

### **3. SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS**

#### **3.1. Approach to Undertaking the Scoping Study**

The screening process undertaken thus far has produced feasible sites that can be used for locating the CCGT plant. Associated with these sites are environmental issues that were identified and needed consideration in the process. This scoping process is part of the EIA process, and seeks to identify positive and negative environmental (biophysical, social and economic) impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed CCGT plant and associated infrastructure, for further investigation in the EIA phase.

This chapter discusses the process to be followed to fulfil the requirements of the Scoping phase of the project.

#### **3.2. Authority Consultation**

##### **3.2.1. Consultation with Decision-making Authorities**

The relevant authorities required to review the proposed project and provide Environmental Authorisation were consulted from the outset of this study, and have been engaged throughout the project process. These supervisory authorities include the National Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), who are the lead decision making authority for this project, and the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture and Land Administration (MDALA) who will act as commenting authority.

##### **3.2.2. Consultation with other Relevant Authorities**

Consultation with non-DEAT authorities will be undertaken through telephone calls, written correspondence and meetings in order to actively engage these authorities and provide background information to the proposed project during the Environmental Scoping Phase. The representatives from these Departments were requested to formally provide input into the EIA process. The other Authorities to be consulted include *inter alia*:

- Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF);
- Pixley ka Seme Local Municipality;
- Gert Sibande District Municipality;
- South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA);
- South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL);
- National Department of Minerals and Energy (DME);
- Department of Transport; and
- Department of Health

### **3.3. Application for Authorisation**

An application for authorisation in terms of the Environmental Management Act (No 107 of 1998) in respect of the activities identified in terms of Section 24 and 24D of the said Act was submitted to DEAT on 25 October 2007. This application included information regarding the proponent, as well as the proposed project and was submitted together with a declaration of independence from the environmental consultants. See Appendix B for the acceptance of application letter from DEAT.

### **3.4. Environmental Scoping Study**

The ESS aims to provide a description of how the environment may be affected by the development of the proposed project. Desktop studies making use of existing information, and ground-truthing through site visits, were used to highlight and assist in the identification of potential impacts (biophysical, social and economic) associated with the proposed project.

Additional issues for consideration have been extracted from feedback from the public participation process, which commenced at the beginning of the Scoping phase, and will continue throughout the duration of the project. All issues identified during this phase of the study have been documented within this issues-based Environmental Scoping Report. Thus, this Environmental Scoping Report provides a record of all issues identified, and a preliminary evaluation of the significance of the issues in order to make recommendations regarding the project and further studies required to be undertaken within the EIA phase of the proposed project.

The Scoping Study aims to address the following:

- description of the sites selected for the proposed CCGT power plant and associated infrastructure;
- identification of potential positive and negative environmental (biophysical, social and economic) impacts, and an evaluation of their significance in terms of the project;
- optimisation of positive impacts to the benefit of the local environment and community; and
- Undertaking of a fully inclusive public participation process to ensure that Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) issues and concerns are recorded and form part of the scoping process.

The Scoping Study will identify potential technological, layout and mitigation alternatives to be evaluated and investigated during the EIA phase of the project. Issues related to terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity (fauna and flora), hydrogeology (groundwater); hydrology (surface water), soils and agricultural potential, existing infrastructure, socio-economic including social issues, air quality; noise; heritage sites, risk; traffic and visual impacts have been investigated in this ESS. Issues that are considered to be of significance will be nominated for further investigation and assessment within the EIA phase of the project.

### 3.4.1. Specialist Studies

**Table 3.1 Specialist studies undertaken as part of the previous Scoping process**

Specialist Study	Organisation
Hydrogeology and Hydrology	SRK Consulting
Fauna and Flora	Bathusi Environmental Consulting
Air Quality	Bohlweki Environmental
Noise	Jongens Keet Associates
Social Environment	MasterQ Research
Heritage	National Cultural History Museum
Visual aspects and aesthetics	MetroGIS
Risk	Riscom
Traffic	SSI Engineers and Environmental Consultants

### 3.5. Overview of the Public Participation Process

The primary aims of the public participation process are:

