

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

BRAAMHOEK 400KV TRANSMISSION POWER LINE AND SUBSTATION INTEGRATION CONSTRUCTION AND UPGRADE OF ACCESS ROADS

for the Eskom Braamhoek Pumped Storage Scheme

PROCEEDINGS OF PUBLIC OPEN DAYS

Area	Venue	Date	Time
Estcourt	Umtshezi Public Library	29 November 2004	13H00 – 18H00
Ladysmith	Ladysmith Royal Hotel	30 November 2004	13h00 – 18h00
Harrismith District	Hamilberg School	01 December 2004	10h00 – 12h00
Harrismith District	Hlomisa School	01 December 2004	14H00 – 17H00

GENERAL AGENDA

The format of the public open days varied significantly and the study team adapted the format, agenda and presentations to suit the audience.

1. Welcome & introductions Facilitator
2. Purpose of workshop Facilitator
3. EIA process Facilitator
4. Project description – Transmission Integration Stuart Dunsmore, PBAI
 - 4.1 Study area
 - 4.2 Preliminary identification of issues
 - 4.3 Discussion All
5. Project description – Roads Jaana Ball, BCJV
 - 5.1 Study area
 - 5.2 Preliminary identification of issues
 - 5.3 Discussion All
6. Open discussion session All
7. Way forward Facilitator

1. REGISTRATION

The attendance registers are attached as Appendix 3.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Facilitator welcomed all those present and thanked the stakeholders for their participation in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes for the proposed 400 kV Transmission Power Line and Sub-station Integration EIAs and the Construction and Upgrade of Access Roads EIA.

Construction and Upgrade of Access Roads EIA Project Team

Name	Organisation
Deidre Herbst	Eskom: Generation Division
Frans Louwinger	Eskom: Generation Division
Vincent Kanyongolo	Eskom: Generation Division
Jaana-Maria Ball	Braamhoek Consultants Joint Venture
Robert Gibson	Braamhoek Consultants Joint Venture
Dave Montgomery	Braamhoek Consultants Joint Venture

Transmission Power Line and Sub-station Integration EIAs Project Team (present)

Name	Organisation
Carol Streaton	Eskom: Transmission Division
Mamokete Mafumo	Eskom: Transmission Division
Moses Mahlangu	Margen Industrial Services
Stuart Dunsmore	PBA International

Public Participation Team (present)

Name	Organisation
Bongi Shinga	ACER (Africa)
Debbie McKirdy	ACER (Africa)

3. PURPOSE OF PUBLIC OPEN DAYS

The primary objectives of the Public Open Days were to:

- Provide stakeholders with an overview of the proposed developments by Eskom.
- Provide stakeholders with an overview of potential issues and concerns regarding the proposed developments.
- For stakeholders to raise additional issues that should be evaluated to reduce negative and enhance positive impacts.
- Provide an opportunity for stakeholders to comment, ask questions and raise issues to be addressed by Eskom and the EIA Project Teams.

4. EIA PROCESS

The EIA process was outlined briefly, including legal requirements, environmental authorities and the public participation process.

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION: 400 KV TRANSMISSION POWER LINES AND SUB-STATION INTEGRATION EIAs

Mr Stuart Dunsmore (EIA Project Leader, PBA International) presented the description of the proposed 400 kV Transmission Power Lines and Sub-station Integration EIAs. The following sections were covered in his description:

- Study area and proposed corridors.
- Alternatives.
- Preliminary identification of issues.

The summary of the information presented is provided in Appendix 4. The issues raised and discussed following Mr Dunsmore's presentation are summarised in Appendices 1 -3.

6. PROJECT DESCRIPTION: CONSTRUCTION AND UPGRADE OF ACCESS ROADS EIA

Ms Jaana-Maria Ball (EIA Consultant, Braamhoek Consultants Joint Venture) presented the description of the proposed Construction and Upgrade of Access Roads EIA. The following sections were covered in her description:

- Study area.
- Alternatives.
- Preliminary identification of issues.

