

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) FOR
ESKOM'S NORTHERN KZN STRENGTHENING PROJECT
DRAFT MINUTES FOR BIRDS FOCUS GROUP MEETING**

Venue	Eskom Megawatt Park	Date	13 December 2017	Time	10H00
Facilitator	Bongi Shinga		Minutes prepared by	Elelwani Ramagadza	

PRESENT		APOLOGIES	
Name		Name	
Mr Phillip Bailey	Mr Thokozani Bengani	Mr Dave Druce	Mr Mohammad Naicker
Ms Grace Mashabela	Mr Kishaylin Chetty	Mr Warren Funston	Ms Caroleen Naidoo
Mrs Terry Calmeyer	Mr Jayandra Haridas	Ms Madinare Mukhuba	Mr Amish Roopnarain
Ms Bongi Shinga	Ms Dinesree Thambu	Mr Lourens Leeuwner	Mr Matt Pretorius
Ms Elelwani Ramagadza	Mr Brent Coverdale	Mrs Jenny Longmore	Ms Enderani Naicker
Mr Phil Patton	Mr Rudi Greffrath		
Mr Jonathan Booth			

Item	Description
1	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Ms Bongi Shinga welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested everyone to introduce themselves, the organisations they represent and their roles on the project.</p> <p>Both the attendance list and a record of apologies are presented above.</p>
2	<p>Safety Briefing (Eskom)</p> <p>Mr Phillip Bailey gave a brief introduction about safety measures in the building in case of emergency.</p>
3	<p>Purpose of the meeting</p> <p>Ms Shinga explained the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hluhluwe Imfolozi Park (HiP) is a stronghold for tree nesting vultures. • A number of issues have been raised by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW) relating to the impact of powerlines on birds' population. • <i>The purpose of the meeting was to discuss these issues with Eskom representatives, the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP), the appointed Avi-Fauna specialist, Birdlife SA, Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and EKZNW.</i>

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4	<p>Background and Progress on the Project</p> <p>Ms Terry Calmeyer gave a presentation on the background and progress of the project based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIA Process and Status Update. • Substation Sites Alternatives <i>(She highlighted the recommendations made by specialists during the Specialists Integration Meeting held on the 7th December 2017. Substation Site 6, Iphiva-Duma West and Normandie-Iphiva 2 were the preferred alternatives by the specialists).</i> • Project Timelines.
5	<p>Discussion on Birds issues</p> <p>a) Ms Thambu requested clarity on the following: With regard to the fourth application for distribution powerlines, one can assume that it will be dependent on whether Iphiva Substation gets approved. Will the four applications be run concurrently looking at the timelines?</p> <p>Response: Mrs Calmeyer stated that one of the reasons for doing 4 applications as one process is due to the inter-connectedness and cumulative impacts that the projects have on each other.</p> <p>b) Referring to the acceptance letters of the scoping reports received from DEA, Ms Thambu asked who requested authorisation of the footprint (i.e. the location of the powerline within the corridor).</p> <p>Response: Ms Calmeyer said that Eskom usually requests authorisation of the corridors and then negotiates a servitude once a corridor has been authorised. Mr Bailey added that servitude negotiation is also dependent on the design of the powerlines. The requirement to specify the footprint is from the DEA.</p> <p>c) Ms Thambu indicated that both alternatives for Iphiva-Duma West and East are a great concern from a biodiversity economy nodes point of view. In support of Ms Thambu statement, Mr Coverdale raised the potential biodiversity impacts of the project specifically on birds (mostly tree nesting vultures) Black Rhino population and the proposed Biodiversity Expansion Areas. He advised the specialist to avoid Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) taking all the impacts including cumulative impacts into consideration.</p> <p>d) Ms Thambu suggested the linking of powerlines to other nearby Substations as an alternative to Duma.</p>

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	<p>Response: Mr Bengani indicated that Duma Substation is the only Substation that can accommodate a 400 kV powerline; the other Substations in the area cannot accommodate the 400 kV powerline.</p> <p>e) Ms Thambu suggested considering a new substation in a less sensitive area that can accommodate a 400 kV powerline.</p> <p>Response: Mr Bengani said once the need for electricity arises, future expansions must be in line with the regulators requirements and the solution must be the least cost solution.</p> <p>f) Mr Chetty commented on bird collision and transmission powerlines by stating that for the past 21 years, based on the mitigation measures Eskom employs, only 8 occurrences of an incidence on the mitigated line have been recorded. If mitigation measures are implemented properly, the risk will be minimised.</p> <p>Response: Mr Patton commented in support to Mr Chetty statement that if mitigation measures are done properly therefore impacts will be minimised.</p> <p>g) Mr Booth asked who was in the group of experts that preferred the Western corridor.</p> <p>Response: Mr Greffrath mentioned the following project specialists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Specialist • Agricultural potential Specialist • Heritage Impact Specialist • Fauna and Flora Specialist • Avifauna Specialist • Wetlands Specialist • Economics Specialist • Visual Specialist <p>h) Mr Booth asked who determined the route to be assessed.</p> <p>Response: Ms Calmeyer explained that Eskom, including engineers from KZN that are very familiar with the region, and the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) identified possible corridors for the powerlines. Mr Bailey added that site selection process started with many corridors, and the corridors with obvious significant issues were discarded leaving those with least impacts for further assessment and consideration.</p>

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	<p>i) Mr Booth recommended the team to acknowledge mortality rates recorded incidences on powerlines to limit the potential loss based on understanding what development impacts has on the species.</p> <p>Response: This comment was noted by the team.</p> <p>j) EKZNW had great concerns with the southern section of the Iphiva-Duma 400 kV powerline, and have proposed some possible deviations from the current corridors. EKZNW also expressed a preference for I-D East in the south (which is contrary to what came out of the specialist's integration meeting). The following are possible scenarios to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Starting with I-D West in the north and then crossing over to I-D East between the Manyoni PGR and the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park and then linking into an existing powerline that connects with Duma east of the substation site - I-D West following the existing corridor for 2/3rds of the route and then continuing in a south westerly direction to link in with an existing powerline that connects to Duma from the west. - I-D East for 3/4s of the existing corridor and then linking into an existing powerline that connects with Duma east of the substation site (I am not keen on this option as the northern section of I-D East is problematic). <p>Mr Coverdale extended thanks on behalf of EKZNW to the team for acknowledging the issues raised and arranging the meeting.</p>
6	<p>Way Forward</p> <p>As part of the way forward, the following actions were confirmed:</p> <p>a) Ms Calmeyer will submit a letter requesting an extension of time (50 days) to the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), to allow a process of considering the proposed deviations. If the extension of time is granted, deviations will be finalised in January 2017. She will also provide the kmz files for the Distribution powerlines to the EKZNW.</p> <p>b) Eskom will look at the details and technical feasibility of the above 3 scenarios. If any of them are technically feasible, then EKZNW will have a closer look at these deviations and provide the EIA team with feedback on what they consider to be the Best Practical Environmental Option.</p>

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	<p>c) Mr Haradis will provide data to EKZNW on the existing 400 kV powerlines, planned new 400 kV powerlines and the planned new 750 kV powerline.</p> <p>d) Mr Chetty will forward the bird's collision data to EKZNW and give feedback of the meeting to EWT.</p> <p>e) Minutes of the meeting to be circulated to all attendees.</p>
7	Closure Ms Shinga thanked everyone for attendance; contributions made and closed the meeting at 13:00.