



Proposed Thyspunt Transmission Lines Integration Project (TTLIP)

DRAFT MINUTES OF A FOCUS GROUP MEETING

MTO

Held on

Wednesday, 07 October 2009

MTO's Office, George

SiVEST Environmental (Pty) Ltd

Name: Nicolene Venter

Address: PO Box 2921
51 Wessels Road
Livonia 2128

Tel: 011 798 0600

Fax: 011 803 7272

E-mail: Thuyspuntlines@sivest.co.za

Website: www.sivest.co.za

Notes for the draft Minutes prepared by:

Nicolene Venter

Please address any comments to Nicolene Venter at the above address.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS	2
2	PURPOSE OF THE MEETING	2
3	PROJECT BACKGROUND	2
4	DISCUSSION AND DECISION SESSION	2

FOCUS GROUP MEETING:

MTO (PTY) LTD

Venue: MTO (Pty) Ltd Offices, George
Date: Wednesday, 07 October 2009
Time: 10h30

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Dave Blair thanked the attendees for attending the Focus Group Meeting and requested that each person introduce themselves and they were:

MTO:

Mr Gerrie van Tonder

Mr Gideon van Lill: Planning Manager

Eskom:

Ms Joyce Mashiteng: Project Manager

Mr Thamsanqa Ngcobo: Transmission Planner

Ms Lerato Mokgwatheng: Senior Environmental Advisor

SiVEST:

Dave Blair: Project Manager

Nicolene Venter: Public Participation

2 PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The purpose of the Focus Group Meeting was to obtain mutual agreement for the proposed three (3) 400kV Transmission (Tx) power lines to follow MTO's firebreaks at Longmore Forest.

3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Dave Blair gave a brief overview regarding the proposed Thyspunt Transmission Lines Integration Project (TTLIP) and the current Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) status.

4 DISCUSSION AND DECISION SESSION

The discussions were opened by referring to the FGM held with MTO on 24 March 2009 and the minutes of that meeting in terms of point 3.5, where it is mentioned that the southern firebreak could be an option. It was also pointed out that Mr Willie Brink did state at the meeting that any routing through Longmore Forest will have to be discussed with MTO's CEO.

4.1. Deon van Lill, MTO:

4.1.1. Informed the project team that MTO wants it to be recorded that they strongly advised that all three (3) proposed 400kV Tx power lines be taken through MTO's northern fire break at Longmore Forest.

There could be some constraints regarding servitude width as required by Eskom, but there is a possibility that this can be accommodated as most of the properties to the north of Longmore Forest are owned by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF). The properties to the north western side of Longmore Forest are owned by Cape Nature Conservation.

4.1.2. That the southern portion of Longmore Forest is their highest growth potential area (Type 4) and Eskom needs to avoid the southern portion, including the fire break to the south, as far as possible.

4.1.3. That fire is a huge risk for MTO and the assumption is that power lines, especially high voltage power lines, are a main contributor towards veld fires especially the flash backs. The outbreak of fires at Longmore Forest occurs from the northern and north-western side of the property.

4.1.4. There are existing claims lodged with Eskom as a result of veld fires caused by faulty power lines in other areas of the country

Joyce Mashiteng replied that MTO's concern regarding veld fires is understandable and Eskom understands their concern in this regard. Eskom does have mitigation measures in place such as fire detection satellites which is an early warning mechanism. It was enquired whether MTO would consider it entering into discussions with Eskom to make use of such a mechanism and possibly MTO can also submit recommendations in this regards.

In response Deon van Lill informed Eskom that MTO will need to know what the relay time is as 40 to 45 minutes relay time is already too long, but Eskom's offer is appreciated and will be forwarded to Management.

Joyce Mashiteng informed MTO that she will obtain technical information regarding the early detection model that Eskom is currently using.

4.1.5. In terms of point 4.1.3 it would therefore be appreciated, and recommended, that the risk potential to MTO be placed in one area and that is the northern fire break. It was further mentioned that MTO might stipulate to Eskom to shut down their power lines in the event of a veld fire.

Thamsanqa Ngcobo informed MTO that the risk to security by placing all three proposed Tx power lines in one corridor is evident especially in dealing with veld fires by switching the lines off. Appreciation was expressed if MTO could share their experience with Eskom regarding veld fires in the area. The technical information and methodology regarding the switching off of probably two lines without interrupting the overall power supply will be sourced and MTO will be advised accordingly.

