

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS
CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROPOSED

STEELPOORT INTEGRATION PROJECT

LIMPOPO PROVINCE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)

Aim of this Document

This document aims to provide you, as an Interested and/or Affected Party (I&AP), with an overview of:

- the environmental process and studies to be undertaken during the Environmental Scoping and Impact Assessment phases; and
- the proposed project and the study area.

It further indicates how you can become involved in the project, receive information, or raise issues, which need to be address.

The following information is captured in this document with the aim of providing you with the above information:

- an overview of the proposed project planned by Eskom Transmission;
- a description of the key activities which form part of the EIA process;
- an indication of the potential impacts associated with the proposed project and the specialist studies to be undertaken;
- a map of the study area indicating the alternatives identified for investigation within the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process:

Overview of the proposed Project

Eskom Holdings Ltd is responsible for the provision of reliable and affordable power to its consumers in South Africa. Electricity cannot be stored and therefore must be used as it is generated. It is, therefore, required that electricity must be efficiently transmitted from the point of generation to the end user. It is vital that transmission capacity keeps up with both electricity generation capacity and electricity demand.

If Eskom Transmission is to meet its mandate and commitment to supply the ever-increasing needs of end-users, it has to plan, establish and expand its infrastructure of generation capacity and Transmission lines on an on-going basis, in support of the generation processes.

As part of its assessment of a range of electricity supply options, Eskom Holdings Limited is planning a new Pumped Storage Scheme approximately 40 km north-west of Eskom's existing Simplon Substation in the Mpumalanga Province. This Pumped Storage Scheme (PSS) is scheduled to be in operation by 2014. An EIA for the proposed PSS is the subject of a separate EIA process, which is nearing completion. Details of this process can be provided on request.

In order to integrate this PSS into the electricity transmission network, Eskom Transmission is proposing the following:



As deel van die evaluering van 'n reeks opsies om elektrisiteit te voorsien, beplan Eskom Holdings Beprek 'n nuwe pompbergingsskema sowat 40 km noordwes van Eskom se bestaande Simplon Sub-stasie in die Mpumalanga-provinsie. Hierdie pompbergingsskema (PSS) is geskeduleer om teen 2014 in bedryf te tree. Hierdie voorgestelde PSS is die onderwerp van 'n aparte OIS-proses, wat byna atgehandel is. Besonderhede van hierdie proses kan op versoek gelewer word.

Indien Eskom Transmissie sy mandaat en verbintenisse gestand wil doen om in die toenemende behoeftes van eindverbruikers te voorsien, moet Eskom sy infrastruktuur van opwekkingsvermoë en Transmissiekraglyne op 'n deurlopende grondslag beplan, oprig en uitbrei, ter ondersteuning van die opwekkingsproses.

Eskom Holdings Bpk is verantwoordelik vir die voorsiening van betroubare en bekostigbare krag aan sy verbruikers in Suid-Afrika. Elektrisiteit kan nie gebereg word nie en moet dus gebruik word soos dit opgewek word. Daarom word vereis dat elektrisiteit doeltreffend van die opwekkingsaanleg na die eindverbruiker oorgebring word. Dit is noodsaaklik dat die transmissiekapasiteit moet byhou by beide die opwekkingskapasiteit en die vraag na elektrisiteit.

Oorsig van die voorgestelde projek

- 'n oorsig van die voorgestelde projek wat deur Eskom Transmissie beplan word;
- 'n verduideliking van die vermaaste aktiwiteite wat deel vorm van die OIS-proses;
- 'n aanduiding van die potensiele impakte gepaardgaande met die voorgestelde projek en die spesialistudies wat onderneem moet word; en
- 'n kaart van die gebied wat ondersoek word, wat die alternatiewe identifiseer wat binne die raamwerk van die OIS ondersoek sal word.

Die volgende inligting word in hierdie dokument vervat, met die doel om die bogenoemde toe te lig:

- Voorts dui dit ook aan hoe u by die projek betrokke kan raak, inligting kan ontvang of standpunte te opper wat na u mening aangespreek behoort te word.
 - die omgewingsproses en die studies wat tydens die omgewingsbestekopname- en impakstudie-proses onderneem gaan word; en
 - die voorgestelde projek en die studiegebied.
- Hierdie dokument stel dit ten doel om u, as 'n belangstellende en/of geaffekteerde party (B&GP), 'n oorsig te bied van:

Die doel van hierdie dokument

AGTERGROND-INLIGTINGSDOKUMENT (AID)

