

Carina Boonzaaier

From: Morne Theron <Morne.Theron@capetown.gov.za>
Sent: 23 October 2019 01:45 PM
To: equiano@acerafrica.co.za
Cc: giles.churchill@acerafrica.co.za
Subject: RE: Proposed Marine Telecommunications System (Equiano Cable System) To Be Landed At Melkbosstrand On The West Coast: BID And Invitation To Participate In An EIA Process
Attachments: Melkbos Marine Telecomm cable BID_City of Cape Town comment.pdf

Dear Mr Churchill

Attached please find the City of Cape Town comment on the abovementioned BID.

Regards

Morné Theron Pr. Plan A/1965/2014

Senior Environmental Practitioner: Environmental & Heritage Management, Environmental Management Department
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From: ACER - Public Participation [mailto:publicparticipation@acerafrica.co.za]

Sent: 18 September 2019 02:52 PM

To: Morne Theron

Subject: Proposed Marine Telecommunications System (Equiano Cable System) To Be Landed At Melkbosstrand On The West Coast: BID And Invitation To Participate In An EIA Process

18 September 2019

Dear Mr. Morné Theron,

PROPOSED MARINE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM (EQUIANO CABLE SYSTEM) TO BE LANDED AT MELKBOSSTRAND ON THE WEST COAST OF SOUTH AFRICA

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

Project Background

Submarine telecommunications cables are important for international telecommunications networks, transporting almost 100% of transoceanic internet traffic throughout the world (www.iscpc.org). This is significant because it is widely recognised that access to affordable international bandwidth is key to economic development in every country.

The purpose of this project is to install a fibre optic submarine cable to provide international high-speed connectivity and reliability. Businesses and consumers will benefit from enhanced capacity and reliability for services such as telecommuting, HD TV broadcasting, internet services, video conferencing, advanced multimedia and mobile video applications. Internet traffic is growing exponentially as the appetite for new applications, like cloud computing and on-demand video, increases. Furthermore, the demand for new connectivity reflects an end-user and business environment in which high capacity data transmission is essential for sustainable growth and development.

Communication via submarine telecommunications cables generally allows for lower cost, better performance and greater capacity (throughput) than that available via satellite. Improvement in Africa's information technology infrastructure via telecommunications cables will help strengthen development in Africa and support economic growth and opportunities on the continent.

Telkom SA SOC Limited, acting through its Openserve division (hereafter referred to as “Openserve”), intends to install a submarine telecommunications cable, called the Equiano Cable System, to link South Africa with key international telecommunications hubs in West Africa (Nigeria) and Europe (Portugal). As the designated Landing Partner of the Equiano Cable System in South Africa, Openserve has the required licenses to operate this system in South Africa and aims to secure local permits to land the Equiano Cable System at Melkbosstrand, Western Cape.

Alcatel Submarine Networks (ASN) has been appointed as the supplier and installer of the Equiano Cable System connecting Africa and Europe. The system is to be installed in phases. The first phase (“Baseline System”) will entail the installation of cable landings at:

- South Africa: Melkbosstrand.
- Portugal: Lisbon (Sesimbra).
- Nigeria: Lagos.

Through the Equiano Cable System, Openserve will facilitate more affordable and effective transport of voice, data, internet and television services in South Africa. Furthermore, the cable will support the objectives set out by the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and provide a means of fulfilling the South African Government’s requirements in terms of digital television broadcasting in the country. The Equiano Cable System will have an initial design capacity of up to 200 Terabits per second.

Environmental Legislation

The current Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 (as amended 2017) published under Section 24(5) read with Sections 24, 24D and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (as amended) apply to this project.

Based on these regulations, the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) must complete Scoping and an Impact Assessment within 300 days of acceptance of the Application for Authorisation by the competent authority, viz. the national Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF). DEFF is the competent authority for the issuing of environmental authorisation because the Equiano Cable System traverses’ international boundaries. It is also envisaged that a Water Use Licence may be required from the Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation in terms of Chapter 4 of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No 36 of 1998), particularly Section 40(4).

On behalf of Openserve and ASN, ACER will fulfil the role and responsibilities of EAP, undertaking the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the associated public participation process, and submitting the required application and supporting documentation to DEFF for consideration and decision-making.

The purpose of this letter is to invite you, as a potentially Interested & Affected Party to participate in the EIA. A Background Information Document (Appendix 1) and Comment Sheet (Separate Attachment) have been compiled and are provided herewith to facilitate your participation (these documents are also available at www.acerafrica.co.za under the “Current Projects” link (Equiano Cable System)). Please note that the closing date for initial comments [1] during public announcement is 22 October 2019.

Please contact the Public Participation Office to obtain further information:

- **ACER (Africa) Environmental Consultants**
 - Carina Boonzaaier or Giles Churchill
 - P O Box 503, Mtunzini, 3867
- Tel: 035 340 2715 Fax: 035 340 2232 - E-mail: equiano@acerafrica.co.za

Your participation is valued and will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. G Churchill

ACER (Africa) Environmental Consultants
Environmental Assessment Practitioner

[1] Please note that consistent with GNR 326, 42(a), 44 (1) and 19(1)(a) (7 April 2017) all comments received will be captured in a Comments and Responses Report which will be made available to the competent authority and which will be placed in the public domain as part of the public review process of the EIA reports.

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