The summary of the information presented is provided in Appendix 4. The issues raised and discussed following Ms Ball's presentation are summarised in Appendices 1-3.

7. WAY FORWARD

Issues raised during the Public Open Days have been captured in Appendices 1 - 3. These issues are crucial to the EIA process and have been recorded and are to be included in the Draft Scoping Report, which will be distributed for public review. The Draft Scoping Report will indicate how issues raised have been addressed. The Draft Scoping Report will be available at public venues on CD as well as hard copies.

APPENDIX 1

RECORD OF ISSUES RAISED AND DISCUSSED AT THE PUBLIC OPEN DAYS

GENERAL ISSUES

NOTE: *Should you as a participant at the meeting not agree to the way in which ACER has captured your issue, please do not hesitate to provide your requested changes in writing within two weeks of receiving this document.*

Stakeholder	Comment	Response
Mr Hylton Green Green H Ranches cc	How much of South Africa's electricity is exported to other countries?	<i>Deidre Herbst.</i> Approximately 2% of South Africa's demand is exported. South Africa is a net importer of electricity.
Mr Obed Shabangu SANCO	What is the impact of developments on water demand?	<i>Deidre Herbst.</i> For the Pumped Storage Scheme, Eskom will not utilize large quantities of water. The reservoirs will be filled once and only topped up after evaporation. Coal fired power stations use more water compared to the Pumped Storage Schemes. Eskom is a strategic water user and, therefore, gets an allocation from DWAF. It is DWAF's responsibility to ensure that there is enough water for the power stations and the population. <i>Frans Louwinger.</i> There will be a certain amount of water loss through evaporation, which is estimated to be 3 million cubic metres per annum (m ³ pa), which is relatively small.
Mr Obed Shabangu SANCO	Eskom is a 'giant' company and operates in areas where communities are poor. Eskom has a corporate social investment programme. How do you ensure that local people benefit from these developments?	<i>Deidre Herbst.</i> Eskom has programmes for the upliftment of people and policies that take the local people into account. During 2004, approximately 50% of contracts were awarded to BEE Contractors. Eskom has a Development Foundation and when communities are in need, an application is submitted to the Eskom Development Foundation. The foundation decides on how communities can be assisted. Also, the electrification programme is currently on line and 70% of the population now has access to electricity as a result of that process.

Stakeholder	Comment	Response
Mayor Gaba Makhathini Emnambithi/Ladysmith Municipality	We have poor communities around the area who cannot grasp the aspects of business. The issue of poverty needs to be addressed and the key question is 'have the surrounding communities been catered for within the development plan?' Eskom's business plan should reflect this. The poor communities should be represented at public open days and the information presented should be suitably simplified.	<i>Deidre Herbst.</i> Your concerns are noted and will be dealt with in the EIA. <i>Stuart Dunsmore.</i> This round of meetings is the first round in the process of consultation. The team has advertised in newspapers, contacted local representatives, sent out information to key organizations as well as various municipalities. It is unlikely that everybody in the entire study area will be contacted as it is such a large area. We rely on people to identify the issues and other groups of people who should be consulted. Meetings have been arranged with the Traditional Authorities, Farmers Associations, Government Departments, Land Owners, etc. The EIA Teams need to understand the environment to see what the best methods of communication/consultation are.
Mr Obed Shabangu SANCO	It is important to brief people at local authority level. It must not be taken for granted that the local people do not require consultation about proposed local developments. Local people understand the local constituents and politicians are not in a position to decide on local issues, without input from these people.	<i>Bongi Shinga.</i> We plan to consult with key representatives from all the pertinent local municipalities. This is another opportunity for consultation and participation.
Mr Enoch Mazibuko Emnambithi/Ladysmith Local Municipality	In terms of job creation, does Eskom only focus on the study area, or are other areas considered too? What will local benefits include?	<i>Stuart Dunsmore.</i> Eskom needs to consider the type of work being done in the construction process. For example, bush clearing may be an opportunity for local contractors. The service provided by contractors is the most important criteria. During construction, there will be spin-off benefits for the local community, including retail, catering, equipment and supplies.
Mr Obed Shabangu SANCO	What are impacts on the virgin land within the study area? This must be addressed in the EIA in association with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.	<i>Stuart Dunsmore.</i> The EIAs will consider land-use, the relevant Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and the consultation process. Through these, sensitive issues and areas will be identified for further investigation/assessment. An Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife representative was present at the Key Stakeholder Workshop.
Stakeholder*	Locally indigenous names need to be respected in projects like these. Braamhoek is not a suitable name and it is better to consider the name from the start to save money in the long-term.	<i>Deidre Herbst.</i> Comment noted. The Pumped Storage Scheme will take on a more indigenous name.
Mr Obed Shabangu SANCO	On 27 January 2005, there will be a DEAT and DWAF workshop in Ladysmith. Please take note of this meeting for a future consultation opportunity.	Comment noted with thanks.