LIMPOPOPROVINSIE

STEELPOORT INTEGRASIEPROJEK

OMGEWINGSIMPAKTESTUDIEPROSES
OPRIGTING VAN DIE VOORGESTELDE

- The construction of a new 400 kV substation, in close proximity to the PSS.
- This new substation is to be supplied via two 400 kV Transmission lines looping in and out of the existing Duvha-Leseding 400 kV Transmission line. These two lines are proposed to be constructed in parallel, each requiring a servitude width of approximately 55 m.
- A 400 kV Transmission line between the proposed Steelpoort and the existing Merensky Substation. A servitude width of approximately 55 m is required for the establishment of this new Transmission line.
- Associated works to integrate the proposed new substation into Eskom's electricity Transmission grid (including the construction of service/access roads, the construction of a communication tower at the substation site, etc).

This project is to be known as the Steelpoort Integration Project.

Technically feasible alternative substation site and Transmission line alignment corridors have been identified for investigation within the EIA process. These are reflected on the attached map. Through the EIA process, preferred alternative Transmission line alignments and a substation site will be nominated. Should the project be authorised by DEAT, Eskom will then enter into a servitude negotiation process with each affected landowner. The process of negotiating a servitude is independent of the EIA process, and will be undertaken directly by Eskom Transmission.

Proposed construction schedule for the proposed Steelpoort Integration Project

Depending on the issuing date of the Environmental Authorisation, and should a positive Environmental Authorisation be issued by the National Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (N DEAT), and to address the increasing demand for electricity, it is proposed that Eskom will commence with construction in 2009. The construction period for the proposed 400kV Transmission power lines are estimated to be 26 months in total. This includes the clearing of the servitude, construction of the towers and the stringing of the conductors. The construction period for the proposed Steelpoort substation is estimated to be 13 months in total.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Process

In terms of the EIA Regulations published in terms of Section 24(5) of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, No 107 of 1998), Eskom requires authorisation from the National Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (N DEAT) (in consultation with the Limpopo provincial Department of Environment) for the undertaking of the proposed project. In order to obtain authorisation for this project, comprehensive, independent environmental studies must be undertaken in accordance with the EIA Regulations.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process forms part of the initial planning process of a new Transmission line. Route alternatives (corridors) are identified (typically based on technical feasibility), and the number of options are narrowed down based on environmental criteria through the EIA process. The findings of the EIA determine those areas in which impacts can be anticipated to be significant, and results in the nomination of a preferred corridor for environmental authorisation (by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism).

Eskom Transmission has appointed Savannah Environmental, as independent environmental consultants, to undertake the EIA. As part of these environmental studies, all I&APs will be actively involved through a public participation process. Savannah Environmental has appointed Afrossearch to undertake the required public participation process.

An EIA consists of various phases, as depicted in the figure 1.

The EIA for the proposed Steelpoort Integration Project is currently in the Scoping Phase. This project has been registered with National DEAT under Application Reference Number 12/12/20/866.

Die Omgewingsimpakstudieproses

Ingevolge die OIS-regulasies wat kragtens Artikel 24(5) van die Nasionale Wet op Omgewingsbestuur (NEMA, Wet No. 107 van 1998) gepubliseer is, benodig Eskom magtiging van die Nasionale Departement van Omgewingsake en Toerisme, in konsultasie met die Provinsiale Departement van Omgewingsake in die Limpopo provinsie, om die voorgestelde projek te onderneem. Ten einde magtiging vir hierdie projek te bekom, moet 'n omvattende en onafhanklike omgewingsimpakstudieproses in ooreenstemming met die OIS-regulasies onderneem word.

Die OIS vorm deel van die aanvanklike beplanningproses van 'n nuwe transmissie kraglyn. Alternatiewe roetes (korridors) word geïdentifiseer (gewoonlik gegrond op tegniese uitvoerbaarheid). Hierdie roetes word op grond van omgewingskriteria deur die OIS-proses ondersoek en lei tot 'n aanbeveling vir 'n voorkeuroete, wat dan aan die Nasionale Departement van Omgewingsake en Toerisme voorgedra word vir 'n omgewingsmagtiging.

Eskom Transmission het Savannah Environmental aangestel as onafhanklike omgewingskonsultante om die OIS te onderneem. As deel van hierdie proses, sal alle B&GPE aktief betrokke wees deur 'n openbare deelnameproses. Savannah Environmental het Afrossearch aangestel om die openbare deelnameproses te onderneem.

Voorgestelde oprigtingskedule vir die voorgestelde Steelpoort Integrasieprojek.

