

COMMENTS AND RESPONSE REPORT

**Proposed “HELIOS-JUNO” 765kV Transmission Powerline & Substations Upgrades
Western Cape and Northern Cape Provinces
NEAS Ref: DEA/EIA/0001558/2012
DEA Ref: 14/12/16/3/3/2/439**

I&AP	Comments, Concerns & Queries	Date	Response from Mokgope / Eskom
WA Loubser	<p>i) I would like to receive documents for comments via post:</p> <p>ii) Eliminate theft</p>	11-03-13	<p>i) Noted.</p> <p>ii) It is a challenge to eradicate this crime problem. However during the construction phase of the power line, the contractors and the team are prohibited from criminal activities such as theft on private properties. If caught, they would face charges handled by the police and could face termination of their work contracts.</p>
Mr N Hickman	I would like to receive documents for comments via email: nhickman@telcomsa.net	18-03-13	Noted.
Mr MNG van Jaarsveld	<p>i) I would like to receive documents for comments via fax: 0273411443</p> <p>ii) Investigate the specific impacts on the ecology, e.g.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">(a) The broadening of roads in an already damaged ecological area.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">(b) The increased movement of vehicles and division of camps.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">(c) The recovery time of the ecology in the area is about 40 years and longer.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">(d) Decreased carrying capacity of soils.</p>	19-03-13	<p>i) Noted.</p> <p>ii) Thank you for your comments. We will bring this to the Vegetation specialists' attention to investigate on the impacts and to provide mitigation measures.</p>
Mr Everhardus Johannes Louw	I would like to receive documents for comments via post or fax: PO Box 185, Loeriesfontein, 8185. Fax: 0276621060	26-03-13	Noted.
Mr ASVD Westhuizen	<p>i) Please ask the following of my colleagues/friends to register as an I&AP for this EIA: Mr GAG Westhuizen, PO Box 184, Kakamas, 8870</p> <p>ii) I would like to receive documents for comments via post: PO Box 98, Loeriesfontein, 8185</p>	02-04-13	<p>i) Mr GAG Westhuizen has been included in the EIA database and would be sent documents pertaining to this project.</p> <p>ii) Noted.</p>

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Louis Visser	i) I received I&APs registration form, from you. Please can you give me more information and let me know what it is all about. I am currently in the process of selling the farm. How will this affect the sale?	04-04-13	i) We are currently compiling an Environmental Scoping report for this project, which would be ready for your review in May 2013. In summary, the proposed powerline entails three alternative powerlines routes of which only one is going to be chosen to construct the powerline along. The Decisions for choosing the route will be based on: interested and affected parties comments (like yourself) and specialist assessment findings such as wetland, vegetation, avifauna, agriculture, Heritage, ecotourist, fauna, visual and social aspects. Please note that the final route chosen might not be the one affecting your farm. Commencement of construction will only be allowed to take place after Environmental Authorisation has been granted. Apparently after Authorisation of the line, Eskom would have to negotiate for servitude with each landowner whose farm is affected. Environmental Authorisation could take a year to two from now. The Eskom negotiation process could take up to 2 years. Hence construction of the powerline could be 4 to 5 years from now. Public meetings are planned for May 2013. I will inform you of the dates and venues once finalised. It would be an opportunity for you to attend so you may discuss your concerns with Eskom representatives. From my opinion, the project would not affect the sales of the farm as construction would only commence at a later stage. However, it would be grateful of you to send me details on the new landowners.
	ii) Thank you for your reply. I currently reside in London. I am however returning, in May. The farm is currently for sale. Just to bring to your attention, I applied for a wind farm, a few years ago and it got dismissed, due to the environmental impact.	10-04-13	ii) Which town would be convenient for you to attend the meeting?
	iii) Last year, they also found new plant species, on the farm. This may also impact your proposed works. I can send you the details, if needed.		iii) Information was send to the consultant which was further brought to the vegetation specialist's attention.