Stakeholder	Comment	Response
Mr Nkosinathi Ndaba Emnambithi/Ladysmith Local Municipality	Will this be the final public meeting in the consultation exercise? Where can we get further information and can we meet again to hear about the study?	<i>Stuart Dunsmore</i> EIA processes usually schedule one round of public meetings during the scoping phase. Proceedings of the meetings will be distributed for comment, and the Draft Scoping Report will also be made available for comment. Further individual meetings have been set up with Municipalities, Farmers Associations, etc. Also, please contact the public participation office for further information.
Mr Obed Shabangu SANCO	It would not be beneficial to have a second public meeting with people who did not attend the first. If a second meeting is held, it should involve attendees from these meetings.	Comments noted with thanks.
Mr Sabelo Mazibuko Emnambithi/Ladysmith Local Municipality	What message does Eskom have for students of Maths and Physics?	<i>Deidre Herbst</i> Maths and Physics are the subjects of the future. There is a need for skilled people in South Africa and Science qualifications are very important.
Mr Jeremy Mokoena Department of Education	Will Eskom assist local schools in any way?	<i>Deidre Herbst</i> When Eskom works in areas such as this, schools are considered and Eskom tries to improve conditions and provide assistance. This is already in process and Eskom will contact the Department of Education for further advice.
Mr Alson Mavimbela	Please could Eskom provide telephones?	<i>Deidre Herbst</i> . Unfortunately, this is not Eskom's business line and you would have to liaise with Telkom in this regard. Perhaps once the reservoirs are built, Telkom will have to bring telephone lines into the area, which will provide the opportunity for telephones.
Mr Moloji Hamilberg School Principal	Thank you to Eskom and the team for the presentations today. The proposed additional infrastructure will assist with poverty relief.	Comments noted with thanks.

* In some instances the name and organisation were not provided by the speaker and thus, not captured in these proceedings. Should you as participant recognise your input, it would be greatly appreciated if you could provide ACER with your details.

APPENDIX 2

RECORD OF ISSUES RAISED AND DISCUSSED AT THE PUBLIC OPEN DAYS

ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE 400 kV TRANSMISSION POWER LINES

NOTE: *Should you as a participant at the meeting not agree to the way in which ACER has captured your issue, please do not hesitate to provide your requested changes in writing within two weeks of receiving this document.*

