

**ESKOM HOLDINGS LIMITED**  
**TRANSMISSION DIVISION**

***ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT***

***INVUBU-THETA 400KV TRANSMISSION LINE***

***BACKGROUND INFORMATION  
DOCUMENT***

**OCTOBER 2009**





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## *GLOSSARY OF TERMS*

- Environmental Impact Assessment:** The process of collecting, organising, analysing, interpreting and communicating information that is relevant to the consideration of an application.
- Public Participation Process:** A process in which potential interested and affected parties are given an opportunity to comment on, or raise issues relevant to the proposed development.
- Route Corridor:** A corridor that is approximately 1-2km wide that is feasible for the routing of the proposed Transmission Power Line.
- Study Area:** The area that will be covered by the EIA process within which possible study corridors will be investigated.
- Study Corridor:** The corridor identified after the initial investigation of technical and environmental attributes of the study area which will be investigate further to identify the preferred or feasible route corridor.





## **INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT**

Transmission Development Plan has indicated that Eskom Holdings Limited: Transmission Division need to strengthen the power corridor into the Eastern Region in order to meet future growth in electricity demand in KwaZulu Natal in order to avoid incidents such as load shedding as a result of limited transmission capacity, as well as to comply with the Grid Code requirements. The strengthening entails the phased construction of 765kV lines into the Empangeni and Pinetown Customer Load Networks (CLN).

Studies have also indicated that in order to evacuate the power out of the proposed new Theta Substation and to meet Grid Code requirements there is a need to construct an additional 400kV line between the new proposed Theta Substation to the north-west of Empangeni and the existing Invubu Substation situated to the north-east of Richards Bay.

It is against the above-mentioned background that Eskom Holdings Limited, Transmission Division, is embarking on an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in terms of the EIA Regulations promulgated on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2006, made under the National Environmental Management (NEMA, Act 107 of 1998), for the construction of the proposed Invubu-Theta 400kV Transmission line between the existing Invubu Substation situated to the north-east of Richards Bay, and the proposed new Theta substation to the north-west of Empangeni. The 400kV GIS Busbar at the existing Invubu Substation will also be extended for the installation of the 400kV Feeder Bay.

This Background Information Document (BID) provides information pertaining to the construction of the proposed Invubu-Theta 400kV Transmission line. It outlines processes that will be followed, as well as avenues for all key stakeholders to participate in the process.

## **THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT**

The BID provides stakeholders with the project information, opportunity to comment on the proposed project, information on how the EIA process will be undertaken, and creates a platform for all key stakeholders and interested and affected parties to be involved in the project.

**NOTE:** Kindly note that the newspaper advertisement that was placed in the following newspapers: Sowetan, Daily Sun, Beeld, Ilanga Iphepha Lesizwe and Baywatch, on the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009, respectively, for the above-mentioned project had a Reference Number **12/12/20/881**, instead of Reference Number **12/12/20/1552**. The assigned Reference Number for this proposed project is **12/12/20/1552**, and all future project correspondence will quote the afore-mentioned reference, number.

## **COMPONENTS OF THE EIA PROCESS & TIMEFRAMES**

The construction of facilities or infrastructure, including associated structures or infrastructure, for the transmission and distribution of above ground electricity with a capacity of 120kV or more are listed activities in terms of the EIA Regulations. The EIA study is being undertaken in compliance with the EIA Regulations published in Government Notice R385, R386 and R387 of 21 April 2006 in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, (NEMA), Act 107 of 1998.

An EIA is a planning and decision-making tool that identifies potential negative and positive impacts of a proposed project or development. It recommends ways in which the positive impacts could be enhanced and negative impacts minimised. The outcome of the EIA will be considered by the Department of Environmental Affairs. An Environmental Authorisation stating whether or not the proposed project has been approved will be made available to all stakeholders.



The EIA for the proposed project will be conducted in three phases:

- ❖ The Scoping Phase;
- ❖ The Impact Assessment Phase;
- ❖ The Decision-Making phase.

The timeframes and the process to be followed are provided in **Figure 1**.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Public participation offers stakeholders the opportunity to learn about the project and to raise issues they are concerned about and to make suggestions for enhanced project benefits. These contributions will then be evaluated by the technical specialists during the EIA process.