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	<p>of our client's properties. Kindly acknowledge receipt and inform us accordingly.</p> <p>Due to the delay in the postal services, Client could not respond earlier.</p>		<i>downloaded by Downing & Engelbrech Attorneys on the 13-08-13)</i>
Christine Visser & Buys Wiese	Their details were forwarded to the consultant by the vegetation specialist.	18-04-13	<p>EAP had a telephonic conversation with Christine Visser. The BID was emailed to them.</p> <p>Their property is about 40km from Vredendal so they may avail themselves for the public meetings.</p>
Alana Duffell-Canham (CapeNature)	<p>i) CapeNature has received several queries regarding this project. We have not been officially notified as we should be as we are a commenting authority as well as one of our nature reserves being affected. Please send documentation at your earliest convenience.</p> <p>ii) I will hopefully be able to send you the shape files of all the CapeNature properties affected by the development later today.</p> <p>iii) There are specialist studies referred to in the Scoping report, please can you send these to me as well.</p> <p>We may need to organise a meeting between CapeNature, yourselves and Eskom before we finalise our comments on the Scoping Report as we have several concerns that need to be discussed</p> <p>Three powerline corridor alternatives have been presented as part of the Scoping study. All three powerline corridors lie within an area known as the Knersvlakte Conservation Area. The process of</p>	<p>13-06-13</p> <p>26-06-13</p> <p>31-07-13</p>	<p>i) Apologies for the late response. Please find attached Draft Scoping Report for your review and commenting.</p> <p>ii) If possible, please send me Google Earth Shape files of the property affected, which I need to bring to Eskom's attention. Please also provide me with the property name so I may send you a map that illustrates that particular portion of the affected area.</p> <p>iii) The Vegetation Assessment Report will be available for your review in the EIR phase. Thanks.</p> <p>Tentative dates for the meeting are yet to be confirmed. Thank you. <i>(The meeting was held on 18th July 2013)</i></p> <p>Thank you for your comments. Please note that from an environmental impact perspective, Alternative 3 (green line) would be the preferred option as it would be parallel to an existing</p>

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	<p>acquiring the properties to be formally conserved began in 1999 and the area currently managed as a Nature Reserve. The Knersvlakte is of international importance. The area is one of the two richest areas for succulent plants in the world. According to Desmet (1999), the conservation targets in the Knersvlakte are justified by the fact that plant patterns and processes on the Knersvlakte are globally unique and there are no other opportunities within the Succulent Karoo to conserve such a large connected area of this habitat within a single reserve.</p> <p>Impacts associated with the construction of a powerline, particularly vehicular and machinery access, could be of extremely high negative and of very long term, possibly permanent duration. Rehabilitation of rocky and stony habitat, once disturbed is not feasible or possible given the aridity of the habitat and the high salinity of the soil – only the very top layer of the soil (between 5 and 10 cm) has been leached over a very long term. Plants are therefore only able to grow in this layer and therefore any disturbance of the soil where the top layer of the soil is mixed with deeper layers will result in permanent absence of plants.</p> <p>It should also be noted that visual impacts are of concern to CapeNature in this case as a powerline is a highly visible structure which will affect the sense of place of one of our nature reserves.</p> <p>Corridor Alternative One (blue line) passes through several properties which form part of the core Knersvlakte Conservation Area. Corridor 1 is thus considered to be highly undesirable in terms of impacts on biodiversity as well as in terms of visual impacts. CapeNature is therefore of the opinion that Corridor 1 should not be considered further as part of the impact assessment process.</p>		<p>400kV power line and close to the existing access routes. During construction phase, vehicles and machinery may be recommended to use the existing access routes for the 400kV power line to avoid and/or minimize high impact disturbance on the vegetation.</p> <p>Recommendations from CapeNature would also be included in the EMPr.</p> <p>Inputs from CapeNature would be required prior to the biodiversity walk-down of the 700kV line.</p>

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	<p>Corridor 3 (Green line), at this stage, is considered the most preferable option from a visual perspective as it follows an existing powerline. This route would also be more preferable from a biodiversity perspective if existing access routes can be utilised (i.e. no new roads are created) but fine-scale identification of sensitive patches (for example dolomite patches, wetland areas etc.) must still be done by a biodiversity specialist. These sensitive areas must be clearly demarcated as no-go areas. The specialist should also obtain input from CapeNature. A combination of corridors 2 and 3 may also be acceptable depending on whether sensitive areas can be avoided through micrositing.</p> <p>CapeNature notes from the meeting that the final powerline route within the approved corridor may be affected by negotiations with landowners. Therefore, a walk down of the entire route will be essential to microsite each pylon location. Eskom have indicated their willingness to do this. We also note that spanning can be as much as 500-600 metres between pylons which will provide some allowance to avoid placing pylons within highly sensitive areas. We would like to note that we are still concerned about the impacts of driving between pylons and proof should be provided that sensitive areas can be avoided during both construction and operational phases of the project.</p> <p>The project should be planned so that construction takes place in the dry summer months as the soils become slippery in Winter, resulting in more damage from driving.</p> <p>Martial eagles, currently nest on 3 known localities (Jessica Shaw pers comm) on the existing powerline associated with Corridor 3. Martial Eagles are listed as Vulnerable (Barnes 2000) Any construction should consider the sensitivity of the breeding season and keep disturbance of birds to a minimum. We strongly</p>		