Stakeholder	Comment	Response
Ms Cebisile Chonco Community Environmental Workers (CEW) Trust	Can transmission power lines avoid going over homesteads/houses? What is the recommended distance between houses and the transmission power lines?	<i>Stuart Dunsmore.</i> The recommended distance is 27.5 metres from the centre point to the edge of the servitude. There are international concerns regarding electromagnetic fields that could affect the health of humans and animals. For safety purposes, Eskom has calculated that the effect of this field would be almost non-existent outside of the servitude. Thus, houses must be relocated outside this area. There is no conclusive evidence that this electro-magnetic field is harmful, however, Eskom adopts a precautionary principle.
Mr Sabelo Mazibuko Emnambithi/Ladysmith Local Municipality	I suggest that you list potentially affected areas along the transmission power line route, including the towns, so that people can clearly understand if they will be affected by the development.	<i>Bongi Shinga.</i> A provisional list has been drawn up and we have maps showing the study area. However, a comprehensive list would help at future meetings for clarity.
Mr Nkosinathi Ndaba Emnambithi/Ladysmith Local Municipality	How will you ensure that all communities will be consulted on a one-to-one basis? We cannot rely on organizations such as Farmers Associations to pass on the message to local communities. Why is the project named after Braamhoek farm?	<i>Bongi Shinga.</i> There are many opportunities for people to participate in the process and we make a point of contacting a wide variety of stakeholders and representatives. It is difficult to invite each and every person in the community to public meetings. The approach that we are using include dealing with representatives of various constituencies, e.g. local municipalities, Traditional Authorities, Farmers Associations, Conservation Bodies, etc. acknowledging the fact that they have a mandate to represent their sector's perspective as well as feedback to their constituencies. We do not only take information from one sector.

Stakeholder	Comment	Response
		<p><i>Stuart Dunsmore.</i> These public open days are about making initial contact with I&APs. Then, if necessary, we will set up individual meetings. There are very few people in favor of power lines, let alone farmers. Whoever has transmission lines across their property will not be happy. We need to see that their concerns are properly justified. We need to identify environmental issues. We send all issues to Eskom for their consideration and evaluation. We cannot only listen to one group of people.</p> <p><i>Deidre Herbst.</i> All issues identified will be captured into a report that is submitted to the government.</p> <p>Braamhoek is a spruit and Bramhoek is the farm. However, the project will be renamed to something more appropriate.</p>

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APPENDIX 3

RECORD OF ISSUES RAISED AND DISCUSSED AT THE PUBLIC OPEN DAYS

ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE CONSTRUCTION AND UPGRADE OF ACCESS ROADS

NOTE: Should you as a participant at the meeting not agree to the way in which ACER has captured your issue, please do not hesitate to provide your requested changes in writing within two weeks of receiving this document.

Stakeholder	Comment	Response
Mayor Gaba Makhathini Emnambithi/Ladysmith Local Municipality	The construction and upgrade of roads project is only necessary because of the construction of a transmission power line and power station.	<i>Jaana Ball.</i> The primary reason for the construction and upgrade of roads, is the operation of the Eskom Pumped Storage Scheme. <i>Frans Louwinger.</i> The main purpose of the roads is to service the Pumped Storage Scheme and for access between the upper and lower reservoirs. One of the alternative roads identified will be constructed for Eskom and public use (funded by Eskom). There are some communities that will benefit from the upgraded/new roads.
Mr Andrew Moeti Department of Transport	The P275 is currently not in good condition and the tarred section is approximately 5 km long. Will the road be widened and upgraded?	<i>Dave Montgomery.</i> The road is in reasonably good condition and our recommendation would be to upgrade it. This is what is proposed in the alternatives identified.
Mr Obed Shabangu SANCO	What SMME opportunities exist, specifically manual labour contracts?	<i>Dave Montgomery.</i> It is government policy to use manual labour and SMMEs. I estimate that approximately 5 000 man months of work will be created during construction, which means that labour will be employed for 18 months.
Mr Nkosinathi Ndaba Emnambithi/Ladysmith Local Municipality	How will you ensure that all communities will be consulted on a one-to-one basis? We cannot rely on organizations such as Farmers Associations to pass on the message to local communities. Why is the project named after Braamhoek farm?	<i>Bongi Shinga.</i> There are many opportunities for people to participate in the process and we make a point of contacting a wide variety of stakeholders and representatives. It is difficult to invite each and every person in the community to public meetings. The approach that we are using include dealings with representatives of various constituencies, e.g. local municipalities, Traditional Authorities, Farmers Associations, Conservation Bodies, etc acknowledging the fact that they are have a mandate to represent their sector's perspective as well as feedback to their constituencies. We do not only take information from one sector.

