8

7.2 Hydra-Gamma1 Related Issues ......................................................... 9

8. CLOSURE & THE WAY FORWARD ..................................................... 9

APPENDICES

ATTENDANCE RECORD........................................................................ Appendix A
1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Ms Nicolene Venter from Bohlweki Environmental introduced herself and her role for this proposed project, and welcomed the delegate present at the workshop. She informed the attendee that Bohlweki Environmental had been appointed as independent consultants to undertake the necessary environmental studies and public participation process associated with the proposed project, and introduced the project team present as follows:

- Mrs Carol Streaton, Senior Environmental Advisor: Eskom Transmission
- Ms Rebecca Thomas, Project Manager: Bohlweki Environmental

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Ms Prashika Reddy, Bohlweki Environmental, and Ms Tania Anderson, WESSA, who unfortunately could not attend the Workshop.

The attendance register and apologies received are attached as Appendix A.

Approval of Draft Agenda
The delegate present approved the draft Agenda and no additional points were submitted for discussion.

Conduct of the Workshop
It was agreed that the Workshop would be conducted in the following manner:

- Language of Choice: It was agreed that questions and comments will be raised in English
- Work through the Facilitator
- Focus on issues related to the proposed project
- Equal Participation
- Identify oneself prior to a question
- Wait until Discussion Session to ask questions

Due to the small delegation present at the meeting, it was agreed with the attendee that questions could be raised during and after each presentation.

2. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

Ms Nicolene Venter explained that the purpose of the meeting was to:

- Provide stakeholders with information regarding the proposed expansion of the 765kV Hydra Substation, located near the town of De Aar, and the proposed additional 765kV Transmission power line between Hydra Substation and Gamma Substation, located south east of Victoria West, in the Northern Cape Province.
- Provide stakeholders an opportunity to comment and seek clarity regarding the proposed project; and
3. BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Ms Carol Streaton, Eskom, introduced the attendee to the nature of bulk electricity supply. The separate divisions within Eskom Holdings (viz. Eskom Generation, Eskom Transmission and Eskom Distribution) were also illustrated.

Electricity is generated at power stations by Eskom’s Generation division, mainly being generated in the Mpumalanga area, whereafter it is transported via transmission power lines (765kV, 400kV or 275kV), managed by Eskom Transmission, to transmission substations where electricity is stepped down. Municipalities obtain electricity from these transmission substations and electricity is then distributed to industrial areas and households within their municipal boundaries. From the transmission substations electricity is also stepped down to distribution substations via distribution power lines (132kV, etc), which are managed by Eskom Distribution.

From the distribution substations, electricity is distributed through high-voltage reticulation lines (380/220V). Low-voltage reticulation lines transport electricity from the high-voltage reticulation lines to individual properties/buildings.

**Current Network: 2006**

An overview of Eskom’s current electricity network was presented and the proposed Perseus-Hydra-Gamma Transmission power line was pointed out to the delegate. The slide also indicated the electricity being imported from Lesotho through the Cahora Bassa Hydro Project.

**Southern Grid Load Forecast**

The projected electricity capacity needed between 2006 and 2027, and the projected load (MW) for East London, Karoo and Port Elizabeth was presented. As this proposed project is being introduced to provide electricity mainly for the Coega Development in Port Elizabeth, the chart indicates that by the year 2009 Port Elizabeth’s electricity demand will be at 2 000 MW, and still climbing.

**2006 – 2009 Servitudes**

An overview of the various Servitudes required (substation to substation), and the year required, was presented as follows:

- Mercury (near Orkney) – Perseus (near Dealesville)  
  (765kV, ± 250km): Servitude required by 2008
- Perseus – Hydra (near De Aar)  
  (765kV, ± 260km): Servitude required by 2009
- Hydra – Gamma (south east of Victoria West, near Hutchinson)  
  (765kV, ± 126km): Servitude required by 2009
- Gamma – Omega (near Koeberg)  
  (765kV, ± 550km): Servitude required by 2009
- Gamma – Grassridge (Port Elizabeth)  
  (2 x 765kV, ± 310km): **Commissioning** 2009
4. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT

Ms Rebecca Thomas, Bohlweki Environmental informed the delegates that a brief history of Hydra-Gamma1 will be presented as the environmental studies undertaken for Hydra-Gamma1 might only need to be updated/revised for the Hydra-Gamma2 proposed project for which this EIA is.

