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Imibuzo Melanie Webber

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Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning
ISebe leMicimbi yeNdalo esiNgqongileyo noCwangciso loPhuhliso



The Director
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Dear Madam

**COMMENTS: PLAN OF STUDY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR
ESKOM' S PROPOSED NUCLEAR-1, -2 AND -3 POWER STATIONS
AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE.**

The above document dated 18 May 2009 and received by the Department on 20 May 2009, refers.

The Department has the following comments to make regarding the plan of study for EIA ("POS EIA"):

Alternative sites

Based on the findings of the Scoping Report, the Brazil and Schulpfontein sites were not considered feasible for further assessment based on severe time constraints associated with Nuclear-1's development coupled with limited local demand and the lack of existing power corridors. Now that three nuclear power stations are being considered with the last envisaged to be constructed in 2016, it is argued that it may not be reasonable to exclude these two sites from the current EIA process. Furthermore, much needed specialist studies at these two sites may provide information to suggest that these sites are more appropriate for development than the other sites identified. It is this Department's view that the Brazil and Schulpfontein sites should be included in the EIA based on the fact that the reason for excluding them in the first place may no longer be valid.

If the DEAT have agreed in principle with Eskom's approach to submit a combined application, it is not understood why Eskom cannot pursue the proposed combined application at present i.e. why Eskom is waiting for the amended EIA regulations to be promulgated.

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Integrated Environmental Management (Region B)*

Other Alternatives

With respect to alternatives, the POS EIA is not clear about what types of alternatives will be assessed in the EIA other than plant layout options on the various sites. Power generation alternatives (dealt with in terms of need and desirability for the proposed developments), nuclear technology alternatives and nuclear fuel options are not mentioned and should form part of the EIA.

Decommissioning

Impact methodology is presented for the construction and operation phases of the development. The decommissioning phase of the development seems to have been disregarded. Although this phase will only come onto effect after 60 yrs of operation making it practically difficult to assess all the impacts associated with this phase at present, there are impacts that must be assessed in the EIA. For example, the consequences for future land use options around the sites and the economic impacts related to the decommissioning phase must be assessed. The public and authorities must be in a position to understand what the long term implications of the project on the environment will be and adequate forward planning must be done to ensure that the environment is protected for future generations. These aspects must be assessed as part of the EIA.

Emergency response

The Emergency Response Specialist Assessment should include an investigation of emergency preparedness in the areas to be affected i.e. the degree to which medical facilities are prepared for casualties as a result of a nuclear incident at any of the plants as well as information as to what measures have been put in place and how they influence the decision on the matter i.e. the safety case will have had to be finalised and reviewed by the NNR and approved before an environmental authorisation is issued. In any event, the construction of the plants will not be able to commence without the NNR's installation licence which follows the evaluation of the safety case.

The POS EIA is not clear regarding the link between the DEAT environmental authorisation process and the National Nuclear Regulator (NNR) licensing process. The timing of these various decisions has also not been made explicit. The agreement between DEAT and the NNR of 15th June 2006 on how to deal with these matters has also not been included in the report. A clear indication of how the co-operative arrangement between DEAT and the NNR will work as well as the responsibilities of these two parties must be provided in a final POS EIA.

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Transport

It has been indicated that the determination of emergency planning zones will form part of the NNR process. This aspect, however, has implications for future land use options as well as infrastructure upgrades or new infrastructure needed for safe evacuation and thus it should be evaluated as part of the EIA.

Nuclear waste management

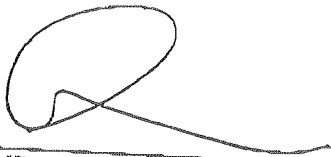
The issue of nuclear waste handling, management, storage and disposal does not seem to be covered explicitly by any of the specialist studies. How will this matter be addressed in the EIA?

Peer review

It is not clear whether or not the findings of the specialist reviewers will be included in the EIR. The findings of the specialist reviewers must be made public knowledge to ensure transparency and promote informed decision making.

This Department reserves the right to revise or withdraw comments or request further information from you based on any information received.

Yours faithfully



ANTHONY BARNES
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