

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) FOR  
ESKOM'S NORTHERN KZN STRENGTHENING PROJECT  
MINUTES OF FOCUS GROUP MEETING WITH EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE**

<b>Venue</b>	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Queen Elizabeth Park, Pietermaritzburg	<b>Date</b>	08 November 2017	<b>Time</b>	13h30
<b>Chairperson</b>	Ms Dinesree Thambu		<b>Minutes prepared by</b>	Ms Lungelo Chamane	

Item	Description																																								
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b></p> <p>Ms Dinesree Thambu welcomed all present to the meeting and requested everyone to introduce themselves, the organisations they represent and their roles in the project.</p> <p>The following representatives were in attendance:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No</th> <th>Name</th> <th>Role/Position</th> <th>Organisation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Mr Philip Bailey</td> <td>Project Development Manager</td> <td>Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Ms Terry Calmeyer</td> <td>Environmental Assessment Practitioner</td> <td>MDTE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Ms Lungelo Chamane</td> <td>Public Participation Officer</td> <td>Wakhiwe SES</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Mr Mikeshen Gounden</td> <td>Civil Engineer</td> <td>Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Ms Jenny Longmore</td> <td>Principal Conservation Planner</td> <td>Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Mr Amish Roopnarain</td> <td>Lines Engineer</td> <td>Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>Ms Dinesree Thambu</td> <td>Principal Conservation Planner</td> <td>Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>A signed attendance register is attached as <b>Appendix A</b>.</p> <p>The following apologies were recorded:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No</th> <th>Name</th> <th>Role/Position</th> <th>Organisation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Mr Mohammad Sho'ayb Nabbie</td> <td>Senior Engineer</td> <td>Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No	Name	Role/Position	Organisation	1	Mr Philip Bailey	Project Development Manager	Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd	2	Ms Terry Calmeyer	Environmental Assessment Practitioner	MDTE	3	Ms Lungelo Chamane	Public Participation Officer	Wakhiwe SES	4	Mr Mikeshen Gounden	Civil Engineer	Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd	5	Ms Jenny Longmore	Principal Conservation Planner	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife	6	Mr Amish Roopnarain	Lines Engineer	Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd	7	Ms Dinesree Thambu	Principal Conservation Planner	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife	No	Name	Role/Position	Organisation	1	Mr Mohammad Sho'ayb Nabbie	Senior Engineer	Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd
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<b>2</b>	<p><b>Purpose of the meeting</b></p> <p>It was noted that the meeting was scheduled to create an opportunity for Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNV) as an agency responsible for biodiversity conservation in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, to comment on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed</p>																																								

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	<p>Eskom Northern KwaZulu-Natal Strengthening Project, and provide clarity on issues of environmental concern identified on the project.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>EKZNW provided both verbal and written comments on the draft Scoping Report during the public comment period. One of the EKZNW comments was a recommendation to meet to discuss the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park and associated Biodiversity Economy Nodes that are being discussed in the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). This Focus Group Meeting was therefore a resultant follow up meeting.</i></p>
3	<p><b>Acceptance of Agenda</b></p> <p>The agenda prepared by EKZNW was accepted with only one additional item of discussing private landowners within the project study area.</p>
4	<p><b>Background Information to Hluhluwe -Imfolozi Park: Ms Jenny Longmore</b></p> <p>Ms Jenny Longmore provided a background to the role and mandate of EKZNW in nature conservation in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), and how the proposed project may potentially affect Hluhluwe Imfolozi Park (HiP), and surrounding biodiversity nodes. She presented on the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity Node as a relatively new term; the Biodiversity Economy Strategy for biodiversity economy areas nodes advocates for the creation of jobs, sustainable eco-development and food security. <i>Ms Longmore to provide a copy of the uMfolozi Biodiversity economy node.</i></li> <li>• Certain species within the study area of Iphiva – Duma east and west corridors may need permits from EKZNW for the powerlines to traverse overhead.</li> <li>• The value of HiP as a flagship proclaimed protected area and one of the oldest protected areas is also home to numerous research projects, hence its invaluable contribution to science.</li> <li>• HiP faces a challenge of development pressure around the perimeter of the Park.</li> <li>• HiP is a primary source of non-subsidiary income for EKZNW.</li> <li>• There is a mature expansion plan in the pipeline for HiP, which will serve as an opportunity to meet certain biodiversity targets stipulated by the DEA. HiP alone has proven to be insufficient to maintain the rich biodiversity of the area – hence the expansion plan.</li> <li>• Some fences have been dropped between the Park and surrounding traditional council land, and EKZNW has been working closely with community conservation areas.</li> <li>• It is anticipated that the expansion of HiP will be southwards towards existing community conservation areas, and the eMakhosini/Babanango area which has a rich cultural heritage, thus potentially developing the area at large into the third world heritage site in KwaZulu-Natal.</li> </ul>

