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**environmental affairs**

Department  
Environmental Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Reference: 12/12/20/888

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Mr Moses Mahlangu  
Margen Industrial Services  
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Dear Mr. Mahlangu

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINAL SCOPING REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF EPSILON SUBSTATION AND ASSOCIATED TURN-INS PROJECT, NORTH WEST PROVINCE**

1. The scoping report which was submitted by you in respect of the above of the application and acknowledged by the Department on 12 August 2009 has been accepted by the Department.
2. However, the EAP is herewith drawn to consider the followings issues that must be considered and assessed in the EIA phase.

- 2.1 A vegetation map must be provided differentiating between Carltonville Dolomite Grassland and Vaal Reefs Dolomite Sinkhole Woodland. Maps also need to clearly indicate existing infrastructure and disturbed areas such as tailing dams and ploughed fields.
- 2.2 The Department is satisfied that options X, Y and Z must be excluded from the EIA phase. Option E must be excluded from further assessment as it is situated in pristine grassland, and this vegetation type has a conservation target of 23%. Site options A, C & D must be subjected to further assessment in the EIA phase. The Department highly recommends the exchange of data between South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and the ecological consultant, once site visits have occurred and point data for species have been collected, as part of the programme to make information available through Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) as part of South Africa's responsibility to this convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- 2.3 *Acacia erioloba* spp is a protected species in terms of National Forests Act (Act 84 of 1998). This species occurs in this area, especially in natural grassland areas, and specimens need to be identified, and preferably the power lines should be re-routed where it will impact on these trees. It is therefore worrying that this Scoping Report ignores the National Forests Act (Act 84 of 1998). This omission must be addressed in the EIR and potential impacts thereof assessed.
- 2.4 The ecological report needs to include wetland delineation, as well as specifics (technical and biodiversity-related) on the river crossing.
- 2.5 Ecological processes also need to be mapped. North-West does have a biodiversity conservation plan, although this may still be in draft and not been approved yet. If not, it can still be used to identify and indicate the ecological sensitivity of possible corridors.



- 2.6 Construction camp sites need to be identified, as well as sensitive areas that the power line alignment needs to avoid.
3. There are a number of issues that needs to be addressed in the EMP, and the most basic of these are:
- o Rehabilitation of soil and vegetation, including rescue and replanting of Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) and Red Data species;
  - o Identification of protected species, and the permits required if they need to be removed. This should preferably be accompanied by detailed and measurable mitigation measures; and
  - o Identification and eradication of Alien and Invasive species.
4. Furthermore, the EAP is required to submit comment from all the relevant organs of state with the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (and not after its submission), *inter alia*, from North West Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment, South African Heritage Resources Agency or the provincial heritage authority, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Department of Water Affairs.
5. You must now proceed with the environmental impact assessment process in accordance with the tasks outlined in the plan of study for environmental impact assessment.

Yours sincerely



Ms Lize McCourt

Chief Director: Environmental Impact Management

Department of Environmental Affairs

Letter signed by: Mr. Dumisane Mthembu

Designation: Director: Environmental Impact Evaluation

Date: 8/10/2009

cc Mr. Sebenzile Vilakazi

Eskom Holdings Limited

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