- To inform interested and affected parties (I&APs) and key stakeholders of the proposed development.
- To initiate meaningful and timeous participation of I&APs.
- The identification of issues and concerns of key stakeholders and I&APs with regards to the proposed development (i.e. focus on important issues).
- The promotion of transparency and an understanding of the proposed project and its potential environmental (biophysical, social and economic) impacts (both positive and negative).
- To provide information used for decision-making.
- To provide a structure for liaison and communication with I&APs and key stakeholders.
- To ensure inclusivity (the needs, interests and values of I&APs must be considered in the decision-making process).
- To focus on issues relevant to the project, and issues considered important by I&APs and key stakeholders.
- To provide responses to I&AP queries.
- To encourage shared responsibility and a sense of ownership.

#### 3.5.1. Advertising

In terms of the EIA Regulations, the commencement of the EIA process for the project was advertised in a national newspaper, namely the *City Press*. On 03 February 2008 (refer to Appendix C) as well as in a local newspaper, namely the *Recorder* on 01 February 2008. Interested and affected parties were requested to register their interest in the project, and become involved in the EIA process. The primary aim of these advertisements was to ensure that the widest group of I&APs possible was informed of the project.

In addition to advertisements, site notices were also placed at the following public places advertising the EIA process for the proposed project (see Appendix C for proof of placement of site notices):

- Offices of the Pixley ka Seme Municipality
- Security check in office at the Majuba Power Station
- UCG Pilot Plant
- Entrance to the Old Mine (Bergvliet Colliery)
- Offices of the Amersfoort Municipality

### **3.5.2. Identification of Key Stakeholders and Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs)**

The first step in the public participation process entailed the identification of key stakeholders and I&APs, including:

- National government and Provincial government;
- Local (Pixley ka Seme Local Municipality) and District Municipality (Gert Sibande District Municipality);
- Affected and neighbouring landowners;
- Farmers Associations; and
- Environmental NGOs.

The existing I&AP database provided by Eskom was utilised as a starting point. The identification of additional I&APs was undertaken through existing contacts, responses to newspaper advertisements, networking and a proactive process to identify key I&APs within the nominated study area.

All I&AP information (including contact details), together with dates and details of consultations and a record of all issues raised is recorded within a comprehensive database of I&APs. This database is updated on an on-going basis throughout the project process (refer to Appendix D).

Consultations, in the form of telephone calls and letters have been undertaken with individuals, businesses, institutions and organisations, including the following:

- Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF);
- South African Heritage Resource Association (SAHRA);
- Pixley ka Seme Local Municipality;
- Gert Sibande District Municipality;
- Neighbouring property owners/landowners;
- Local residents/Residents Associations/Community Organisations from the surrounding area;
- Local businesses surrounding the area;
- Environmental interest groups and Environmental NGOs; and

- Other parties interested in the proposed project including those from a business point of view.

Examples of letters sent to I&APs and key stakeholders are included in Appendix E.

### **3.5.3. Briefing Paper**

A briefing paper for the project has been compiled in English (refer to Appendix E). A summary of the proposed project has also been compiled in Afrikaans and Zulu. The aim of this document is to provide a brief outline of the new proposed project, provide preliminary details regarding the Scoping and EIA process, and explaining how I&APs could become involved in the project. The briefing paper has been distributed to all identified stakeholders together with a registration/comment sheet, inviting I&APs to submit details of any issues and concerns. Completed comments forms submitted to the consultants will be included within the Final Environmental Scoping Report.

### **3.5.4. Consultation and Public Involvement**

Through consultations, issues for inclusion within the EIA will be identified and confirmed. Telephonic consultation, a public meeting/open day, key stakeholder workshop as well as focus group meetings with I&APs and key stakeholders will be undertaken in order to identify additional key issues, needs and priorities for input into the EIA for the proposed project. Minutes of meetings with stakeholders and I&APs will be prepared and forwarded to the attendees for verification of issues raised and acceptance. Copies of the minutes for all formal public involvement meetings held during the process will be included in the Final Environmental Scoping Report.

Networking with I&APs will continue throughout the duration of the project until the completion of the EIA phase. This process will be undertaken through Open Day and Public Meeting, KSW, FGM and one-on-one meetings.