EIA STUDY PHASES	ACTIVITY	DATES	Public Participation will be on-going throughout the EIA process with meetings held at key project milestones
Scoping Phase	Submit Application to DEA	July 2009	
	Site Visit	July 2009	
	Project Announcement	September 2009	
	Identification of Issues	July - September 2009	
	Draft Scoping Report	End October 2009	
	Comment Period: Closing Date for Public Comment & Submission to DEA	December 2009	
Impact Assessment Phase	Specialist Studies	November 2009	
	Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) & Environmental Management Plan (EMP)	End February 2010	
	Comment Period: Closing Date for Public Comment & Submission to DEA	April 2010	
Decision-Making Phase	DEA considers the Draft EIR & EMP for Authorization	April - June 2010	
	An Environmental Authorisation is issued & Announced to the Public	June 2010	
	The 30-day Appeal Period Commences		
	Appeals Upheld or Rejected		
<b>THE END OF THE EIA PROCESS</b>			

**Figure 1: Key activities in the EIA Process**



The proposed steps and timing of the public participation process are:

### September 2009

- ❖ Announcement of the project through an invitation letter addressed personally to a wide range of stakeholders and a Background Information Document (this document), by placing an advertisement in the print media (local newspapers) to inform the local public of the opportunity to comment on the proposed project.

### September – November 2009

- ❖ Consultation with the authorities, communities, NGOs and other stakeholders.
- ❖ Capture all comments in an Issues and Response Report
- ❖ Draft Scoping Report and including Terms of Reference for specialist studies and Issues Report, made available for public review in various public places in the project area
- ❖ Public meetings with key stakeholders, community representatives and the relevant authorities to present the Draft Scoping Report for comment.

### 2009 Ongoing

- ❖ Compilation of Issues and Response Report in which all issues and suggestions raised by stakeholders are captured.

### December 2009 – February 2010

- ❖ Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) with the findings of the specialist studies available for comment.
- ❖ Focus group meetings
- ❖ Public meeting with local communities, authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders to present the draft findings and obtain comments.

### April 2010

- ❖ Finalise EIR and EMP their accompanying reports and submit to the authorities for a decision.

### June 2010

Advise all stakeholders of the decision from the relevant authority.

## ***Your Role as a Stakeholder / Interested & Affected Party***

As a Stakeholder or Interested and Affected Party (I&AP), you are invited to participate in key stakeholder workshops, as well as Focus Group meetings to be held in the study area.

You can participate in the following manner:

- ❖ Review all project documentation provided to you;
- ❖ Attend focus group meetings and key stakeholder workshops;
- ❖ Contact the public participation office if you would like to further information on the project;
- ❖ Raise issues that you are concerned about, make suggestions for enhanced project benefits, and provide the project team with information on issues relevant to the proposed routes;
- ❖ Visit the Eskom Website, [www.eskom.co.za/eia](http://www.eskom.co.za/eia), to download the project documents as they become available.

## **STUDY AREA**

- ❖ The proposed 400kV Transmission line will be constructed between the existing Invubu Substation situated to the north-east of Richards Bay and at the proposed new Theta substation to the north west of Empangeni. The proposed alignment is along three possible corridors, with the first corridor running almost parallel to the existing Invubu-Umfolozzi Transmission power line, the second and third corridors being parallel to the existing Athene-Umfolozzi and Athene-Invubu Transmission lines, with the second running on the north of the Enseleni Nature Reserve and the third on the south of the Enseleni Nature Reserve. **Figure 2** outlines the Map of the Study area.



