

21 April 2011

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Dear Registered Interested and Affected Party

PROPOSED BRINE EVAPORATION PROJECT AT TUTUKA POWER STATION, MPUMALANGA (DEA REF NO.: 12/9/11/L456/6): AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT AND OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

Our previous correspondence of 9 February 2011 regarding the authorization of the proposed brine treatment works at Tutuka Power Station, has reference. As noted in our previous correspondence on the brine treatment works, Eskom currently evaporates some excess brine in three of the six boilers (boilers 1, 2 and 3) at Tutuka Power Station. Eskom is proposing to expand this evaporation process to the remaining three boilers (boilers 4, 5 and 6) as well license the existing process in terms of new waste legislation. This proposed expansion of the evaporation process forms the subject of a separate Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process to the authorized brine treatment works.

Legal requirements

In terms of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act (No. 59 of 2008) (NEMWA), the proposed project triggers Activity 7 and 11 of Regulation R718, namely:

No. & date of notice	Activity no.	Listed activity and relevant project component which is triggered
GN No. 718, 3 July 2009: Category B	7	<i>The treatment of effluent, wastewater or sewage with an annual throughput capacity of 15 000 cubic metres or more.¹</i> The proposed brine evaporation process would evaporate up to 1 300 cubic metres a day.
	11	<i>The construction of facilities for activities listed in Category B of this Schedule (not in isolation to associated activity).</i> The proposed brine evaporation process would involve modifications to existing boilers within the Tutuka Power Station.

Accordingly, the proposed activities will require authorisation of a Waste Management Licence from the competent environmental Authority, namely the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) via the EIA Regulations² enacted in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (No. 107 of 1998). As the activities triggered are listed in Category B of Schedule 1 of NEMWA an EIA process is required.

¹ Eskom has indicated that the brine, and the precipitate, is not considered to be hazardous waste (pers.comm. Mr Mike van der Walt, 17/08/10).

² Government Gazette No. R543, R544, R545 and R546.

However, Section 20 (4) of the National Environmental Management Act (No. 108 of 1998)(NEMA) allows that *"If an applicant intends undertaking an activity to which S&EIR [Scoping and Environmental Impact Report] must be applied in terms of subregulation (2) and the applicant, on advice of the EAP [Environmental Assessment Practitioner] managing the application, is for any reason of the view that it is likely that the competent authority will be able to reach a decision on the basis of information provided in a basic assessment report, the applicant may apply, in writing, to the competent authority for permission to apply basic assessment instead of S&EIR to the application."*

The motivation for a downgrade from an EIA to a Basic Assessment (BA) process was subsequently submitted to DEA on 22 October 2010, based on the following:

1. The evaporation of the brine would result in a net gain for the environment, compared to current status, as the risk of groundwater contamination under the ash dump would be reduced.
2. The project is a brownfields development. All activities would occur within the confines of the power station, on land already impacted either through ash disposal or the power station precinct.
3. Modifications to boilers etc. are considered to be relatively minor, consisting primarily of additional ducting in and around the boilers.
4. The evaporation of brine would have little to no impact on the power station emissions, based on Eskom's emission's monitoring.

The downgrade was subsequently approved by DEA on 8 November 2010. As such a BA process, as outlined in sections 21 to 25 of Regulation R543, is currently being undertaken for the proposed project. A flow diagram explaining the required procedure is attached as **Annexure A**.

Public participation

As a registered Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) for the EIA for the brine treatment works, we would like to notify you of the availability of the Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) for the proposed expansion of the brine evaporation process and to invite you to raise related comments or concerns.

The Draft BAR has been made available for review and comment from 4 May 2011 at the Thuthukani and Standerton Public Libraries, the security centre at Tutuka Power Station and online on Eskom's website (www.eskom.co.za/eia, Tutuka brine project) and Aurecon's website (www.aurecongroup.com) (follow the public participation links) until **13 June 2011**. A brief summary of the findings of report is given below.

Draft BAR

The purpose of a BA process is to identify potential social and biophysical impacts (both positive and negative) that may occur as a result of the proposed project. The identification and assessment of potential impacts and actions or controls to reduce the negative impacts and enhance the positive impacts is the key role of the EIA process that is detailed in the Draft BAR.

The Draft BAR has been compiled and includes, amongst others, a description of the following:

- The proposed project;
- Reasonable and feasible alternatives;
- The possible positive and negative environmental (both social and biophysical) impacts associated with the proposed project; and
- Recommendations for reasonable and feasible mitigation measures in order to reduce potential negative impacts and increase positive impacts identified and assessed.

Key findings of the impact assessment contained in the Draft BAR are included below:

PHASE	IMPACTS	
	Without mitigation	With Mitigation
Proposed project:		
Construction	No impact	No impact
- Local socio-economics	Low (positive)	Low (positive)
Operation		
- Water resources	Low (positive)	Low (positive)
- Air quality	No impact	No impact
Decommissioning	No impact	No impact
Cumulative	No impact	No impact
No-go alternative		
Operation		
- Water resources	Low (negative)	Neutral
- Economy	Low (negative)	Neutral

Way forward

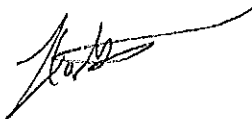
The Draft BAR has been made available to the public for a 40 day comment period. As an I&AP, you are invited to review and comment on the Draft BAR.

Should you have any comments, issues or concerns regarding the proposed project or the findings of the Draft BAR, please provide your comments in writing to Aurecon by email, fax or post, on or before **13 June 2011**.

All comments received and issues raised will be included in a Comments and Response Report (CRR), and where appropriate will be used to update the Final BAR, which will be submitted to DEA for their consideration and decision. Copies of the CRR will be sent to those who submitted comment. All registered I&APs will be notified when the Final BAR is available for a 21 day comment period, parallel to submission to DEA.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact **Louise Corbett** of Aurecon on Tel: (021) 481-2501, Fax: (021) 424-5588 or louise.corbett@aurecongroup.com or PO Box 494, Cape Town, 8000.

Yours sincerely
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Annexure A: Flow chart of the BA process

BASIC ASSESSMENT FLOW CHART