- **Open Day and Public Meeting:**

An Open Day and public meeting will be held during the review period of the draft Environmental Scoping Report in order to inform I&APs of the proposed project. The primary aim of this meeting will be to:

- \* provide I&APs and stakeholders with information regarding the proposed CCGT and associated infrastructure;
- \* provide I&APs and stakeholders with information regarding the EIA process;
- \* provide an opportunity for I&APs and stakeholders to seek clarity on the project;
- \* record issues and concerns raised; and
- \* provide a forum for interaction with the project team.

In accordance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations, this meeting will be advertised at least 14 days prior to the event within the *City Press* and *Recorder* newspapers (refer to Appendix F). Registered I&APs and stakeholders will also be invited to attend the public meeting by letter. Copies of the minutes compiled will be included in the Final Environmental Scoping Report.

- **Key Stakeholder Workshop:**

A key stakeholder workshop will be held with I&APs who are identified as key stakeholders with regards to the project. The purpose of this meeting will be to allow key stakeholders with specific issues to air their views and to facilitate interaction between the key stakeholder and the project team. The meeting will allow for smaller groups of I&APs and/or representatives of larger interest groups or organisations to play an active role in the process and provided an opportunity for dialogue and consultation with these parties.

Formal minutes will be compiled for the meeting and will be included within the Final Environmental Scoping Report.

- **Focus Group Meetings:**

Focus group meetings with identified key stakeholders in the study area will be held during the EIA phase of the project. These meetings will be held with groups that have similar interests, such as environmental NGOs, local authorities, landowner's associations, etc. The main aims of these meetings will be to provide stakeholders with information regarding the proposed project and provide them with the opportunity to raise any comments, issues or concerns regarding the proposed project. Identified key stakeholders will be invited in writing to attend these focus group meetings.

The following focus group meeting has taken place:

- \* Meeting with the Pixley ka Seme Local Municipality, Volksrust– 08<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

Minutes of the Focus group meeting is included in Appendix G.

### **3.5.5. Social Issues Trail**

All issues, comments and concerns raised during the public participation process of the EIA process will be compiled into a Social Issues Trail. The Social Issues Trail compiled to date is included in Appendix D. The Social Issues Trail will be updated on an on-going basis.

### **3.6. Review of the Draft Environmental Scoping Report and Plan of Study for EIA**

#### **3.6.1. Public Review of Draft Scoping Report and Plan of Study for EIA**

The draft Environmental Scoping Report and Plan of Study (PoS) for EIA has been made available for public review for a 30-day review period from **04 March 2008**. Hard copies of the report will also be made available for inspection at the following public places:

- Volksrust Public Library
- Daggakraal Library
- Amersfoort Library
- Offices of the Pixley ka Seme Local Municipality
- Offices of the Gert Sibande District Municipality
- Offices of Bohlweki Environment (Building 5, Country Club Estate, Woodmead)
- Bohlweki Environmental website ([www.bohlweki.co.za](http://www.bohlweki.co.za))
- Eskom website ([www.eskom.co.za/eia](http://www.eskom.co.za/eia))

The availability of this draft report was advertised in the *Recorder* (29 February 2008) and *City Press* (02 March 2008) (refer to Appendix F) together with the notification of the public meeting. I&APs registered on the project database were notified of the availability of this report by letter (refer to Appendix F).

All issues and comments received during the review period will be recorded in the Social Issues Trail and included in the Final Environmental Scoping Report.

#### **3.6.2. Authority Review of Draft Environmental Scoping Report**

The draft Environmental Scoping Report has been made available to the public, DEAT; MDALA; Pixley ka Seme Local Municipality; Gert Sibande District Municipality as well as the Mpumalanga SAHRA simultaneously for review and comment.

### **3.7. Final Environmental Scoping Report**

The submission of the final Environmental Scoping Report will be the final stage of the Environmental Scoping Phase for the proposed project. The Final Scoping Report will be submitted to DEAT and MDALA for review and decision-making once the review period for the draft Environmental Scoping Report has been completed and all additional I&AP comments have been considered. The Final Scoping Report will also include a final Plan of Study for the EIA phase of the project, although a draft has been included in this report for public comment.