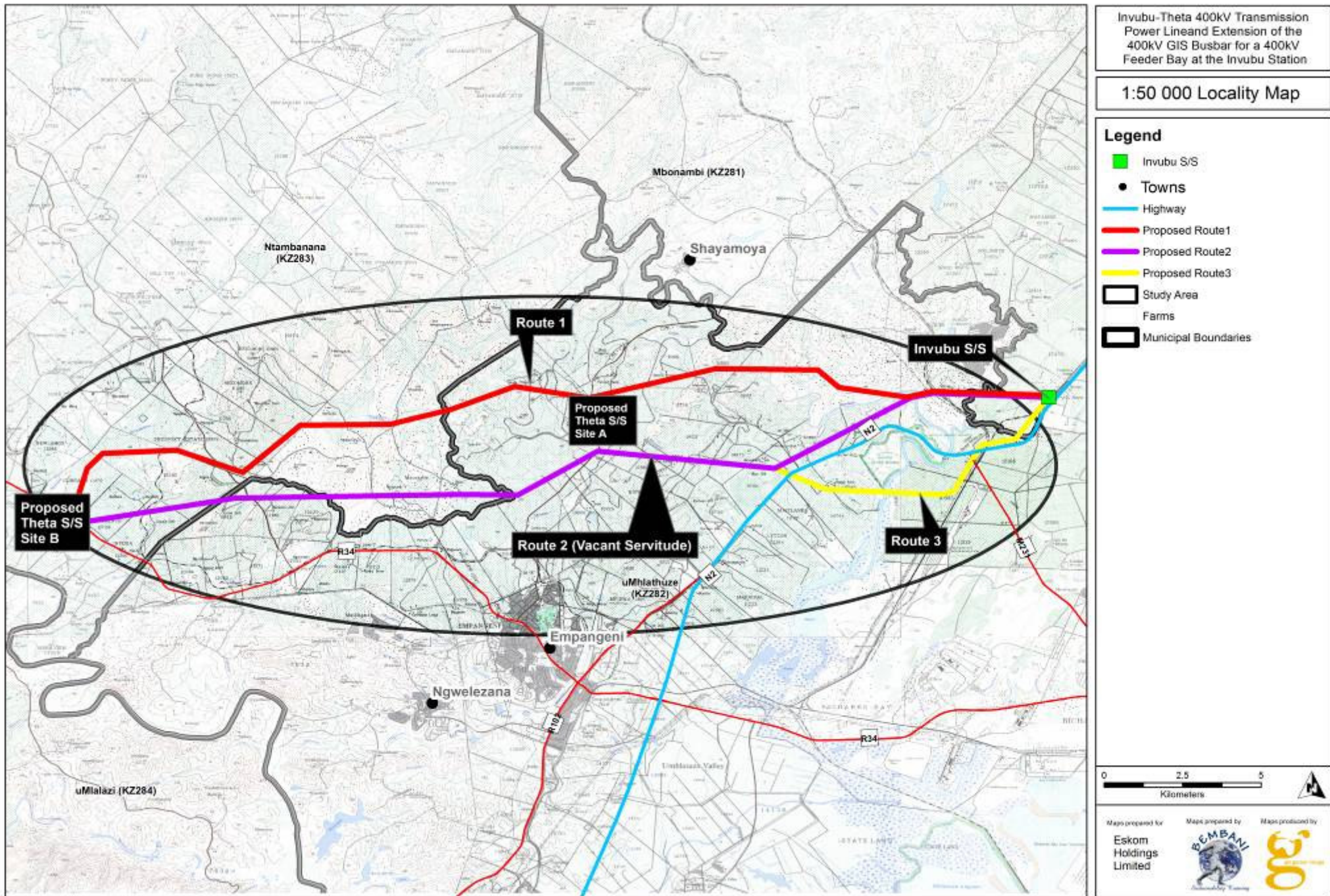


Figure 2: Map of the Study Area

## TYPICAL TOWER STRUCTURES

Figures 3a and 3b, indicates the typical tower structures that could be used for the proposed 400kV Transmission line.