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4.1	<p><b>Comments and Questions raised are summarised below:</b></p> <p>(a) Ms Calmeyer stated that the project has avoided by all means to have powerlines traverse through the Park, hence both suggested corridors of Iphiva-Duma east and west go around the Park, but it is unlikely that the surrounding expansion areas can be completely avoided. The servitude for the powerlines is only 55m.</p> <p>She asked from an EKZNW perspective, what is their idea of least impact in terms of the options available from the proposed corridors?</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Ms Longmore stated that the expansion plans around HiP are at an advanced stage and they include Black Rhino Expansion Plans and having surrounding areas formally proclaimed as protected areas, hence the need to treat the areas earmarked for expansion as protected areas. Areas such as the Thula-Thula protected area must be considered as an extension of HiP because biodiversity moves, and most of those areas are foraging sites that no form of mitigation may minimise potential negative impacts associated with the project. Wilderness areas also need to be taken into consideration.</p>
5	<p><b>Comments and questions on the Iphiva-Duma study area</b></p> <p>Ms Longmore and Ms Thambu commented on the following:</p> <p>a) Avifauna within the Iphiva-Duma proposed corridors appears to be a red flag. It needs the input of specialist studies.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Ms Calmeyer indicated that an avifaunal specialist has been appointed to conduct specialist studies for the proposed project. Mr Gounden further stated that noise and visual diverters are usually placed on the powerlines to deter the birds from flying into them. <b>Action:</b> Ms Thambu to provide CITES listings.</p> <p>Ms Longmore advised that it would be preferable for the project to be implemented as far away from the Park as possible as there are also international obligations to be met in responsibly conserving the Park. There is also a 5km <i>de facto</i> buffer around the Park that triggers an EIA in terms of Listing Notice 3. The site for the Duma Substation which already has environmental authorisation is within the 5 km buffer. The western corridor of Iphiva-Duma is also within the 5km buffer in some places.</p> <p>b) Ms Longmore asked if Iphiva-Duma east and west corridors were the only options for the powerlines to traverse without affecting HiP and its surroundings?</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Ms Calmeyer indicated that Eskom needs as short a route as possible to get the powerlines from Iphiva to Duma substations to minimise costs. Protected areas such as Manyoni Private Game Reserve and HiP were avoided when identifying possible corridors for the powerlines. Ultimately a solution with the least impacts needs to be identified.</p> <p>c) Ms Thambu asked if there are no existing servitudes that the powerlines can follow?</p>

