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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REPORT

BASIC ASSESSMENT (BA), MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN, AND GENERAL AUTHORISATION FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMPALA ZIRCON TEMPORARY BY-PASS 132KV POWERLINE WITH ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE MAINTENANCE OF THE EXISTING IMPALA ZIRCON 132KV MAIN LINE WITHIN THE UMHLATHUZE MUNICIPALITY IN KWAZULU NATAL PROVINCE

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**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REPORT FOR THE BASIC ASSESSMENT (BA),
MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN, AND GENERAL AUTHORISATION
FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMPALA ZIRCON
TEMPORARY BY-PASS 132KV POWERLINE WITH ASSOCIATED
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ZIRCON 132KV MAIN LINE WITHIN THE UMHLATHUZE MUNICIPALITY IN
KWAZULU NATAL PROVINCE**

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List of Abbreviations

BA	Basic Assessment
BAR	Basic Assessment Report
C&RR	Comments & Response Report
DBAR	Draft Basic Assessment Report
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
EAP	Environmental Assessment Practitioner
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FBAR	Final Basic Assessment Report
GA	General Authorisation
I&AP	Interested and or Affected Party.
LPU	Lake Qube Water Pump
MMP	Maintenance Management Plan
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NWA	National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998)
OOS	Organ of State
PPP	Public Participation Process

1 INTRODUCTION

The Public Participation Process (PPP) is a cornerstone of every Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). It forms a fundamental part of these procedures and is one of the most important components of the environmental authorisation process. The principles of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), the National Water Act (NWA), 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations of 2014 (as amended) govern the BA, MMP and GA processes, including public participation process. These principles emphasise the provision of sufficient and transparent information on an ongoing basis to all stakeholders to allow for meaningful input, and they ensure the inclusion of previously disadvantaged individuals, women, and youth in the process.

The aim of the process is to provide Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs), Stakeholders, Organs of State (OoS), Landowners and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) with clear, accurate, and comprehensive information about the proposed development, its alternatives, and the associated environmental impacts. Furthermore, it ensures that I&APs are given a fair opportunity to express their viewpoints, raise issues, and voice concerns regarding the proposal, its alternatives, and/or the decisions being made.

All inputs from the public and relevant stakeholders are taken into consideration during the project planning phase. All issues raised and comments made are maintained in the register of comments and responses. This register is updated as and when new comments and concerns are raised.

In terms of the EIA regulations, the public –

- May participate in the BA application process.
- May comment on any written communication submitted to the competent authority by the applicant or environmental consultant.
- Must comment within the timeframes.
- Must send a copy of any comments to the applicant if the comments were submitted directly to the competent authority; and
- Must disclose any interest that the person has in the application being granted or refused.

Further, in terms of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended), the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) –

- Manages the application process.
- Must be independent.
- Undertakes the work objectively – even if this results in findings that are not favourable to the applicant.
- Discloses information that may influence the decision; and
- Conducts a public participation process.

1.1 Project Background

Eskom Holdings SOC Limited (the Applicant) intends for the Maintenance and Refurbishment of the Impala Zircon 132kV powerline located in Empangeni,. The existing powerline spans approximately 10,582 km in length, but Eskom is only responsible for about 7.6km of this line; the rest of the powerline belongs to the uMhlathuze Local Municipality. The Impala Zircon 132kV powerline is a radial line with no back-feeding capabilities and distributes electricity to approximately 6062 customers. It feeds Cygnus Substation, which supplies all the Esikhaweni networks, uMhlathuze Local Municipality and Lake Qube water pump (LPU).

The 10km powerline is from the North coast of KwaZulu-Natal and is exposed to both industrial and coastal pollution. Therefore, due to the proximity to the coast, this powerline is experiencing severe corrosion and deterioration on tower foundations. Therefore, a temporary bypass powerline is required in order to continue with the Maintenance of the Main powerline.

The proposed temporary 132kV bypass powerline will be approximately 6.5km in length and will be built on wooden poles as a temporary option, which will allow the Maintenance of the Main powerline. The temporary bypass powerline will be in use for a period of 5 years. The temporary bypass powerline will run parallel (within its servitude) to the existing Main powerline (approximately 15m apart) and across the uMhlathuze River, most of the powerline traverses a sugarcane farm.