Indien die Nasionale Departement van Omgewingsake en Toerisme die voorgestelde projek magtig, en affanlik van die datum van so 'n magtiging, word dit voorsien dat Eskom in 2009 met oprigting sal begin. Die oprigtingsydperk vir die voorgestelde 400 kV Transmissiekraglyne word in totaal op 26 maande geraam. Dit sluit die skoonmaak van die servituut, die oprigting van die toerings en die bedrading van die geleiers in. Die oprigtingsyd vir die voorgestelde Steelpoort Substasie word op sowat 13 maande beraam.

Tegnies haalbare alternatiewe terreine vir die substasie en die roetebeplanning van die korridors vir die beplande transmissiekraglyne is binne die OIS-proses geïdentifiseer. Die alternatiewe word op die meegaande kaart aangedui. Die OIS-proses sal die substasie terrein en alternatiewe roetebeplanning vir die transmissiekraglyn ondersoek en 'n gepaste aanbeveling maak rakende die terrein vir die substasie en die beplanning van die transmissiekraglyn. Sou die projek deur die Nasionale Departement van Omgewingsake en Toerisme gemagtig word, sal Eskom dan 'n onderhandelingsproses vir die servituut met elke geaffekteerde grondeenaar van stapel stuur. Hierdie onderhandelingsproses is onafhanklik van die OIS-proses en sal regstreeks deur Eskom Transmission onderneem word.

Hierdie projek sal as die Steelpoort Integrasieprojek bekendstaan.

- Die oprigting van 'n nuwe 400 kV substasie, baie naby aan die PSS.
- Hierdie nuwe substasie sal voorsien word via twee 400 kV Transmissiekraglyne wat 'n nnglyn in en uit die bestaande Duvha-Leseding 400 kV Transmissiekraglyn maak. Daar word voorgestel dat hierdie twee lyne parallel opgerig word, elk met 'n servituut van sowat 55 m in wydte.
- 'n 400 kV Transmissiekraglyn tussen die voorgestelde Steelpoort- en die bestaande Merensky Substasies. 'n Servituut met 'n wydte van ongeveer 55 m word vir die vestiging van hierdie nuwe Transmissiekraglyn benodig.
- Gepaardgaande werke om die voorgestelde nuwe substasie by Eskom se elektrisiteits-transmissie-netwerke te integreer. Die gepaardgaande werke sluit in die bou van diens en toegangstroetes, die oprigting van 'n kommunikasietoring by die substasie, ens.

Ten einde hierdie PBS by die transmissienetwerk van elektrisiteit te integreer, doen Eskom Transmission die volgende aan die hand:

- Ten einde aan hierdie OIS-proses deel te neem, moet u self op die projek se databasis registreer!

U verantwoordelikhede as 'n B&GP:

U sal per pos of e-pos 'n persoonlike kennisgewing van alle beskikbare dokumentasie en sperdatums vir kommentaar tydens elke fase ontvang.

Dit is belangrik dat tersaaklike B&GFe uit die staanspoor van die voorgestelde projek geïdentifiseer en by die openbare deelnameproses betrek word. Ten einde doeltreffende openbare deelname te verseker, die openbare deelnameproses sluit 'n paar nodige stappe in soos voorgestel in Figuur 2.

Die hoofdoelwit van openbare deelname tydens hierdie OIS sal wees om B&GFe deurentyd met genoegsame en deursigtige inligting te voorsien, sodat effektiewe deelname regdeur die proses verseker kan word. As deel van hierdie openbare deelnameproses sal u die geleentheid gebied word om kommentaar te lewer op die bevindinge van die OIS-verslag (Bestekopname en Impakevaluering), wat ten tyde van die proses vir openbare oorsig beskikbaar gestel sal word.

Openbare deelname is die hoeksteen van enige OIS, soos ook die geval sal wees vir hierdie voorgestelde projek. Die beginsels van NEMA behaar talle aspekte van OISs, insluitend openbare deelname.

Die openbare deelnameproses

Spesialisties sal deur bestaande inligting, veldwaarnemings en insette van die openbare deelnameproses toegelig word. U insette, as mense wat in die gebied woon en die beste vertrou is met die plaaslike kwessies, word as belangrik bestempel. Ons druk dit op die hart om betrokke te raak by die proses.

1. 'n Bestekopnamestudie, waar in potensiele knepunte wat gepaard gaan met al die alternatiewe wat geïdentifiseer is, geëvalueer sal word en 'n voorkeur voorstel gemaak word vir oorweging tydens die OIS-fase.
2. 'n Gedetailleerde beraming van potensieel wesenlike impakte wat met die genomineerde alternatiewe/alternatiewe van voorkeur verband hou, wat gedurende die Bestekopnamefase geïdentifiseer is. Praktiese en uitvoerbare versagende maatreëls sal aanbeveel word sodat potensieel wesenlike impakte wat geïdentifiseer is, beperk word. Hierdie aanbevelings sal ingesluit word by 'n konsep Omgewingsbestuurplan.