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	<p><b>Response:</b> Ms Calmeyer indicated that existing servitudes and corridors parallel to existing powerlines were given priority when identifying possible powerline corridors. Some of these servitudes are, however, in protected areas. Protected areas will be avoided as far as is possible, even if they have existing servitudes or powerlines.</p> <p>d) Ms Thambu asked if the towers can carry more than one (1) line.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Mr Bailey stated that the towers can carry more than one (1) line.</p> <p>e) Ms Longmore asked if any of the proposed corridors have the potential to be moved?</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Ms Calmeyer indicated that altering the proposed corridors completely would require the scoping phase to be re-done which would have major financial implications for Eskom and a significant extension of the project timeline. The final Scoping Report has been submitted to DEA, and specialists' studies are in progress and near completion. Slight deviations to the current corridors could, however, be considered without re-doing the Scoping Phase.</p> <p>f) Ms Thambu indicated that EKZNW has noted that the specialists appointed for the project are not from KZN, hence it is advised that the project specialists engage with EKZNW local specialists before finalising their specialist reports.</p> <p>It was agreed that the project specialists will engage with EKZNW local specialists before submitting their final specialist reports. They will communicate directly, but Ms Thambu will be copied on all correspondence because final comments and recommendations must come from the EKZNW planning unit to be deemed as legitimate.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Ms Thambu to provide contact details of EKZNW specialists, and any other Interested and Affected Parties that the EIA team specialists should consult with. These specialists include: Mr Brett Coverdale (birds), Stephen Richert (Regional Ecologist) Mr Boyd Escott (Rhino), and Mr Jabulani Ngubane (Park Manager - HiP). And contact details of Bat KZN Society.</p> <p>g) Ms Longmore suggested that an extension can be requested from national DEA for submission so that the necessary studies are conducted thoroughly because the study area is quite extensive.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Ms Calmeyer stated that a request for a 50-day extension was submitted to the DEA, but that it was denied as the Regulations do not provide for an extension for the reasons requested. The final Scoping Report for the project has been submitted.</p> <p>h) Ms Longmore indicated that there is a landing-strip within HiP and a helicopter pad that needs to be borne in mind when finalising which corridor is best for the powerlines. She</p>

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	<p>indicated that there is a safety issue with having powerlines where helicopters are used for monitoring black rhino poaching. Ms Thambu further stated that the same applies for private game farms who use helicopters and drones for anti-poaching activities.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Ms Longmore to provide exact location of landing-strip and helicopter pad.</p> <p>i) It was noted that the potential impact of powerlines on drones used for anti-poaching activities needs to be assessed.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Mr Bailey indicated that the shortest and straightest route is usually given preference, but it should avoid heritage sites, relocations, forestry, protected areas, and sugar cane which are often incompatible land uses for powerlines. Areas of least impact are given preference.</p> <p>j) Ms Longmore stated that greater public good needs to be prioritised since areas such as HiP belong to all peoples and threatened species cannot be compromised. She asked which landowners have been consulted in the study area.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Ms Chamane stated that 31 Traditional Councils within the study area were consulted.</p> <p>k) Ms Calmeyer indicated that in initial consultations with the EKZMW in September 2016, the EIA team was advised that there is no formal buffer zone around HiP, and was not informed of the intentions regarding the extension areas. She stated that the process of re-doing scoping for the project would be costly and result in a project delay of 6 – 12 months.</p> <p>l) Ms Longmore stated that EKZMW will study the proposed corridors for the powerlines in detail and will indicate if any fatal flaws are identified. She indicated that she understood that the project must be done right and within certain timeframes. She concluded that she will wait for the specialist reports before providing commentary, and will inform the EKZMW specialists of the proposed corridors to avoid “retrospective comebacks.”</p> <p>m) Ms Calmeyer stated that if a new and third alternative is suggested, scoping will have to be re-done. However, shifting an already proposed corridor may be presented as a deviation if it is added before specialist studies have been finalised. The deviation can be presented as a mitigation of an already existing alternative of the project.</p> <p>n) Ms Calmeyer confirmed that the Eskom Northern KwaZulu-Natal Strengthening project is a Strategic Infrastructure Project (SIP) aimed at electricity generation to support socio-economic development. It will be problematic to have an overall analysis that states that all proposed corridors are fatally flawed, with no options available for the powerlines to connect the Iphiva and Duma Substations.</p>

