

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED NEW COAL-FIRED POWER STATION IN THE LEPHALALE AREA, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY MEETING  
HELD AT MANAMELA PARK (DITHAYERENG) IN MARAPONG  
EXT. 3 LEPHALALE ON THE 28 MARCH 2006 AT 18H00**

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**1. OPENING**

The meeting opened with a prayer.

**2. WELCOME**

Rev. Kodibona welcomed everybody to the meeting. He informed the meeting about the rules of the meeting:

- Raise a hand if there is a question,
- Give one another a chance for questions or comments,
- No talking or disturbing during the meeting.

Rev. Kodibona advised the meeting that the purpose of the meeting was to inform the community about the progress already made with the proposed project (i.e. the proposed construction of a new coal-fired power station in the Lephalale area.

He informed the community that they should complete the attendance register, which had been circulated and handed over to Mr. Magangane from Bohlweki Environmental (Pty) Ltd. to address the meeting.

Mr. Magangane requested that the project team should introduce themselves as requested by the attendants. The following team was present: Mr. Tony Stott (Stakeholder Manager) from Eskom, Mr. William Laenen (Project Leader) from Eskom, Mrs. Deidre Herbst (Generation Environmental Manager) from Eskom, Ms. Thuli Methula (Communication Officer) from Matimba Power Station, Mrs. Ashlea Strong (Environmental Scientist) from Bohlweki Environmental, and Mrs. Ingrid Snyman (Public Participation Consultant) from Bohlweki Environmental.

**3. PRESENTATION**

With reference to the previous meeting that was held on the 27 June 2005 at the same venue, Mr. Magangane discussed the following points:

- The need for the project
- Brief overview of the project which includes
  - Power station alternatives
  - Location alternatives
  - Road and conveyor belt alternatives
  - Technology alternatives
- Overview of the EIA process which includes the following
  - The Scoping Phase
  - The EIA Phase
- Public Participation Process
- Finding of the specialist studies which include the following:
  - Overall benefits
  - Water resources
  - Fauna and flora
  - Air quality
  - Emission control technologies
  - Visual
  - Tourism
  - Heritage sites
  - Geology, Soils and Agricultural Potential
  - Social
- Overall Conclusion

The findings of the specialist studies undertaken within this EIA provide an assessment of both the benefits and potential negative impacts anticipated as a result of the proposed project. The findings conclude that there are no environmental fatal flaws that should prevent the proposed project from proceeding, provided that the recommended mitigation and management measures are implemented.
- Overall Recommendation

In order to achieve appropriate environmental management standards and ensure that the findings of the environmental studies are implemented through practical measures, the recommendations from the EIA must be included within an Environmental Management Plan (EMP). This EMP should form part of the contract with the contractors appointed to construct and maintain the proposed

power station and ancillary infrastructure. The EMP would be used to ensure compliance with environmental specifications and management measures. The implementation of this EMP for all life cycle phases (i.e. construction, operation and de-commissioning) of the proposed project is considered to be key in achieving the appropriate environmental management standards as detailed for this project.

It is also recommended that the process of communication and consultation with the community representatives is maintained after the closure of this EIA process, and, in particular, during the construction phase associated with the proposed project.

The issues raised regarding air quality and water use and potential pollution should be considered by DWAF and DEAT in the respective application for licenses.

➤ **Way Forward**

The meeting was informed that the draft Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIR) were available at the following locations for review:

- Lephalale Municipal offices (Corner of Joe Slovo and Douwater Streets)
- Lephalale Library (Corner of Joe Slovo and Douwater Streets)
- Eskom Matimba Power Station
- Co-op Lephalale (Offices of Lephalale District Agricultural Union - Botha Avenue)
- Marapong Clinic (Tlou Street, Marapong)
- Offices of Bohlweki Environmental (Kyalami Office Park, Kyalami)
- [www.bohlweki.co.za](http://www.bohlweki.co.za)

The community was encouraged to review these reports and provide their comments to Bohlweki Environmental by 28 April 2006. Once all I&AP comments were received the draft EIR will be updated to include all the comments and the Final EIR will be submitted to the authorities for decision making.

**4. DISCUSSION SESSION:**

Questions and comments were taken and addressed three at a time to facilitate the smooth running of the meeting:

- Will Eskom provide the local people with training of required skills before the construction of the proposed power station?

- My request is that Eskom should send our people for skills development and training in preparation for the project whilst the Environmental Studies are being carried out so that when construction time comes, they will be prepared for the jobs.
- My request is that the people from Marapong and Reboni should receive first preference. Most projects that have taken place in this area have never allowed an opportunity to our children because they are told that they do not have experience. Opportunities are given to outsiders, we therefore plead that our children be given hands-on training so as to be considered useable during the project implementation.