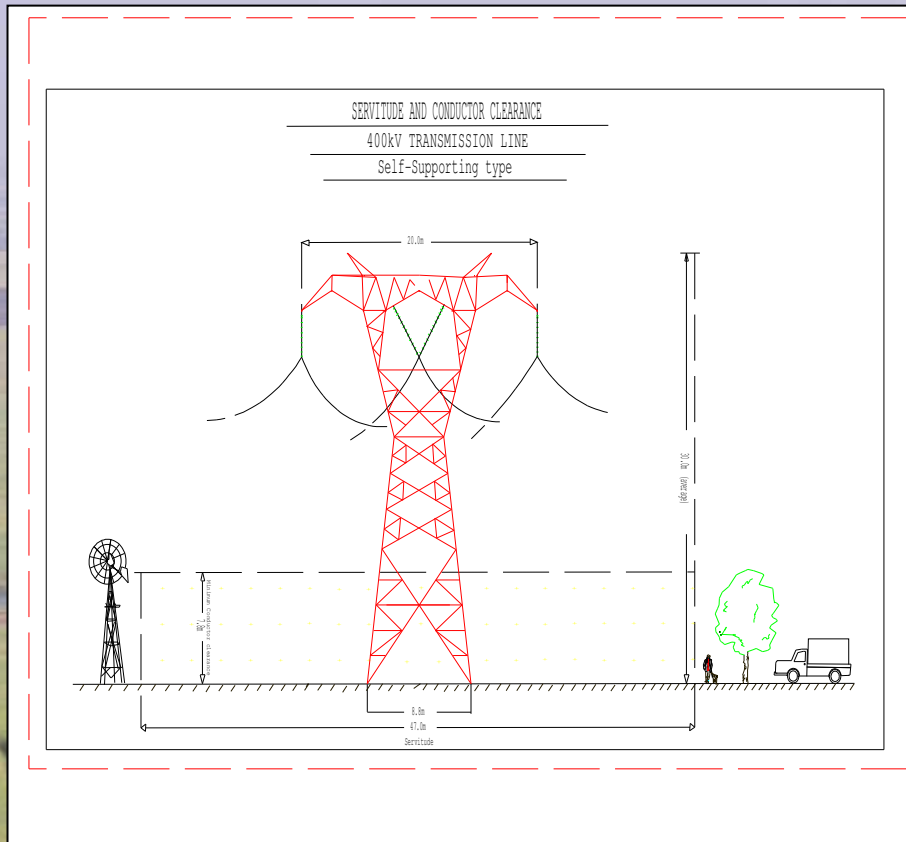


Figure 3a: A Self-supporting type tower

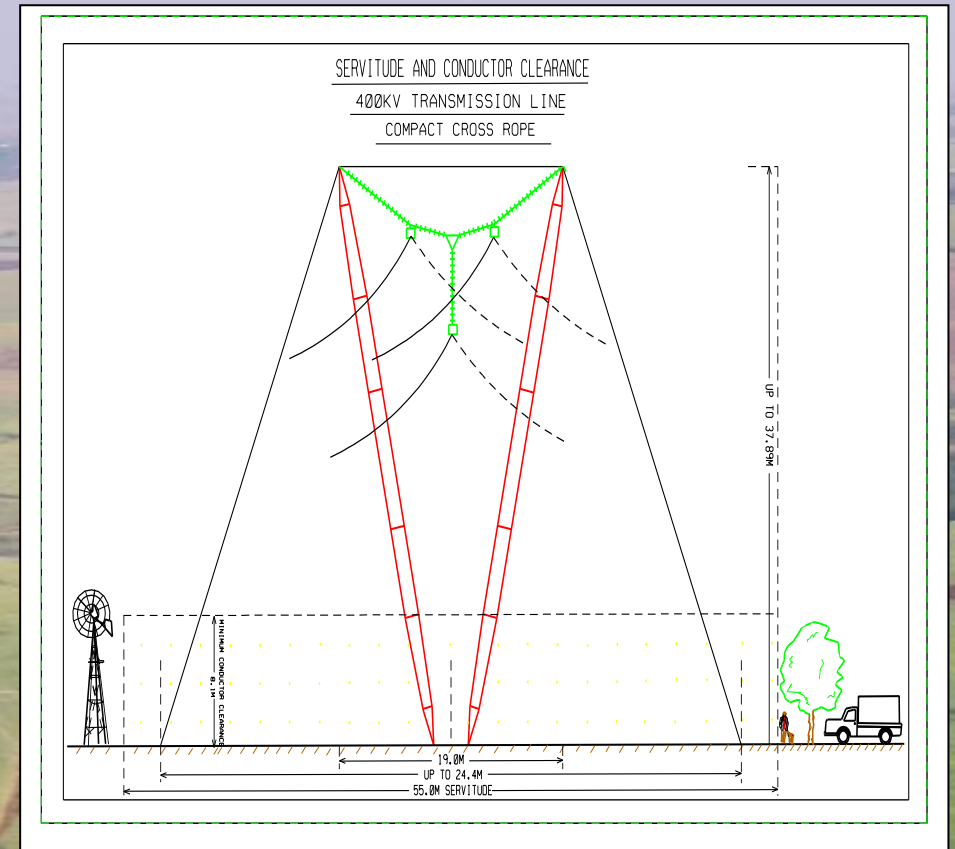


Figure 3b: A 400kV Compact Cross Rope