Stakeholder	Comment	Response
		<p><i>Deidre Herbst.</i> All issues identified will be captured into a report that is submitted to the government.</p> <p><i>Jaana Ball.</i> No individual group will be given power or preference over another.</p> <p><i>Vincent Kanyongolo.</i> The EIA Consultants will provide you with proceedings of these meetings, so please go through the document and make sure that your issues are captured correctly so that the government can assess them properly.</p> <p>Braamhoek is a spruit and Bramhoek is the farm. However, the project will be renamed to something more appropriate.</p>
Mr Andrew Moeti Department of Transport	Are all alternatives identified possible to construct?	<p><i>Jaana Ball.</i> Yes. The gradients, bends, turns, alignments, safety, etc. have all been taken into account when identifying alternatives.</p> <p><i>Dave Montgomery.</i> It must be noted that the roads will not be high speed roads, therefore, roads are being designed for 60-80 km per hour.</p>
Mr Lucky Thabethe Department of Transport	Who will be responsible for the maintenance of the roads?	<i>Dave Montgomery.</i> The road maintenance will be the responsibility of the provincial Department of Transport. Discussions have been held with relevant departments.
Mr Obed Shabangu SANCO	It is important that all affected people along the road routes are consulted. They must be visited on a one-to-one basis so that all communities on the ground are engaged and capacity is built.	<i>Jaana Ball.</i> Once the preferred alternative is selected, more intense consultation will be conducted. However, we do try to identify as many affected people as possible at this early stage.
Mr Moses Dlamini Hamilberg	What will you do if the road traverses a grave?	<i>Jaana Ball.</i> The EIA team has appointed specialists to conduct studies so as to try and avoid such instances. Also, we will rely on information provided by I&APS to indicate where existing graves are, so we can inform the specialists.
A Stakeholder*	What is the deciding factor for environmental authorization in the EIA process, specifically regarding specialist studies?	<i>Jaana Ball.</i> All aspects should be considered during the EIA and nothing has higher weighting than the other. Distance, time, social, visual, biophysical, etc. are all issues that will be investigated and considered.
A Stakeholder*	What influence do we, as a community, have as to which option is chosen? Can we vote for the best option?	<i>Jaana Ball.</i> You need to tell us which option you like and why. You need to substantiate your issues too. It is not a vote as such, but your opinion will be evaluated and considered.
A Stakeholder* *	I am concerned that you will put in a toll road.	<i>Jaana Ball.</i> Definitely not. Eskom will build the road, but the road will belong to the provincial Department of Transport.