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	<p>o) Ms Longmore asked if a viewshed analysis was done for the project and asked about the height of pylons. She stated that visual intrusion in wilderness areas will be problematic because by definition, wilderness areas should have no trace of manmade structures.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Mr Gounden stated that it is anticipated that the pylons will range from 40 – 60m with approximately 9m ground clearance. Mr Roopnarain further stated that the maintenance of powerlines needs annual inspections and whichever corridor is chosen must allow for access to maintain the powerlines, which may include the use of trucks and cranes, which in the case of HiP, may increase safety and poaching risk.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Ms Longmore to provide shapefile of wilderness areas in and around HiP.</p> <p>p) Ms Longmore asked whether the Duma Substation will attract development around HiP as a result of the prospect of electrifying other industries.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Mr Bailey stated that Duma Substation will be very low-key with no reticulation. It is mainly for the use of Transnet.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Ms Longmore to provide socio-economic information to Ms San Marie Aucamp for the Social Impact Assessment of the project. Ms Longmore will provide Folweni Mine alternatives to Ms Calmeyer.</p>
6	<p><b>Private Game Farms and Stewardship Sites:</b></p> <p>Ms Calmeyer stated that Zimanga and the Manyoni Private Game Reserves near Mkhuze have raised concerns about the impact of the project on their financial viability. The Manyoni Private Game Reserve is a proclaimed protected area and Zimanga is in the process of applying for protection but is not yet proclaimed.</p> <p>Ms Thambu identified stewardship sites within the project study area, and it was noted that there is a stewardship site towards KwaNongoma from Mkhuze, near Mabeleni, near Iphiva Site 3. She indicated that the agreements between the landowners and EKZNW for the stewardship sites may have to be revisited to see if they have any limitations on the use of that land such as servitudes; if so, some agreements would have to be renegotiated with EKZNW to allow for the servitude of powerlines.</p> <p>Ms Chamane identified the stewardship area near Iphiva site 3 as that of KwaGumbi Traditional Council (Somkhanda), which is found between Mkhuze and Pongola, and has most of its land administered under the Emvokweni Community Trust.</p>
7	<p><b>The Way Forward</b></p> <p>Ms Thambu requested that all shapefiles sent to EKZNW must be in decimal degrees to</p>



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	maintain accuracy.  It was agreed that all information to be shared by EKZNW will be sent by Friday, 10 November 2017.
<b>8</b>	<b>Closure</b>
	Ms Thambu thanked all present and closed the meeting.



## APPENDIX A: Attendance List

Alphabetical (Surname Order)

No	Name & Surname	Organisation	Position	Email	Attended
1	Mr Philip Bailey	Eskom Holdings SOC Limited	Project Development Manager	<a href="mailto:BaileyPJ@eskom.co.za">BaileyPJ@eskom.co.za</a>	Yes
2	Mrs Terry Calmeyer	MDTE	Environmental Assessment Practitioner	<a href="mailto:terry@mdte.co.za">terry@mdte.co.za</a>	Yes
3	Ms Lungelo Chamane	Wakhiwe SES	Public Participation Officer	<a href="mailto:lungelo@wakhiwe.co.za">lungelo@wakhiwe.co.za</a>	Yes
4	Mr Mikeshen Gounden	Eskom Holdings SOC Limited	Civil Engineer	<a href="mailto:goundenmi@eskom.co.za">goundenmi@eskom.co.za</a>	Yes
5	Ms Jenny Longmore	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife	Principal Conservation Planner	<a href="mailto:Jenny.longmore@kznwildlife.com">Jenny.longmore@kznwildlife.com</a>	Yes
6	Ms Grace Mashabela	Eskom Holdings SOC Limited	Project Manager	<a href="mailto:MashabGT@eskom.co.za">MashabGT@eskom.co.za</a>	No
7	Mr Mohammad Sho'ayb Nabbie	Eskom Holdings SOC Limited	Senior Engineer	<a href="mailto:nabbieM@eskom.co.za">nabbieM@eskom.co.za</a>	Apologised
8	Mr Amish Roopnarain	Eskom Holdings SOC Limited	Lines Engineer	<a href="mailto:RoopnaA@eskom.co.za">RoopnaA@eskom.co.za</a>	Yes
9	Ms Dinesree Thambu	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife	Principal Conservation Planner	<a href="mailto:Dinesree.thambu@kznwildlife.com">Dinesree.thambu@kznwildlife.com</a>	Yes