

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**FOR THE 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)**

PROCEEDINGS OF A KEY STAKEHOLDER MEETING

12 November 2015

Mkhambathini Local Municipality

1. ATTENDANCE

Attendance was as follows:

Name	Organisation
Elaine Donaldson	Mkhambathini Local Municipality
Annah Motalane	Eskom – Senior Environmental Advisor
Dieter Heinsohn	ACER (Africa) Environmental Consultants
Paul Scherzer	ACER (Africa) Environmental Consultants

2. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Mr Paul Scherzer, ACER (Africa) Environmental Consultants, facilitated the meeting introductions and outlined that the purpose of the meeting was to present findings on the key issues raised to date, the status of the EIA investigations and to discuss the way forward with the key issues of concern.

3. PRESENTATION

Mr Scherzer made a presentation (Appendix 1) stating that a number of issues had been raised to date by the municipality. These primarily related to the following:

- Incompatibility with the Municipal SDF.
- Visual impacts on agriculture and tourism.
- Future lines through the municipal area.
- Impact upon:
 - Mayibuye Game Reserve.
 - Rainbow Farms.
 - Africa Bird of Prey Sanctuary.
 - Lion Park.

In order to investigate these and other issues, fourteen specialist studies have been undertaken:

- Avi-fauna.
- Fauna.
- Vegetation and Wetlands.
- EMFs.
- Noise.
- Cultural Heritage.
- Tourism and Economic Development.
- Visual.
- Air Quality/Dust.
- Aquatic and Riparian Ecosystem.
- Social and Spatial Development.
- Poultry Veterinarian.
- Blast Impact.
- Geohydrology and Hydrology.

Based on the outcomes of these investigations, ACER's findings to date are:

- ❑ Visual impacts will be limited to ridgelines and higher ground surrounding the proposed development. This change in character could result in irreplaceable loss of opportunity in terms of a rural/agricultural outlook to one where industrial elements are likely to dominate the view. This would have a high negative significance for the existing tourism enterprises on the same ridge but with mitigation, this impact could be reduced to one of low significance. The proposed mitigation is to plant screening trees along the road access.
- ❑ Noise measurements were taken throughout the study area. The area is generally very quiet, exhibiting a rural/agricultural character, where noise levels generally do not exceed 45 dBA during the day and generally do not exceed 35 dBA during the night. The sub-station will alter the noise profile and character of the area. The impact is of medium significance and will vary because of the wide variety of land-uses in the area.
- ❑ In terms of the impacts upon surrounding enterprises, the following are currently the broad findings:
 - **Rainbow Farms** – no impact during operation but noise and dust from civil works may impact them during construction - mitigation measures are being discussed with RCL Foods.
 - **Africa Bird of Prey Sanctuary** – incompatible land use and cumulative impact may require relocation of the Sanctuary.
 - **Lion Park** – no significant impact.
 - **Wild Aloe** - no significant impact but plans are likely to change if Isundu proceeds.
 - **Mayibuye Game Reserve** – the main impact would be a visual one, which could be partially mitigated by trees. This may still detract some investors but large parts of the proposed development are not impacted at all. Projected income, employment, land prices, etc. are seemingly all overestimated. The feasibility of the development as proposed may be affected by other factors as well (apart from the proposed Isundu Sub-station).

4. DISCUSSION

General discussions were held with regard to the various impacts. The key points from the discussions were:

- ❑ The municipality is concerned about their small area of N3 corridor and that agriculture and eco-tourism are allocated to the area north of the N3. Ms Donaldson stated that the municipality felt that all the jobs were in eco-tourism these days, hence, their concern if these plans are impacted.
- ❑ According to Ms Donaldson, the proposed airport being discussed by some stakeholders in this same area is now a SIP 2 project (strategic infrastructure project).
- ❑ ACER needs to address in the EIR all the issues raised by the municipality in their Council letter.
- ❑ The municipality is concerned about the cumulative impact of future transmission lines. Mr Scherzer explained that the approximate direction of the majority of the currently anticipated lines is known and will be illustrated in the EIR.

5. CLOSURE

Mr Scherzer thanked Ms Donaldson for her input and trusted that the discussions had provided a suitable update on the process and findings to date.

Appendix 1: Presentation