Hierdie spesialisties sal in twee fases onderneem word:

- Impakte op ekologie, fauna & flora
- Impakte op vollew
- Impakte op grond en landboupotensiaal
- Impakte op erfenissterreine
- Impakte op visuele gehalte en estetika
- Impakte op topografie, hidrologie, grondwater, klimaat en besoedeling
- Impakte op die maatskaplike omgewing, insluitend grondgebruik en toeristepotensiaal

'n Aantal potensiele omgewingsimpakte is geïdentifiseer wat met die projek gepaard gaan. Hierdie potensiele impakte sal as deel van die OIS deur die volgende spesialisties geëvalueer word:

Wat is die potensiele omgewingsimpakte wat met die voorgestelde projek gepaard gaan?

Die OIS vir die voorgestelde Steelpoort Integrasieprojek is tans in die Bestekopnamefase. Hierdie projek is by die Nasionale Departement van Omgewingsake en Toerisme geregistreer onder Aansoekverwysingsnommer 12/12/20/866.

'n OIS bestaan uit verskeie stadiums, soos in figuur 1 uiteengesit word.

What are the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project?

A number of potential environmental impacts associated with the project have been identified. These potential impacts will be assessed through the following specialist studies:

- Impacts on ecology, fauna & flora
- Impacts on avifauna
- Impacts on soils and agricultural potential
- Impacts on heritage sites
- Impacts on visual quality and aesthetics
- Impacts on topography, hydrology, groundwater, climate and pollution
- Impacts on the social environment

These specialist studies will be undertaken in two phases:

1. A desk-top Scoping Study, wherein potential issues associated with all alternatives identified will be evaluated and a preferred alternative nominated for consideration in the EIA phase.
2. A detailed assessment of potentially significant impacts associated with the nominated preferred alternative/s identified in the Scoping Phase. Practical and achievable mitigation measures will be recommended in order to minimise potentially significant impacts identified. These recommendations will be included within a draft Environmental Management Plan.

Specialist studies will be informed by existing information, field observations and input from the public participation process. As people residing in the area are most familiar with the local issues, your input is considered important and we urge you to become involved in the process.

The Public Participation Process

Public participation is the cornerstone of any EIA, as it will be for this proposed project. The principles of NEMA, govern many aspects of EIAs, including public participation.

The key objective of public participation during this EIA will be to provide I&APs with sufficient and transparent information on an on-going basis in order to ensure effective participation throughout the process. As part of this public participation process you will also be provided with the opportunity to comment on the findings of the EIA Report (Scoping and Impact Assessment), which will be made available for public review during the process.

It is important that relevant I&APs are identified and involved in the public participation process from the outset of the proposed project. In order to ensure effective public participation, the public participation process includes a number of steps, as depicted in Figure 2.

You will receive personal notification by mail or e-mail of all documents available for comment, and due dates for comment at every stage.

Your responsibilities as an I&AP:

In terms of the EIA Regulations, your attention is drawn to your responsibilities as an I&AP:

- In order to participate in this EIA process, you must register yourself on the project database.
- You should inform any other parties who may be interested and/or affected by the proposed project about the EIA process and encourage them to become involved.
- You must ensure that any comments regarding the proposed project are submitted within the timeframes that have been approved or set by DEAT and that any extension of a timeframe agreed to by DEAT and the applicant (i.e. Eskom).
- You are required to disclose any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which that you may have in the approval or refusal of the application for the proposed Steelpoort Integration Project.

Our responsibilities as Independent Environmental Consultants:

In terms of the EIA Regulations, our responsibilities for the public consultation process include:

- We must ensure that sufficient information regarding this proposed project is made available to you, either through the BID or providing information as and when requested.
- We must ensure that you have an understanding of the proposed project to be able to comment informatively and to enable you to submit any concern in an informed manner.
- We must ensure that the following actions are taken:
 - the contact details provided by you are entered into the project database and that you are sent all further information releases
 - if you send us queries or comments, we respond in writing
 - if you call us, your details and queries / comments are recorded. Should we not be able to answer your question immediately, your call will be returned as soon as possible with a response.