**Hydra-Gamma1 Project**

*Project scope of Hydra-Gamma1*

The EIA for Hydra-Gamma1 included the construction of a new 765kV Gamma Substation of approximately 1.6km x 800m on the farm Uitvlugtfontein near Victoria West. It also included a new 765kV Transmission power line between Hydra Substation and the proposed new Gamma Substation.

The two proposed route alternatives were indicated by means of an overview map and explained to the attendee.

*Background*

The EIA for the Hydra-Gamma1 project was undertaken during 2004 and 2005 by Bohlweki Environmental, and was conducted in two phases, the Scoping phase and the Impact Assessment phase. As this EIA was conducted for the first 765kV Transmission power line, comprehensive specialist studies were undertaken to assess and address these impacts of this new type of Transmission power line in the area.

The specialist studies undertaken were:

- Geology
- Surface Water
- Soils and agricultural potential
- Flora and Ecology
- Avifauna
- Visual and aesthetics
- Heritage Impacts
- Tourism potential
- Social Environment

*Conclusion*

A Record of Decision was issued in December 2005 for both the Gamma Substation and the 765kV Transmission power line.

During Eskom’s servitude negotiation activity for this approved Hydra-Gamma1 765kV Transmission power line, the increase in demand for electricity in the Port Elizabeth area had already become clear and Eskom negotiated the option for a double servitude with the affected landowners. This second servitude was negotiated during 2006 and was signed by all the affected landowners by October 2006.
New EIA for Hydra-Gamma2

Ms Thomas informed the attendee that to ensure that the project is transparent, mention needs to be made that the project team will approach the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), the ‘Competent Authority’ for this proposed project, to apply for exemption from a full EIA for Hydra-Gamma2.

Project scope
This EIA includes the proposed extension of the 765kV Hydra Substation that is proposed to be situated adjacent to the existing Hydra Substation on Eskom owned property. The Hydra Substation extension will be approximately 200m x 250m.

The proposed additional 765kV Transmission power line will be constructed parallel to the existing Hydra-Gamma1 765kV Transmission power line for a distance of approximately 130km.

The proposed route alignment, which included a slight deviation, was indicated by means of an overview map and explained to the attendee.

Environmental Scoping Phase
The scoping phase will be based on desktop investigations to identify any potential negative as well as positive environmental impacts. During this phase the identification of the preferred alternative will be made.

The specialist studies undertaken during the Hydra-Gamma1 EIA will be updated and/or revised during the scoping phase. However, environmental aspects that will be considered during the environmental scoping phase are:

- Biophysical
- Social

Updated specialist studies
The following specialist studies will be considered to establish whether any changes had taken place between 2005 and 2006:

- Soils and Agricultural Potential
- Flora and Fauna
- Heritage Impacts
- Tourism Impacts
- Socio Economic Impacts

Revised specialist studies
The following specialist studies will take into consideration the cumulative impacts:

- Avifauna
- Visual Impacts
Summary of the EIA process

The following outline the steps of the EIA process for this proposed project:

- **Application:** Submitted to DEAT and received approval in October 2006
- **Environmental Scoping Study:** Currently at this phase of the process and is planned to be conducted during October and November 2006. It is envisaged that the draft Environmental Scoping Report (ESR) will be made available for public review, and simultaneously to DEAT as well as the Northern Cape Department of Tourism, Environment and Conservation (NCDTEC), from end November 2006 until mid January 2007 (45 days).
- **Plan of Study for EIA:** It is envisaged to submit the Plan of Study for EIA to DEAT by March/April 2006
- **Environmental Impact Assessment:** Should the Plan of Study for EIA be accepted by DEAT, the project will enter the impact assessment phase and it is envisaged that it will take place during February and March 2007. The draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be made available for public review, and simultaneously to DEAT and NCDTEC, from March to April 2007 (30 days).
- **Record of Decision:** It is envisaged that the Record of Decision might be issued by May 2007.