- 4.1.6. It was stated that Eskom would need to acquire the relevant licenses should the removal of vegetation within the negotiated servitude need to be removed. This requirement will form part of the servitude negotiations.
- 4.1.7. Although all landowners would prefer, as first choice, not to have any power lines traversing their property, MTO has passed that point and is willing to enter into discussions to find the most feasible route for both parties. It needs to be noted that MTO will put forward their conditions and license requirements to protect MTO from the risks that they are aware of.
- 4.2. Thamsanqa Ngcobo enquired to the frequency of uncontrolled fires at Longmore Forest.
- Deon van Lill informed the team that natural uncontrolled fires occur every 5 to 15 years. Human intervention is responsible for substantial veld fires. Due to the low rainfall at Longmore Forest, the trees are much older and their fuel load much higher which contributes to veld fire intensity, when there is a veld fire.
- 4.3. Thamsanqa Ngcobo enquired what, in general, is the duration of a veld fire in the Longmore Forest area.
- Deon van Lill replied that MTO's do block burning over a period of time which could take one week to do, depending on wind conditions and moisture in the air.
- 4.4. Thamsanqa Ngcobo commented that it needs to be highlighted that it would be a risk to run all the proposed power lines only in the Northern Corridor, especially if three (3) of the 5 (five) power lines could be, or need to be, out of service. This poses a great challenge to Eskom's planning team. He recommended that the best way would be to approach Eskom's National Control Unit to obtain an understanding of the impact should three (3) power lines be taken out of service (temporarily).
- Dave Blair pointed out that this point will be raised as a "Red Flag" to Eskom through the EIA process.
- 4.5. In terms of point 4.1.1, Dave Blair responded that towards the end of April 2009, MTO forwarded the shape files to SiVEST indicating the northern and southern firebreaks at Longmore Forest and it was this information that was used to include Longmore Forest's southern fire break as the *southern corridor* of the Northern Corridor.
- It is noted that since the draft Scoping Report was made available for comment, MTO submitted their objection regarding the *southern corridor* of the Northern Corridor.
- 4.6. On request from Gerrie van Tonder that MTO receives SiVEST corridor information on GIS format (shape files), Dave Blair agreed to it. SiVEST's Data User Agreement was signed by Gerrie van Tonder. GIS information will be forwarded to MTO.
- 4.7. Deon van Lill informed the TTLIP project team that the decision makers will be Willie Brink, Willem Jacobs, Dirk Nortjé, Deon Malherbe and Dave Reeves the CEO (Corporate). It was recommended that SiVEST get in contact with Mr Reeves as well.

- 4.8. Nicolene Venter informed the attendees that SiVEST did receive, and acknowledged, the e-mail from Mr Deon Malherbe, objecting to the proposed *southern corridor* of the Northern Corridor going through Longmore Forest.

It was requested that although an e-mail was received regarding the objection, MTO to submit a formal objection on their organisation's letter head, with reasons as to why the proposed *southern corridor* of the Northern Corridor going through Longmore Forest cannot be considered.

- 4.9. Dave Blair said the *southern corridor* of the Northern Corridor going through Longmore Forest is a viable alternative from an environmental viewpoint and has to be assessed accordingly.
- 4.10. Gideon van Lill said should SiVEST need decision taking at the meeting that he and Gerrie van Tonder cannot fulfill that role but they will be able to provide the necessary maps and aerial photos. With the information received at the meeting and with the GIS information that will be provided by SiVEST, they will be able to make suggestions for the proposed 3 x 400kV power lines to traverse Longmore Forest.
- 4.11. Gerrie van Tonder indicated that MTO's northern fire break extends to DWAF's property and also to that of Cape Nature Conservation (CNC), this is in accordance to MTO's latest property ownership information.
- 4.12. Dave Blair confirmed that Ms Karin Kirkman, MTO Consultant (GECKO) has identified red data species that appears within the discussed fire breaks and that MTO or SiVEST (or both) need to discuss a possible routing, by making use of MTO's fire breaks as far as possible, through Longmore Forest.
- 4.13. It was agreed that SiVEST will forward the link to their FTP site where MTO can download their GIS data.
- 4.14. Thamsanqa Ngcobo stated that Eskom will have to engage with MTO on various technical issues.

The meeting was closed at 12h00.