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Dear «Title» «Surname»

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN AN ENVIRONMENTAL  
AUTHORISATION PROCESS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)**

**PROPOSED ISUNDU 765/400 KV SUB-STATION AND TURN-IN TRANSMISSION LINES  
(DEA EIA REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/745; 12/12/20/1397/AM2)**

As part of Eskom's KZN Strengthening Programme, Eskom intends to increase and strengthen the electricity transmission network to the KZN Midlands and southern KZN region. This is to meet growing demand and to improve service quality and reliability.

Since 2009, Eskom has been investigating options to bring a 765 kV transmission line from the Venus Sub-station, near Estcourt, to a new sub-station (Sigma) in the KZN Midlands, with two 400 kV transmission lines from the new Sigma Sub-station linking into the existing Hector and Ariadne Sub-stations. This infrastructure forms a key component of the overall KZN Strengthening Programme.

Following extensive environmental investigations between 2009 and 2011, the Sigma 1 sub-station site, north-west of Wartburg, was identified as the preferred sub-station site. Also, a preferred transmission line corridor for both the 765 kV and 2 x 400 kV transmission lines was identified.

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) issued Environmental Authorisation on 11 June 2012 for the Venus-Sigma-Hector-(Ariadne) 765/400 kV Transmission Lines (EIA: 12/12/20/1397/1, EIA: 12/12/20/1397/3) and the new Sigma Sub-station (765 kV) (EIA: 12/12/20/1397/2).

Both Environmental Authorisations were appealed, subject to the concluding of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Eskom and the South African Sugar Association concerning the cultivation of sugarcane in 765 kV and 400 kV transmission line servitudes, inclusive of the burning of sugar cane immediately prior to its harvest. This MOU has since been signed and the appeals were withdrawn.

In the interim, more detailed geotechnical investigations undertaken at the Sigma Sub-station site have shown that earthworks and foundations will be exorbitantly expensive. Thus, Eskom initiated further investigations to identify if alternative, more cost-effective sub-station sites were available without needing to significantly alter the authorised VSHA transmission line corridor. Sixteen alternative sites were investigated, all of which proved unsuitable except for the proposed Isundu site, located at S29° 39' 50.77"; E30° 30' 48.37" to the east of Ashburton.

The proposed Isundu 765/400 kV Sub-station is a replacement to the Sigma Sub-station previously authorised. If the Isundu Sub-station is authorised, the 765 kV transmission line from the Venus Sub-station will need to continue along the authorised transmission line corridor until the Isundu Sub-station. By implication, a single 765 kV transmission line rather than 2 x 400 kV transmission lines will be constructed in the corridor between the Sigma and Isundu sites.

In terms of the amended EIA Regulations published under the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA), as amended, the proposed establishment of approximately 1,072 ha of sugarcane triggers listed activities in Listing Notice 1 (No. R.544 of June 2010), Listing Notice 2 (No. R.545 of June 2010) and Listing Notice 3 (No. R.546 of June 2010), in terms of section 24(2) and 24D of NEMA, which requires environmental authorisation via the undertaking of an Environmental Impact Assessment. A Water Use License will also be required from the Department of Water and Sanitation.

The national Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) is the competent authority for the issuing of environmental authorisation for this proposed development. ACER will fulfil the role and responsibilities of Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to undertake the Environmental Impact Assessment and the associated public participation process, and to submit the required application and supporting documentation to DEA for consideration and decision-making.

The purpose of this letter is to invite you, as a potential Interested & Affected Party to participate in the EIA process. A Background Information Document and Comment Sheet are available at [www.acerafrica.co.za](http://www.acerafrica.co.za) under the "Current Projects" link. Please note that the closing date for initial comments during public announcement of the project is 12 December 2014.

Please contact the Public Participation Office to obtain further information:

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Your participation is valued and will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



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Mr Paul Scherzer

Environmental Assessment Practitioner