

## MINUTES OF MEETING

**CLIENT** : KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport  
**PROJECT** : Sani Pass Road Upgrade – Phase 2 (&3)  
**PROJECT No** : J27344  
**PURPOSE** : Project Meeting No. 1  
**PLACE** : Queen Elizabeth Park – Commercial Operations Boardroom  
**DATE & TIME** : 3 March 2008  
**MINUTE TAKER** : 08h30 – 11h00

NAME	REPRESENTING	E-MAIL ADDRESS	DISTRIBUTION
<b>PRESENT</b>			
Rob Faure (RF)	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife	faurer@kznwildlife.com	1
Roger Porter (RP)	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife	rogport@kznwildlife.com	1
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Russell Stow (RS)	Arcus GIBB (Pty) Ltd	rstow@gibb.co.za	1
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### APOLOGIES

Yoliswa Ndlovo Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife ndlovuy@kznwildlife.com

### ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

None

**Minuted by:** Rashieda Thomas

**Approved by:** Russell Stow

Item No.	Comment By	Comment	Response By	Response	Action
1.	<b>OPENING DISCUSSIONS</b>				
1.1.	RS	<p>Extended welcome and thanks to all for attending considering the availability of most attendees.</p> <p>Noted that the aim of the meeting was to introduce and discuss the proposed project with EKZNW. Noted that the project engineers were present to provide more details.</p> <p>The purpose of the meeting was also to identify problems experienced in Phase 1 and prevent these from re-occurring in Phase 2.</p>	RP	Requested an overview of the proposed project and the roles of the various team members.	
1.2.	RS	Noted that ACER had completed the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for Phase 1 of the Sani Pass Road Upgrade. They were unable to undertake the required EIA for Phase 2 & 3 and hence ARCUS GIBB was appointed as the consultants to undertake the EIA.			
1.3.	EG	Introduced the Engineering Joint Venture between SSI, Semenya Furumele Transportation Engineers (Pty) Ltd and Ndizani Civils. RT, a member of the SSI team, was previously employed at the KZN Department of Transport (DoT). RT has therefore been involved in the Sani Pass upgrade project from its inception.			
2.	<b>PROJECT BACKGROUND</b>				
2.1.	RT	<p>Provided the background to the project and stated it had been divided into 3 Phases:</p> <p>Phase 1, involving km0–km14 of the Sani Pass road, was to be a stand-alone project serving hotels, tourist facilities, agriculture etc. and is currently under construction.</p> <p>The remainder of the Pass was initially divided into two phases i.e. Phase 2: km14–25 (to the existing border post) and Phase 3: km25–33 (to the Lesotho border). These two phases have now been combined into Phase 2 with the purpose of mitigating current impacts, improving links between Lesotho and South Africa and improving trade and tourist facilities.</p>	EG	The final design of the Pass is still undecided and before it can be completed, concerns need to be established and addressed in the design. At km16, the re-alignment i.e. straight line through switchbacks of the road, is a valid option but would require a 15m high fill. Spoil material generated from road works on other sections of the Pass could be used for fill at the proposed re-alignment section.	

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		<p>In terms of design, the topography and environmental/ecological attributes of Phase 2 &amp; 3 are different to Phase 1 and hence the proposed road structure is different.</p> <p>The road in Phase 1 has a width of 8–8.5m while Phase 2&amp;3 has a narrower width of 6m. The width of the road in Phase 2 is governed by the steep side-cuts and keeping with the existing alignment as far as possible so as not to disturb the surrounding area. Initially a tunnel was considered, however this was not upheld as it would detract from the scenery and aesthetic appeal of the Pass and also due to potentially high construction costs.</p> <p>The re-alignment of a section of Phase 2 (at km16) of approximately 1.5 km is being considered and will be confirmed after further investigation.</p>			
<b>3.</b>	<b>PROJECT DISCUSSION</b>				
3.1.	SC	Queried whether lay-bys would be created along the road.	EG	Stated that turning circles will be required along the Pass and viewing areas and picnic sites will be incorporated where possible. Additional turning circles may be required during the construction phase.	
3.2.	RT	Noted that the road will have to be closed during the construction period.	EG	Added that this will be discussed with the public through the public participation process.	
3.3.	RF	Queried where the site camps will be located during the construction period.	EG	Stated that there may be an opportunity to use the current border post facilities as the site camp. This option could be incorporated into the contract document. As part of the contract, at end of the Pass construction, the contractor would undertake all demolition works required at his cost.	
3.4.	RF	Stated that there would be a timing implication with using the current border post facilities as the site camp as rehabilitation needs to occur before the end of construction. The funds allocated to rehabilitation have to be spent within a certain time period and if not used will be forfeited.	EG	Responded that the funds allocated for the removal/demolition of the border post facilities could be used for rehabilitation.	
3.5.	RP	Noted that the cost for rehabilitation should be included into the road development and relocation of the border post contracts. Rehabilitation should take place at the current and	RF	Noted that if this is the case then the approach is acceptable.	