2 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The overarching aim of the Public Participation Process (PPP) is not only to comply with the relevant legislative requirements, but also to ensure that all potential stakeholders and Interested and Affected Parties are given a fair and meaningful opportunity to participate. Therefore, Selahle Consultancy & Projects (**SCP's**) approach to this process was to proactively identify the relevant I&APs, inform them of the proposed development and related procedures, involve them by affording them ample opportunity to raise issues and concerns about the proposed development and consolidate all those issues within the planning process.

Based on the above approach, the following methodology was used to ensure that a complete I&AP communication process was achieved:

- Consultation with Landowners, Stakeholders and the various Organs of State.
- Compile a Background Information Document (BID), including all information and describing the process, including a map of the area affected by the proposed development.
- Advertise the project in the prescribed newspapers, put up site notices, identify all authorities and adjacent landowners, and send them a BID (according to the legal requirements).
- As I&APs respond to the advertisements and notices, register them on an I&AP database.

- Communicate relevant information to all registered I&APs throughout the process, in order for them to respond.
- Address the issues raised in a Comment and Response Report (CRR).
- Determine the need for a public meeting and, if required, arrange, advertise, and hold public meetings, and record all issues raised; and
- This report provides a description of the methodology followed and includes detailed appendices as proof of the procedure followed.

3 OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The PPP for Basic Assessment was initiated on Monday, **9 March 2026**. The stages that formed part of the public participation process to date are reflected in the figure below:

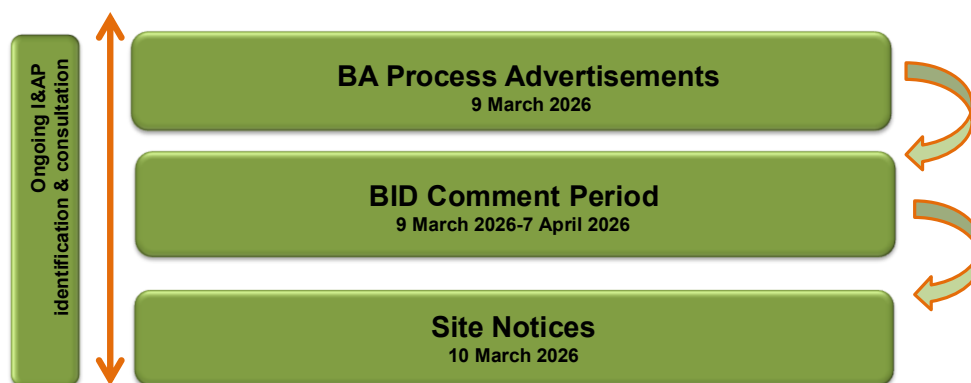


Figure 1: Public Participation Process to date.

Members of the public who wished to be registered on the database as an I&AP were able to do so via telephone and email.

On-going consultation with key stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, relevant government departments, local businesses etc.) and identified I&APs ensured that I&APs were kept informed regarding the Basic Assessment, Maintenance Management Plan and General Authorisation processes and any key changes regarding the project. Networking with I&APs will effectively continue throughout all the phases of Basic Assessment, the adoption of the Maintenance Management Plan and General Authorisation (GA). Applications are submitted to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) and the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) respectively. Where required, stakeholders and I&APs will be engaged on an individual basis.

During the Phase 1 of the public participation process (PPP), consultation was undertaken with individuals, businesses, institutions and organizations. These identified Interested and Affected Parties will be afforded an opportunity to comment on the Draft Basic Assessment Report (DBAR) and GA.

Table 1: List of Commenting Organs of State and Stakeholders

Type of Interested and Affected Party	Directorates
Local communities and residents	Ward Councillors Richard's Bay, Empangeni Madlanghala and Bhiliya Communities
Government Departments (Organs of State)	- The city of uMhlathuze Municipality - King Cetshwayo District Municipality - Department of Water and Sanitation - South African Civil Aviation Authority - KwaZulu-Natal Amafa and Research Institute - Department of Roads & Transport - South African Heritage Resource Agency - Air Traffic and Navigation Services SOC Limited (ATNS) - KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (KZNEDTEA) - Transnet - South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL) - Department of Electricity and Energy (DEE)
Competency Authority – Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE)	<u>Departments under DFFE</u> - Biodiversity Conservation, Control Biodiversity - Forest Resource Protection Branch: Forestry Management - Integrated Coastal Management - Coastal Pollution Management - DFFE Protected Areas Directorate - DFFE Oceans and Coast Directorate
Provincial commenting Authority- - KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (KZNEDTEA)	<u>Departments under KZNEDTEA</u> - Environmental Impact Management - Coastal Management - Biodiversity Management
Business owners and industry groups	- Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone Company - The Umhlathuze Valley Sugar Company (Pty) Ltd (UVS)
Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)	- Bird Life South Africa - Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) - Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife - Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)
Traditional leaders and landowners	Tribal Authorities

The figure below indicates the next steps to be undertaken during the continuation of the PP process.