It is noted that the people to be hired should have the correct knowledge/skills to perform the jobs required. Eskom policy states that the contractors are required to appoint as many local people as possible. Eskom also have mechanisms whereby training could be provided. Once a contract is signed, it is binding and the people taking these contracts fulfill the necessary requirements. Eskom is aware that there would be additional funds required for this purpose and this money has been approved. Contractors will be requested to produce their plans that will show the number of people to be trained and those to be employed.

- Previously, Eskom estimated that 3000 to 4000 people would be employed during the construction phase. We request that Eskom should give us the exact number of people that it will hire during the construction phase, i.e. skilled and unskilled.

To answer this question, we are still not sure about the exact numbers, but at the beginning of the construction phase, the numbers will be low and will gradually increase to the maximum of about 8000 and again decrease towards the end of this phase. People should remember that this number includes unskilled people to highly skilled people. The 8000 will not all be people from this area only. Local people will form a part of this 8000.

- Previously it was mentioned that Eskom would start off by constructing 3 units during its first phase of construction. I want to make sure if that statement still stands, and will the other units be constructed as proposed?

At the moment, the approved plans are for the 3 units, but Eskom is still busy conducting studies whether they still need more power stations. Eskom knows that it will be easier to build the three remaining units at the new proposed power station, than to go to a new area to construct another new power station. Eskom management will have to decide if the 3 units remaining will be built in this area

or in another area but the chances are very good to have 6 units in this area because the country is growing so fast and we will need units everywhere.

- I would like to know how long would it take before the construction takes place. The previous letters that we received estimated the time as July 2006. Is it possible that this time can be met?

Firstly, we need to wait for the government's decision on whether or not the project will be allowed to proceed. The comments that I&APs submit and the EIA report will first need to be reviewed by the National DEAT to inform their decision. We expect everything the record of decision by the end of June. Then there will be a 30-day appeal period during which I&APs can contest the record of decision. If there are no appeals, the project would start in August beginning with the ground preparation work. Construction would then start early next year.

- Concerning the training, as noticed in other projects, people from outside Marapong would be trained in the area without involving local people. How possible can it be that contractors send their trainers to Marapong to offer training to the youth of the area and it should not be heard by rumours that there is training going on in the area without involving the local people?

Concerning the training and training of trainers to start before construction, We cannot promise that it will happen here, but the request is noted and will be taken back to Eskom to see if this would be possible.

- Who will monitor that the contractors are providing employment to the local people?

Eskom will be responsible for this monitoring. Eskom is also responsible to the government to make sure that these targets are met.

- My concern is that we have no people who are experienced in this area. If this will be considered, where will our people get this experience if no training will be provided?
- In addition to the above question, we have children who have matriculated but cannot continue with their studies due to financial demands. Can Eskom provide for such people by means of bursaries or any form for the improvement of their qualifications? We have an education academy in this area but only outsiders are using it. It would be appreciated if our people could get financial assistance from this project to be able to improve themselves possibly by obtaining the N4 grade.

- In our environment, we do have talented people who end up being useless due to the lack of help needed to improve these skills/talents. I hope that if such projects can provide assistance to them, we can be in a position to uplift ourselves.

Eskom does provide bursaries to people to improve their qualifications. This is one possibility, the other is the Eskom Development Foundation that goes into communities to see what they need and how can they be helped. These possibilities will be taken to Eskom and Eskom can see what can be done.

- Since that the Power Stations has emissions. Will these emissions be harmful to the people if considered in addition to the existing Power Station emissions.

A specialist has been appointed to address this issue. Eskom also undertake monitoring of emissions from the existing Matimba Power Station to see how and where the emissions settle to the ground. What has been found with this Power Station, is that the emissions do not come to the people of Marapong, instead they blow in the opposite direction and these emissions are of a low level which will not harm people. With the added station, it is noted that there will be an increase in emissions, but the emissions will still not blow in the direction of Marapong or the Lephalale area.

- I believe the Education System will be changing as from next year. Will Eskom follow the modern trend to be introduced or will Eskom continue with its current methods of teaching?

If education system changes, Eskom will comply with what the government has implemented and requires.

- As registered attendants to this meeting, I would like to know if there is anything we can do to help, rather than to wait for the decision that will come from the authorities on this project?

Firstly, as registered parties, you can comment on the draft EIA Report that is currently out for review. The database will also be updated and all the people on the database will be kept informed about the project as it proceeds. Should anybody need information about any issues relating to this project, we can be contacted at our offices. Our contact details are found in the letters sent out to most of the community.

## **5. Closure**

Mr Magangane thanked the community for attending the meeting and thanked Rev. Kodibona for all his help in arranging the meeting.

The meeting closed with a prayer at 19h45.