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		new border post as well as along the full length of the road. Should the contractor use the camp for road construction staff at the old border post, then the rehabilitation of this camp site should also be to his cost.			
3.6.	RS	Noted that undertaking this action may save rehabilitation funds.	RF	Stated that it was unlikely that any money would be saved, as the funds would simply be re-allocated.	
3.7.	IH	Stated that it needs to be confirmed that there are sufficient funds for rehabilitation.	RF	There is a history of mis-using rehabilitation funds through construction projects. This must be accounted for in the EIA.	
			RP	Stated that it is important to ensure that budget and skilled staff are available for rehabilitation. This must be conditional in contracts and highlighted boldly in the EIA.	
3.8.	EG	Added that the rehabilitation will occur during construction and will be incorporated into the design. Rehabilitation will be covered in detail in the design. E.G. added that one of the purposes of this meeting was to identify concerns that need to be addressed through the design process and can be written into the contract agreements.			
3.9.	RF	Questioned how much area outside of the 7m alignment would be disturbed.	EG	Responded that the design has not been finalised as yet. Various ideas have been proposed thus far including the use of retaining walls instead of fills. This will be decided in conjunction with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW) at the appropriate time.	
3.10.	RP	Noted that EKZNW will require that certain criteria are met with regards to design elements. The design must consider permafrost during winter, which can be up to 1m in depth. The tarred road leading to Katse dam appears to be in good condition and can be used as a good example of an appropriate road surface. The adverse impact of high rainfall on the ground and substrata will need to be considered. Noted that precipitation exceeds evaporation in KZN.	EG	Responded that the design team were currently addressing these problems at a local, as well as international level.	
			RS	Noted that the major issues that will have to be addressed are stormwater management and erosion control.	
3.11.	RP	Commented that the current state of the road is unstable and unacceptable and must be addressed in EIA.	RT	Drainage of the road will have to be addressed, as it is currently insufficient.	

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		Many objectors have not seen this point of view and must be made aware of the damage occurring on site, not allowing South Africa to meet conservation targets.	RS	This would serve as one of the rationals for the project that will be highlighted to the public.	
3.12.	GF	Highlighted that the objective of the proposed project is not to rehabilitate the entire degraded area associated with the Pass. It would not be feasible to rehabilitate degraded areas down the slope as part of this project.  A long-term, and post-construction, rehabilitation plan will need to be established for the Pass.	RP  RF	Need to indicate to what extent rehabilitation will be undertaken as part of the project. This would assist EKZNW in determining if additional rehabilitation is required. Information on alien vegetation, e.g. location, should be obtained through this process.  Pointed out the need to identify where the areas of alien vegetation are and that these need to be highlighted in the report.	
3.13.	RP	Questioned what would happen if unexpected rainfall is experienced during construction and loose material is washed away.	RS  GF	Responded that this will be taken into consideration and discussed with all stakeholders. A critical consideration of this project is the manner in which construction takes place. This will be investigated and built into the EIA and Environmental Management Plan (EMP). Contingency plans will have to be developed.  Added that a thorough investigation into the engineering process to mitigate environmental impacts during construction was being undertaken by the project engineers.	
3.14.	RF	Questioned whether an Environmental Control Officer (ECO) has been appointed for the project. The ECO will need to establish a relationship with the site engineer.  RF noted that improper management of the site construction and the significant impacts that could consequently, might result in the mandate to manage the uKhahlamba World Heritage Park being taken away from EKZNW and handed over to another organisation.	GF EG RS RD	The appointment of an ECO will likely be a requirement of ROD issued by the authorities. DoT expects that ARCUS GIBB will provide the ECO services as they are the environmental consultants for the project. On construction sites the ECO is often not given authority required to make decisions and act where necessary. Penalties will be imposed on contractors that are in transgression with the requirements of the EMP. These penalties will be built into the EMP.	