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	recommend consulting an ornithologist regarding the breeding season of these particular birds. We would also like to recommend that Jessica Shaw of the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute at the University of Cape Town be consulted as she is currently doing research on birds and powerline interactions in the Karoo and would be able to provide valuable input.		
Dorien Werth (DENC, Northern Cape)	The DSR of the above mentioned was received by the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation (DENC). There were no concerns raised in the report. DENC awaits the final Scoping Report for review.	09-07-13	Thank you for your comments. The FSR hardcopy will be couriered to Dorien Werth.
Mr A Osborne (DEADP, Western Cape)	<p>i) The potential impacts associated with the proposed new servitude road must be identified and assessed and reported on in the EIAR.</p> <p>ii) Reference is made to the amount of vegetation to be cleared for the construction of the power line infrastructure; however details must also be provided with regards to vegetation to be cleared for the upgrading of the substations. This must be included in the final SR.</p>	15-07-13	<p>i) Noted with thanks.</p> <p>ii) Please note that details (<i>i.e.</i> which site of substation would be extended, the extent of this extension in order to accommodate the 765kV yard / bay) with regards to vegetation to be cleared for the upgrading of the substations will only be available during the EIA phase when detailed assessments (environmental and technical) are being or have been undertaken. Furthermore, the solid information will be provided during the compilation of the Environmental Management Programme (final sketches and drawings for substation upgrade / extension will be available).</p> <p>Generally the area to be utilised for upgrade, extension and construction of substation is cleared altogether of vegetation, not trimmed. The area is excavated and compacted with the imported material (<i>i.e.</i> soil amongst others.) to stabilise equipment being installed (<i>e.g.</i> transformers).</p> <p>Further details on guidelines for transmission power line</p>

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	<p>iii) Specific mitigation measures in relation to potential impacts on the affected watercourses must be included in the EIAR.</p> <p>The potential impacts associated with the proposed construction of the power line infrastructure across the watercourses must also be identified and assessed. Specific attention must be given to the riparian environment. This must be included on the EIAR.</p> <p>iv) It is noted that CapeNature and Birdlife South Africa is not listed as I&AP in the I&APs in the draft SR. CapeNature and Birdlife South Africa must be registered as Interested and Affected Parties and allowed an opportunity to provide comments.</p> <p>The Directorate reserves the right to revise or withdraw comments or request further information based on any information received.</p>		<p>vegetation management are provided in Annexure L in the Helios-Juno FSR.</p> <p>iii) Comments would be brought to the wetland specialist's attention, thank you.</p> <p>iv) Thank you for bringing this to our attention. CapeNature are registered as I&APs and Birdlife South Africa will be included in the I&AP register as well as be provided with the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Reports. <i>(Comments from the CapeNature and Birdlife South Africa were received)</i></p>
<p>Carolyn Ah Shene-Verdoorn (BirdLife South Africa)</p>	<p>i) Avifaunal specialist studies for the EIA to include a comparison of the different impacts on raptors and electrical faulting issues of the four alternative structures presented in the DSR. Is there any data yet on any impacts on raptors from the new crossrope tower design?</p> <p>ii) Avoid ephemeral pans and buffer zones of 100 m around pans (and CBA2, T2 areas) as these are very important in the arid areas. Effective bird diverters on all lines along sections where they pass by pans, through the ESA corridors and over all perennial and non-perennial rivers and across bird flight paths, as advised by avifaunal specialist.</p> <p>iii) Avifaunal specialist to review monitoring data of large terrestrial</p>	02-08-13	<p>i) Comments would be brought to the Avifaunal specialist's attention! Data would be provided in the EIR phase.</p> <p>ii) Noted with thanks. Comments would be brought to the Avifaunal specialist's attention!</p> <p>iii) Noted with thanks. Comments would be brought to the</p>

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	<p>bird collisions and electrical faulting on other transmission lines across the Karoo to make new recommendations on mitigation measures that can be taken.</p> <p>iv) If authorisation is given, monitoring of collisions and possible electrical faulting for at least five years should take place to determine the actual impacts of the transmission lines on threatened raptors and large terrestrial bird species, and new mitigating measures developed and implemented to reduce these impacts. This must be included in the EMP.</p>		<p>Avifaunal specialist's attention!</p> <p>iv) BirdLife recommendations would be included in the EMP.</p>