How to become involved

1. By responding (by phone, fax or e-mail) to our invitation for your participation, which has been advertised in the local newspaper.
2. By mailing, faxing or e-mailing the attached Registration and Comment Form to Afrosearch.
3. By attending the meetings to be held during the course of the project. Should you register as an I&AP you will automatically be invited to attend these meetings. The public meeting date will also be advertised in the local newspaper. Please be on the lookout for these advertisements.
4. By telephonically contacting us if you have a query, comment or require further project information.
5. By reviewing the draft Environmental Scoping Report and the draft Environmental Impact Report within the 30-day review periods that will be stipulated in the advertisement and well as in your personalised letter.

If you consider yourself an I&AP for this proposed project, we urge you to make use of the opportunities created by the public participation process to become actively involved in the process and provide comment or concerns which affect and/or interest you, or about which you would like more information. Your input into this process forms a key part of the Environmental Studies and we would like to hear from you to obtain your views on the proposed project.

By completing and submitting the accompanying Registration and Comment Form, you automatically register yourself as an I&AP for this proposed project, and are ensured that your comments and/or concerns raised regarding the proposed project are noted. The public participation consultants will respond to all comments and queries received during the course of the project.

We look forward to your contributions.

COMMENTS & QUERIES / KOMMENTAAR EN NAVRAE

Nicolene Venter or Marti Moolman of Afrosearch
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• U moet toesien dat enige kommentaar rakende die voorgestelde projek betyds ingedien word binne die tydrammer wat deur die Nasionale Departement van Omgewingsake en Toerisme goedgekeur is, en dat enige verenging van 'n tydrammer 'n ooreenkomstige tussen die Nasionale Departement van Omgewingsake en Toerisme en die applikant (d.i. Eskom).

• Dit word van u verwag om enige regstreke sake, hetsy finansiële, persoonlike of ander belang wat u moontlik kan hê by die goedkeuring of weiering van die aansoek vir die voorgestelde Staalpoort Integrasieprojek bekend te maak.

Ons verantwoordelikhede as onafhanklike omgewingskondesant:

Ingevolge die OIS-regulasies, sluit ons verantwoordelikhede vir die openbare konsultasieproses die volgende in:

- Ons moet toesien dat genoegsame inligting rakende hierdie voorgestelde projek aan u beskikbaar gemaak word, hetsy deur die AID of deur inligting op aanvraag te voorsien
- Ons moet toesien dat u voldoende kennis dra van die voorgestelde projek om ingeligte kommentaar te kan lewer en enige knelpunte op ingeligte wyse te kan kommunikeer.
- Ons moet toesien dat, wanneer enige interaksie plaasvind:
 - die kontakbesonderhede deur u versiek by die projek se databasis ingesluit word, sodat u alle toekomstige inligting sal ontvang;
 - daar skriftelik op navrae of kommentare gereageer word;
 - dat, sou u ons skakel, ons u besonderhede en navrae/kommentaar aanteken. Indien ons u vraag nie daar en dan kan antwoord nie, sal ons u so gou moontlik met 'n antwoord terugskakel.

Hoe om betrokke te raak

1. Deur per telefoon, faks of e-pos op ons uitnodiging vir u deelname, wat in die plaaslike koerant geadverteer is, te reageer.
2. Deur die aangehegde registrasie- en kommentaarform te voltooi en dan aan Afrosearch te pos, faks of e-pos.
3. Deur die vergaderings by te woon wat tydens die duur van die projek gehou sal word. Sou u as 'n B&GF registreer, sal u outomaties uitgenooi word om hierdie vergaderings by te woon. Die datums vir openbare vergaderings sal in die plaaslike koerante geadverteer word. Wees assidie op die uitlyk vir hierdie advertensies.
4. Deur ons telefonies te kontak indien u 'n navraag of kommentaar het, of indien u verdere inligting oor die projek verlang.
5. Deur die konsep omgewingsbestekopnameverslag en konsep omgewingsimpakverslag binne die 30-dae oorsigperiode te evalueer. Die datums van die 30-dae oorsigperiode sal in die advertensies sowel as d.m.v. persoonlike korrespondensie aangedui word (indien u as B&GF registreer het).

Ons moedig u aan om gebruik te maak van die geleenthede wat die openbare deelnameproses u bied om aktief betrokke te raak by die proses deur kommentaar te lewer, aspekte wat u kwel uit te wys of om vir meer inligting te vra. U insette in hierdie proses vorm 'n belangrike deel van die OIS.

Deur die meegaande registrasie- en kommentaarform te voltooi en in te dien, word u outomaties as 'n B&GF vir hierdie voorgestelde projek geregistreer. U is dan verseker dat die bydraes deur u gelewer, aangeteken sal word. Die openbare deelnamekonsultante sal reageer op kommentare en navrae wat gedurende die verloop van die projek ontvang word.

Ons sien uit na u bydraes.