



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Ms. Mmamoloko Seabe
Eskom Holdings Limited
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JOHANNESBURG
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PER FACSIMILE / MAIL

Dear Ms Seabe

ACCEPTANCE OF SCOPING REPORT AND PLAN OF STUDY FOR EIA: PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF ONE 765 KILOVOLTS ("KV") CAMDEN-MBEWU (THETA) POWER LINE FROM ERMELO (MPUMALANGA PROVINCE) TO EMPANGENI (KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE)

1. The Department has evaluated the submitted Final Scoping Report (FSR) and the Plan of Study for Environmental Impact Assessment, dated 27 January 2011 and is satisfied that the document complies with the minimum requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2010. The Final Scoping Report is hereby accepted by the Department in terms of GN R 543 (30) (1) (a) of the EIA Regulations, 2010.
2. You hereby advised that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report must contain all the information outlined in regulation 32(2) of the EIA regulations, omission of information may result in the EIA report being rejected.
3. Activity Description and Listed Activities

While the information broadly refers to the construction of one 765 Kilovolts Camden-Mbewu power line from Ermelo to Empangeni, no specific details have been provided for other listed activities. More specific information must be provided regarding all listed activities being applied for.

1. Specialist Studies

The Department noted that the proposed power line will cross wetland areas. Therefore, the Department recommends that a wetland study must be carried out for the proposed development.

5. Public Participation

You are required to submit official comments from all relevant organs of state. These comments must be submitted with the final EIA report to the Department.

6. Detailed General Map

The general map submitted to the Department does not include the alternative routes considered for the proposed development. You are requested to include a detailed general map indicating all the alternative routes considered in the final EIA.

7. From a planning perspective the following is of concern:

- The newly proclaimed protected environment, KwaMandlangampisi, in Mpumalanga needs to be included in the map of protected areas. All declared protected areas along the route need to be mapped, and avoided. If they are not avoided, the Department's Directorate: Protected Areas: Planning and Development needs to provide comment before a decision on the acceptability of the EIA is made and an environmental decision taken. This includes all protected areas proclaimed or being negotiated through the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme.
- The Protected Area Expansion Strategies of the two provinces need to be mapped in terms of the possible alignments.
- The routes need to be mapped on the respective provincial conservation plans.
- Comments from the conservation agencies of both provinces, as well as the respective Biodiversity Stewardship sections, need to be included.
- All protected trees listed by the National Forest Act need to be identified, mitigation measures specified and permits applied for.
- All wetlands along the alternative routes need to be delineated, and protected species identified. This includes TOPS-listed species.
- Route alignment need to avoid bigger wetlands, and associated infrastructure should in no way impact on wetlands.
- Impact on TOPS-listed species need to be identified and mitigation measures identified.
- IBAs need to be identified and mapped. Birdlife South Africa needs to be included as an interested and affected party in this instance.
- All existing road and power line infrastructure needs to be mapped, as well as the supporting infrastructure for this development, in particular additional access roads where existing road networks cannot be used.
- Mitigation measures of importance, that should be included in the EMP:
 - Measures to avoid soil erosion and compaction during construction.
 - Rehabilitation plan needs to be developed and implemented.
 - The avifaunal study must denote mitigation measures for bird species, and mitigation measures need to be specified.
 - Delineation of wetlands and riparian species.

- Removal of natural vegetation should be in accordance to the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004).
- Removal of alien invasive species in accordance with the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (Act No. 43 of 1983), and follow-up procedures for at least three years.
- Mitigation measures should be provided for the threatened reptiles, birds, and mammals that inhabit that ecosystem.

You may accordingly proceed with the environmental impact assessment process in accordance with the tasks outlined in the plan of study for environmental impact assessment.

Please note that if the Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not submitted to this Department within a period of six months from the date of this letter, your application will lapse (Regulation 67 of GN No. R. 543 of 18 June 2010 refers). As such, a new application and assessment process will have to be initiated if you wish to again pursue your proposed development.

Yours sincerely



Mr. Dumisani Mthembu

DIRECTOR: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EVALUATION

Department of Environmental Affairs

Date: 23/02/2011

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