It was mentioned that the public participation process will continue throughout the EIA process.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

Ms Nicolene Venter informed the delegate that to ensure that there is a clear understanding of what public participation is and what it is not, the following to be noted:

**What is a public participation process?**
- A communication tool to inform stakeholders of a proposed project; and
- A communication tool to receive and integrate the comments of stakeholders into the relevant phases of a proposed project

**What a public participation process is not?**
- It is not a public relations exercise; and
- It is not a means to satisfy grievances, but rather to record comments and concerns

**Summary of the public participation process**
- **EIA process advertised:** The EIA process was advertised in the following newspapers:
  - De Aar Echo (Afrikaans): 10 November 2006
  - Citizen (English): 10 November 2006
  - Rapport (Afrikaans): 12 November 2006
- **Background Information Document:** Distributed to I&APs who responded to advertisements as well as those identified during the identification process.
- **Identification of and Consultation with I&APs:** This is an ongoing process throughout the EIA and includes telephonic consultation, etc.
- **Focus Group Meetings / Stakeholder Workshop:** The process is currently in this phase where meetings are conducted with e.g. local authorities, environmental bodies, provincial authorities, etc.
• Comment and Response Report and the draft Environmental Scoping Report (ESR) available for public review: All comments/concerns/issues received from I&APs will be captured in the Comment and Response Report that forms part of the draft ESR. As mentioned during the EIA Process Summary, it is envisaged that the draft ESR will be made available for public review from end November 2006 until mid January 2007 (45 consecutive calendar days).

6. TECHNICAL DETAILS (ESKOM)

Negotiation process
According to Eskom’s Negotiation Guidelines, the following Negotiation Process will be followed:

- After completion of the EIA, negotiator has a corridor of 500m and within that a proposed alignment to be negotiated.
- Eskom appoints an independent registered valuator.
- The negotiation process begins by visiting the landowners.
- Servitude against the property is registered at the Deeds Office.

Negotiations:
- Individual contract being drawn up between Eskom and affected landowner
- Servitude compensation – discussed market related and realistic compensation
- Affected landowner signed option to register a servitude
- Exercise the option-contract
- Servitude Registration with Deeds Office
- Payout with interest – once of payment to affected landowner
- Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for construction/maintenance phase are enforced
- Environmental Control Officer appointed by Eskom to ensure that the construction company adheres to the EMP

Environmental Control Officer (ECO)
The ECO is appointed by Eskom prior to construction, and his duties include:

- Negotiation of access road
- Liaison between contractor, landowner and Eskom
- Ensures that the conditions of the EMP are met
- Ensures that the special conditions are upheld

Relocation
It was noted that in certain instances, it might be necessary to relocate people if their houses fall within the proposed servitude area and there is no way for the proposed Transmission power line to avoid the houses.

Overview of Transmission line building practices
Overhead or underground:
A brief overview was presented in relation to The National Grid Example at the Goring Gap (United Kingdom). The excavation activities for a 400kV underground cable require close to double the servitude clearance during construction, which have a detrimental affect on vegetation.
Gates
Should gates along the registered servitude be required, negotiations with the affected landowner will take place to discuss the position and type of gate(s) required.

Access Roads
Access roads are constructed where the need is identified, and in some instances the need for a two-track road is needed.

Erosion Control
Care is taken during the construction of access road and towers to address or limit any erosion that might occur.

Aviation Spheres, Bird Guards & Flapper products
Aviation spheres (red/white/yellow balls) are attached to Transmission power lines, where identified, to ensure that these power lines are easily identified and noticed by pilots of light aircrafts, crop sprayers, etc.

Bird guards (spikes) are attached above the insulators to prevent bird droppings on the insulators, as that is the main cause for power failures.

To prevent birds flying into Transmission power lines, bird flappers are attached to the sections where birds’ flight paths has been identified. These flapper products provide movement that is easily recognisably by birds. Continuous research is taking place to ensure that these products are as affective as possible.

Clearance for stringing
It is imperative that the conductors does not touch the ground during stringing at this will damage the conductors, which is a costly activity. During the operational and maintenance period the area underneath the conductors are kept clear of any vegetation that could damage the conductors, especially during a veld fire.