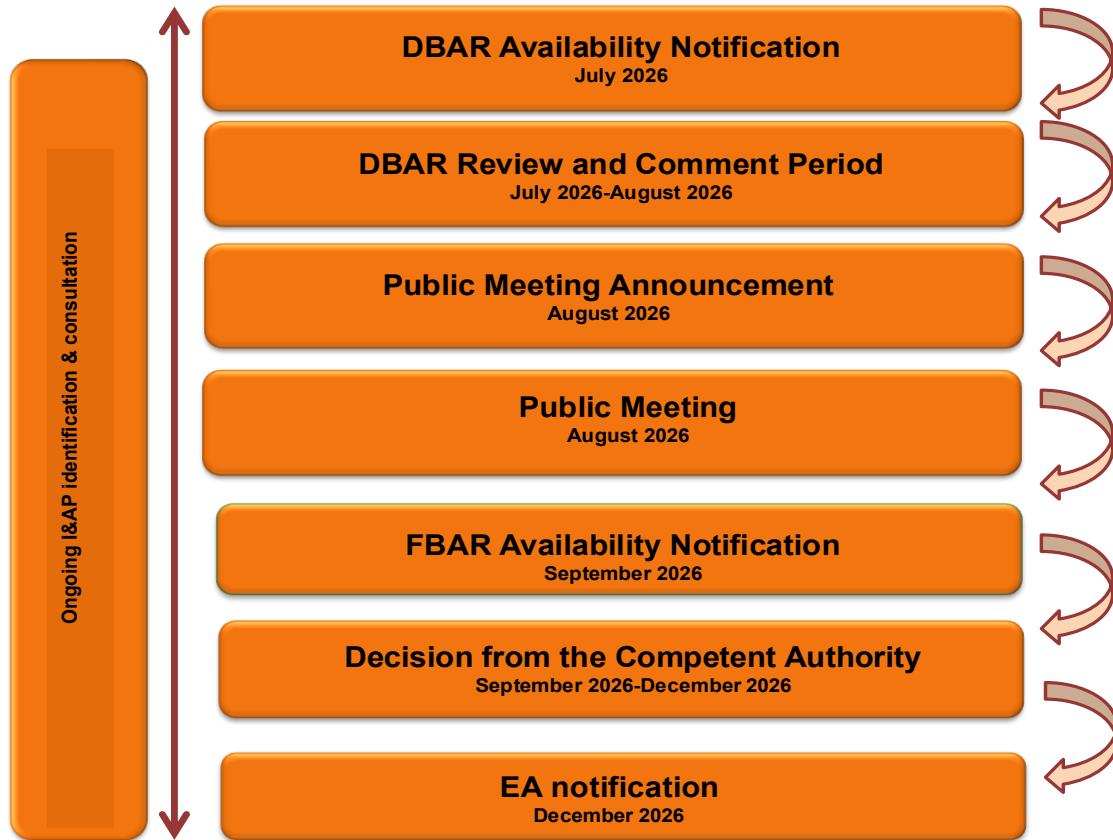


Figure 2: Public Participation going forward

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS TO DATE

The opportunity to participate in the BA and GA processes was announced in **March 2026** in the following ways:

4.1.1 Stakeholder Mapping

A 5km radius mapping was used to be able to identify stakeholders who would be potentially impacted by the proposed development. This was also aimed at identifying key stakeholders directly impacted by the proposed project. In addition, this map was also used to identify locations for placing site notices, BID distribution and public meeting venues. Figure 4 below is a stakeholder map.