Stakeholder	Comment	Response
Mr Jan Du Plessis Farmer	Has Eskom conducted an impact study on the cost of road alternatives? The fourth alternative is the best, and the road along the escarpment is not a good alternative.	<i>Jaana Ball.</i> The costing forms part of the EIA and is currently being done.
A Stakeholder*	What type of vehicles will use the roads after construction? What about tourism potential? Why have you not considered other alternatives?	<i>Frans Louwinger.</i> During construction, heavy machinery will use the roads. During operation, 3 ton trucks will use the roads. There will be a minimum amount of traffic during operation. The construction period will be approximately 5.5 years. The roads will be for public use, thus, boosting tourism potential in the area. Other alternatives were considered, however, these are the best four options, for various reasons.
A Stakeholder*	A road from Swinburn will benefit the entire community (i.e. alternative 4). What about a cableway between dams?	<i>Frans Louwinger.</i> This is not an option under consideration as it would be too expensive and not very practical with moving big machinery and trucks.
A Stakeholder*	When construction commences, what chance do the local community have in seeking employment? Most contractors bring their own labourers into the area.	<i>Frans Louwinger.</i> There will be various contracts and various contractors. Approximately 20% of people will comprise core staff or highly skilled people. Approximately 80% will comprise labour that will be recruited from the local community. The contractor will be contracted (in documents) to recruit local people for local benefits.
Mr Jan du Plessis Farmer	The majority of the community works for the farmers. Eskom will, thus, be employing our labourers.	<i>Deidre Herbst.</i> Eskom cannot prevent community members from seeking alternative employment. Legally, Eskom cannot turn people away. We do acknowledge that it is an issue for further attention.
A Stakeholder*	There is a potential for loss of residence for farm labourers, should they decide to apply for jobs with Eskom. What will Eskom do to prevent this situation?	<i>Frans Louwinger.</i> Local people must sort out their own accommodation needs. Eskom acknowledges that these are potential issues and will need to be considered. <i>Deidre Herbst.</i> Eskom will consult the Department of Labour and provide an official response in the Issues Report. We are not in a position to provide an official response at this point.
Mr Phillip Dlamini Local resident	Many people are unemployed and when contractors come from other areas, locals are not provided with opportunities.	<i>Frans Louwinger.</i> There will be various contracts and various contractors. The contractor will be contracted (in documents) to recruit local people for local benefits.
Mr Moloi Hamilberg School Principal	Many unemployed people have no skills. Can Eskom provide opportunities with training and teaching, so that when construction commences, they are in a position to apply for jobs?	<i>Deidre Herbst.</i> I will pass on this request to Eskom to be confirmed. Eskom does encourage skills development.

Stakeholder	Comment	Response
A stakeholder*	This project will have negative impacts on our environment during construction, e.g. pollution, construction camps, litter, informal settlements, increase in crime, etc.	<p><i>Jaana Ball.</i> The environmental team deals with these issues during the EIA process. Environmental Management Plans (a requirement of the Record of Decision) will be compiled and an Environmental Control Officer will ensure that the environment is protected as far as possible. Potential sites for construction camps have been identified, which will be located in areas that are not so sensitive.</p> <p><i>Deidre Herbst.</i> There are many negative social issues related to construction camps. Eskom attempts to regulate contractors to reduce negative social issues. The landowners must assist Eskom in preventing informal settlements on their land.</p> <p><i>Vincent Kanyongolo.</i> There are regulations in the EMP that the contractor will need to adhere to.</p>
Mr ZS Dlamini	It would be appreciated if the roads are upgraded because it will benefit the community in many ways.	<i>Jaana Ball.</i> It is important to note that construction will only commence in 2007.
A Stakeholder* Hamilberg School	Eskom does not own all this land. How do you propose to build on the land? Can we get more information about the servitudes and compensation process?	<i>Frans Louwinger.</i> Eskom will register servitudes.
A Stakeholder*	Will there be compensation for land?	<i>Frans Louwinger.</i> Yes. The land will be valued and the amount will be negotiated with the landowner.
A Stakeholder* Hamilberg School	Alternative 3 and 4 are preferred as they involve the upgrading of the Skeurklip Road. The road from Besters and the Skeurklip Road are the two used by the majority of people in the area, and so should be upgraded.	Comments noted with thanks.
A Stakeholder* Hlomisa School	Will Eskom only construct roads for the reservoirs? What about roads in this area? How will this project provide jobs?	<i>Jaana Ball.</i> The roads will be constructed specifically for access to the reservoirs. There are options that involve roads near this community. The EIA process includes the assessment of alternatives, taking all issues into consideration. Unfortunately, Eskom is not in the road building business; that is Provincial Government's responsibility. Eskom cannot please everyone, as many people have different requirements. The project will provide extra work and 80% of labourers will be sourced locally.
A Stakeholder*	Would there be an opportunity to provide electricity to the Park East Area?	<i>Deidre Herbst.</i> I will have to find out.

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APPENDIX 4

INFORMATION PRESENTED AT THE PUBLIC OPEN DAYS

APPENDIX 5

ATTENDANCE REGISTERS