Bush clearing
If vegetation is low enough, vegetation needs only to be cleared at those areas where the towers are to be constructed. Vegetation should not pose a threat to the operation of the power line, it is sometimes sufficient to clear the tower footing areas and a strip of approximately 8m wide for stringing purposes. It may not necessary to clear the entire servitude width depending on the type of vegetation.

Low risk trees
An example of what is mean by a low risk tree, which will not be removed from the servitude, was shown. These are trees that are low enough not to pose a threat to the operation of the power line.
Archaeological and Historical Sites
Should any sensitive sites, such as archaeological sites, that were not found during the EIA process, be found during construction, construction is to cease until the site has been assessed by a relevant specialist and the authorities have been notified. Mitigation measures will then be implemented and if needed, the line will be re-routed to avoid the sensitive area.

Construction Camps
Should construction workers not be able to be accommodated in a town nearby, construction camps are generally erected to accommodate workers during the construction of a power line. The landowner, the environmental consultant and power line contractor together agree on an appropriate site for the construction camp. Proposed construction camps will be assessed by ecology specialists prior to the establishment of such a construction camp. Preference is given to sites where services such as sanitation are available.

Construction Methodology
Using photographs, typical construction techniques such as on-site construction, the construction of tower foundations, etc were illustrated. It was explained that towers are constructed onsite. Where holes have not been filled with concrete for the anchor ropes, these wholes will be covered with strong steel mesh to ensure the safety of the surrounding communities and animals.

Substation Construction
The outlay, groundwork and construction of a substation were illustrated, and it was mentioned that fire walls are constructed between each transformer to prevent the spreading of fire should one of the transformers catch fire.

7. DISCUSSION SESSION

7.1 General Comments and Issues

7.1.1 Mr Molusi enquired whether the proposed Omega Substation has been approved by the decision-making authority.

Ms Carol Streaton replied that a positive Record of Decision has been issued for the Omega Substation project.

7.1.2 Mr Molusi enquired as to who and what is the IPP referred to in Eskom’s presentation.

Ms Streaton replied that IPP refers to Independent Power Producer which is private individuals/companies and are not related to Eskom.

7.1.3 Mr Molusi asked whether the landowners affected by the proposed new Gamma Substation site have been informed.

Ms Streaton replied that the owners permission had be acquired to conduct the EIA and that an EIA for the new site has been submitted to the Western and the Eastern Cape Provincial Departments, respectively.
7.2 Hydra-Gamma 1 Related Questions

7.2.1 Mr Molusi enquired whether the landowners affected by the Hydra-Gamma1 alignment were informed that the alignment had changed from the western side of the exiting power lines to the eastern side.

Ms Streaton replied that the proposed western route alignment was moved to the eastern side on request of the landowners. The Record of Decision received by DEAT for the Hydra-Gamma 1 project was for the western alignment, and the fact that the landowners prefer the eastern alignment needs to be communicated to DEAT.

8. CLOSURE AND THE WAY FORWARD

Ms Venter informed the delegate that all comments and concerns raised during the workshop had been minuted, and would also be included in the Comments and Response Report that forms part of the draft ESR.

The way forward is:
- Distribution of the draft Minutes of the Workshop, also to those who submitted apologies.
- Availability of the draft Environmental Scoping Report (ESR) for public review and the authorities
- Comments received from the public on the draft ESR will be incorporated into the final ESR, which will be submitted to DEAT for consideration, as well as NCDTEC for comment.
- The public consultation process will continue through the EIA process of the proposed project.

The projected project timeframes are as follows:
- Draft ESR available for public review End November 2006
- Public review period for the draft ESR End November 2006 until Mid January 2007 (45 consecutive calendar days)
- Submission of final ESR to DEAT (and NCDTEC) End January 2007

Ms Venter requested the delegate to please read carefully through the draft minutes to ensure that his comments, concerns and issues raised have been captured correctly as Minutes are considered a legal document. It was also requested that he submit his comments/changes on the draft Minutes in writing to Bohlweki Environmental within the allocated timeframes.

The meeting closes at 12:00.
APPENDIX A
ATTENDANCE RECORD