

BRAAMHOEK PUMPED STORAGE SCHEME

DRAFT SCOPING REPORT: ACCESS ROADS FOR THE BRAAMHOEK PUMPED STORAGE SCHEME

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (Draft for Public Comment)

Eskom Holdings Limited (Eskom) has determined that in order to meet the expected peak electricity demand, South Africa requires additional peaking generation capacity by 2012. This requirement has been confirmed by the National Integrated Resource Plan of the National Electricity Regulator (available from <http://www.ner.org.za>). Eskom is thus planning the development of the Braamhoek Pumped Storage Scheme (PSS).

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), was undertaken for the proposed Braamhoek PSS, which was completed in June 1999. A comprehensive Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was submitted to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) for approval. The Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism issued a Record of Decision (RoD) authorising the construction of the Braamhoek PSS on 13 December 2002.

In terms of the conditions of the Braamhoek PSS RoD, Eskom is required to complete an EIA for the proposed access roads and transmission lines. The two separate EIAs were commissioned in 2004. This report only covers the EIA for the proposed access roads. The Braamhoek Consultants Joint Venture (BCJV) has been appointed by Eskom to undertake the EIA for the upgrade of existing roads and the construction of new roads to provide access to the Braamhoek PSS.

An extensive public participation programme has allowed Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) to identify issues and potential environmental impacts associated with the construction of this road network during the Scoping Phase of the EIA to date. The BCJV Environmental Team and its appointed specialists have further identified potential environmental impacts associated with the construction and operational phases of the road upgrading and construction. Investigations will be conducted during the EIA Phase to supplement the available information. These specialist studies will quantify the environmental impacts accurately and recommend management and mitigation measures to minimise negative and maximise positive impacts.

BRAAMHOEK CONSULTANTS JOINT VENTURE

The following specialist studies are planned for the EIA Phase:

- Ecological including fauna and flora;
- Surface water;
- Air quality;
- Land-use;
- Geology, soils and erosion;
- Visual and aesthetics;
- Noise;
- Socio-economic; and
- Heritage resources.

The access roads for the project include external access roads and internal access roads. With regard to the external access roads, two alternatives have been considered, and are put forward and discussed in the Scoping Report:

- Alternative 1: Use existing N3 and R103; and
- Alternative 2: Provide direct access from the N3.

The Scoping Phase identified that the preferred alternative would be to use the existing access route to the site, Alternative 1 (use of existing N3 and R103). This alternative will be carried forward into the EIA.

Four alternatives for the internal access roads have been identified for consideration during the Scoping Phase and are discussed in this Scoping Report (see attached **Figures 1 – 4**), namely:

- Alternative 1 – Braamhoek Pass;
- Alternative 2 – De Beers Escarpment;
- Alternative 3 – De Beers Skeurklip; and
- Alternative 4 – Kiesbeen.

The two access road routes which have been identified to be carried forward for investigation in the EIA Phase are Alternative 1 (Braamhoek) and Alternative 2 (De Beers Escarpment). The choice of these two routes is based on predicted environmental impacts and economical considerations of access road upgrade and construction, as well as access between the Lower and Upper Reservoirs during operation.

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