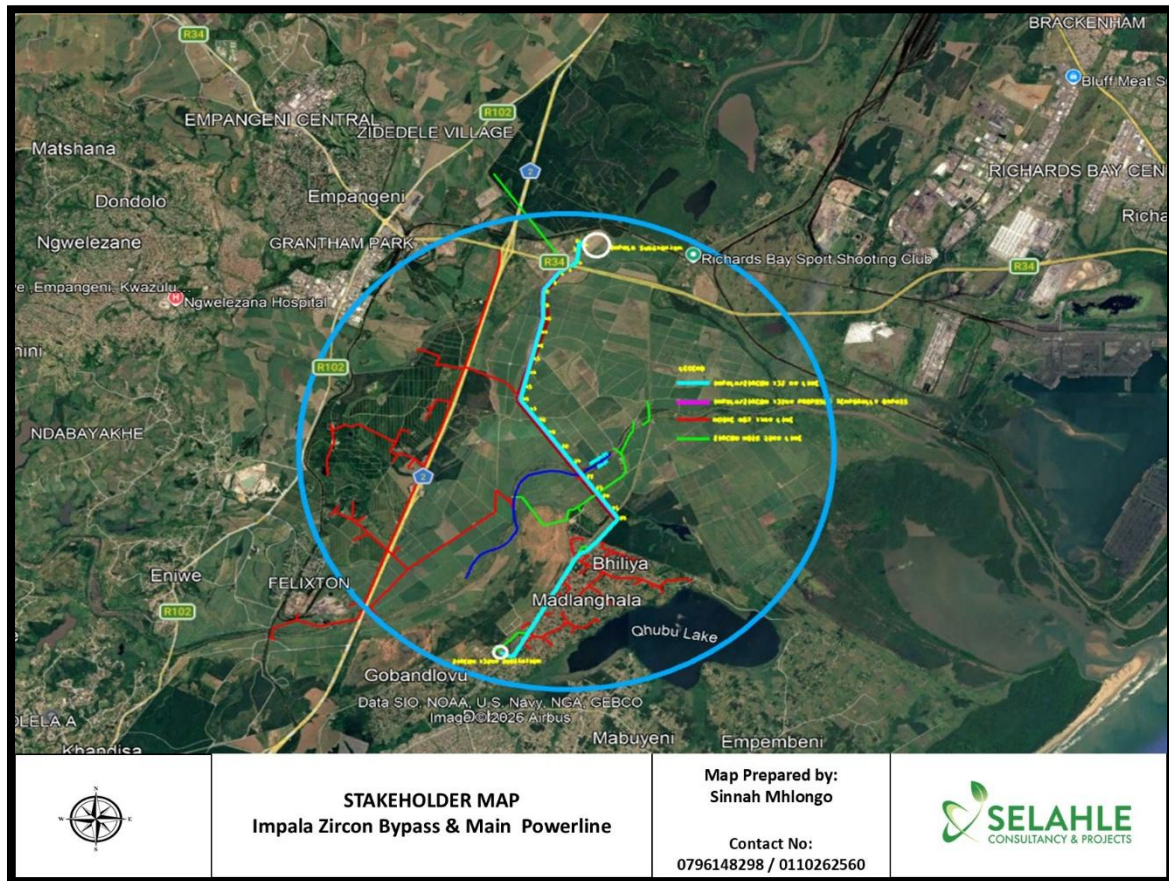


Figure 3: Impala Zircon Stakeholder Map

The Stakeholder Risk Mapping (SRM) method was also employed to identify, analyse and prioritise stakeholders based on the level of risk they might pose in the proposed development. This is to ensure that appropriate engagement manages stakeholder concerns, expectations, influence, and potential impacts on project outcomes.

Table 2: Stakeholders Risk Mapping

IDENTIFIED RISKS	- Potential complaints from landowners - Community Unrest - Lack of stakeholder interest or participation in the process. - Increased Crime - Public resistance and lobbying efforts against the project - Low attendance at public meetings and consultation sessions - Misinformation or misunderstanding of project information - Unrealistic stakeholder expectations regarding project outcomes and benefits - Language and communication barriers
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	- Community distrust towards the project proponent or authorities - Community opposition to the project - Failure to identify all relevant stakeholders
MITIGATION MEASURES	- Engage directly with affected landowners early in the process and address concerns promptly. - Maintain continuous and transparent communication with affected communities throughout the project lifecycle. - Use multiple communication channels to encourage stakeholder participation. - Collaborate with local authorities and community structures to monitor and address security concerns. - Provide clear and factual project information to address concerns and reduce misconceptions. - Schedule meetings at convenient times and locations for stakeholders. - Disseminate accurate and easy-to-understand project information through the official communication channel - Clearly communicate the project's scope, limitations, and anticipated benefits. - Translate key project information into the locally spoken language - Ensure transparency and provide regular feedback throughout the public participation process - Engage stakeholders early to identify and address concerns before they escalate. - Conduct a comprehensive stakeholder identification and mapping exercise at the outset of the process
LOCAL LANGUAGES SPOKEN	- English - Isizulu
NEWSPAPER	Zululand Observer

Site Notices

Approximately 20 A2 site notices in two languages (English and isiZulu) were erected within the footprint of the proposed development on **Tuesday, 10 March 2026**. The aimed at introducing the project to all Interested and Affected Parties in the Empangeni area. The areas that were covered are:

- Esikhaleni
- Empangeni
- Madlanghala
- Gobandlovu

▪ **Circulation of Newspaper Advertisement**

The newspaper advertisement was placed in the **Zululand Observed Newspaper** on **Monday, 9 March 2026**. The newspaper advert aimed at reaching a wider audience, including Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) who may not reside in the immediate vicinity of the site or who may not frequently pass by the erected site notices.

4.1.2 Circulation of Background Information Document

Background Information Document, together with a Comment Form in two languages (English and isiZulu) were distributed around the PAOI. Comment forms were also provided for all Interested and Affected Parties to complete and return to the SCP Public Participation Office. Furthermore, the mentioned BID, Notification Letters and Comments forms were sent via email to all pre-identified stakeholders, landowners, and Organs of State.

4.2 Review of Draft Basic Assessment Report and Public Comments

The DBAR will be made available for public review for a 30-day comment period as stipulated in the EIA Regulations, 2014(as amended). The comment period commenced is anticipated to be from **28 July 2026 to 26 August 2026**. Registered I&APs will be sent written notification of the availability of the DBAR through emails.

The DBAR will be made available at the following venues:

Table 3: Venues of where the DBAR will be available

Venue	GPS Location	QR CODE
Gobandlovu Community Hall	https://share.google/zv6sIPexoL2ndvQPH	
Madlankala Primary School	https://share.google/jDa6UNrhMqlZ83wqc	
Mcabango High School	https://share.google/lqQRelayVwKJCOjbl	
Empangeni Community Library	https://share.google/TpPnvZ3OmGEzfwhAd	
Esikhaleni Community Library	https://maps.app.goo.gl/JZr6NnKcyNtc1aox8	

The DBAR will also be made available on USB upon request and on the SCP website during the review period. Furthermore, all identified Organs of State will also be offered an opportunity to review and comment on the Draft BAR. A hard copy and/or soft copy (email) of the DBAR will be submitted to all Organs of State for review and comment.

4.3 Public Meetings

As part of the public participation process, public meetings will be undertaken during the Draft Basic Assessment Phase. The public meetings will be scheduled during the review and comment period of the DBAR. This will take place two (2) weeks from the date the DBAR will be released for public review. Public meetings are scheduled to occur between **17 August 2026 - 21 August 2026**.

These public meetings aim to provide I&APs with information regarding the proposed development. Furthermore, to afford I&APs to raise any comments and/or concerns regarding the proposed development. All comments and concerns made during the public meeting will be recorded and appended to the Final Basic Assessment Report (FBAR).

Comment and Response Report (CRR), which includes all issues raised and corresponding responses, will also be appended to the FBAR and submitted to the Competent Authority.

5 COMMENT AND ISSUE RESPONSE REPORT

A Comment and Response Report (CRR) would be compiled during the Draft Basic Assessment Report public review period. All comments, issues, and concerns raised by the I&APs will be recorded and duly responded to by the EAP and project managers should the queries be too technical.

6 CONCLUSION

Selahle Consultancy and Projects Pty Ltd has duly concluded Phase 1 of the and will commence with the second phase in **July 2026**. All registered and identified Interested and Affected Parties, Organs of State, Stakeholders and communities will be contacted and afforded an opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Basic Assessment Report and also be invited to all planned Public and Focus Group Meetings

The project database will be kept active until the end of the project life cycle

The public participation information and supporting documents will be appended in the Draft Basic Assessment Report as Appendix D. Below herein is the list of the PP appendices and sub-appendices:

- Appendix D: Public Participation Information
 - Appendix D1: Public Participation Report
 - Appendix D2: Proof of site Notice Erection
 - Appendix D3: Proof of Newspaper Advertisement
 - Appendix D4: Project Announcement Notification letters
 - Appendix D4(a): Notification Letters to I&APs
 - Appendix D4(b): Notification Letters to Organ of State
 - Appendix D5: Background Information Document (BID)
 - Appendix D5(a): Proof of Bid Distribution
 - Appendix D5(b): BID comment Forms
 - Appendix D5(c): Email Correspondence
 - Appendix D6: Database
 - Appendix D7: Comment and Response Report