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3.15.	GF	Noted that it is important for EKZNW to include all their recommendations through the review of the EIA process.	RF	Must ensure that the ECO is included into the budget to be on site all day everyday. The earlier the ECO is appointed, the easier it will be to manage the process. The ECO should be hired now.	
			EG	Added that recommendations must be practical so that they can be included in the assessment. There may be a need to arrange smaller meetings to discuss and fine-tune solutions to the problems identified. The ECO will be from ARCUS GIBB.	
3.16.	RP	Noted that the project may receive criticism from some of the EKZNW staff as they have not yet been informed of how impacts are intended to be managed. Smaller meetings will therefore be necessary to ensure that everyone is on the same page and the potential impacts are mitigated.	GF	Smaller meetings should include the experienced team members who have undertaken projects of similar nature to provide recommendations for mitigation. From that method statements for all potential construction impacts can be identified.	
3.17.	SC	Highlighted that the project should not be treated as a road on the coast. It should be treated as a sensitive environment and be controlled as much as possible.	EG	SSI intends to include Alan Parrock in the design team. Alan has worked on Chapman's Peak drive in Cape Town.	
3.18.	SC	Questioned if tar is being considered as an option for the surfacing of the road. Noted an example of a road that is being surfaced with interlocking bricks which seems to be working well.	RP	The foundation of the road is important.	
			EG	Various hard surface options will be considered.	
3.19.	RP	Alien vegetation is an issue. Turning / view points are becoming alien 'hot spots'. At point of handover, it must be ensured that the road reserve is free of all alien vegetation.	RT	Two separate issues are highlighted, one during construction and one after. These will not form part of this contract.	
			GF	The maintenance period after construction would only be related to the maintenance of infrastructure.	
			RD	The required maintenance of alien vegetation post construction could be included as a recommendation in the EIA and get built into the ROD.	
3.20.	SC	Questioned whether blasting would take place and noted that eagle nesting sites (historic and current) located in close proximity to the Pass.	EG	Blasting will be required. Traffic accommodation and wildlife (e.g. eagles) will need to be considered.	

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3.21.	RS	Stated that as part of the EIA, the ecological information required will need to be identified. Questioned whether EKZWN has this information available.	RP	Responded that there is very detailed information available. Vegetation is all mapped and is all logged into the EKZWN C-plan database. Richard Lechmere of Oertel can be contacted for this information. He is involved in the Maluti Drakensberg Transfrontier Park and was responsible for all ecological investigations including aquatic investigations. The available terrestrial information is excellent.	RD
3.22.	GF	Questioned whether water quality information on the Pass is available.	RP	No water quality information has been documented. However, the university has conducted some work in this regard.	
3.23.	EG	<p>Noted that water would be required for construction purposes. Questioned whether there is a limitation on the amount of water that is extracted and the manner in which it is extracted from the river.</p> <p>Two contracts will be running at the same time. Therefore the design team will be looking at two sites to draw water from. Also need to consider the through-flow of boulders at a potential water extraction point. Bridges and mini viaducts are also being considered.</p> <p>The design team will have a plan for each road crossing and consider the cut and fill requirements.</p>	SC	Need to know the volumes to be extracted, points of extraction and the methods of extraction.	
			RT	There are stream crossings in the area that have a consistent flow all year round.	
			RP	<p>Concerns would be raised if the flow of water stops as a result of construction activities The run of river should never be interrupted – not even for 5% of the time.</p> <p>There would be a concern during a dry period. Under the normal climatic regime all sites will be available for water extraction. There would be a need to cater for a dry period when whole system is stressed.</p>	
3.24.		<p>Noted with respect to cladding options along the Pass, a method used by Thomas Banes in the Cape was the most environmental friendly to date. The fill between stones and cladding was not to the surface. This allowed for the hillside to blend into the landscape.</p> <p>Must use the rocks of the three systems of geology typical in the area when considering cladding.</p>	GF	On the Du Toits Kloof Pass project, Neal Carter of Arcus GIBB trained contractors not use straight lines and to keep rough surfaces. His experience can be tapped into for the Sani Pass project.	
3.25.	SC	Questioned where the material (rock) to be used for cladding would come from.	RP	Responded that rocks would probably come from the footprint of the road.	

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3.26.		Commented that EKZNW has stringent guidelines with respect to seeds and nurseries. The plant material used in the nursery must be obtained from within a radius of 50km of the site.	RS	Questioned whether the resources for the nurseries are available or if an external botanist would be required. Asked who is preferred by EKZNW.	
			RP	Dr Clinton Carbutt from EKZNW is a botanist that can be consulted. Essentially, a botanist would need to be sourced externally for the project as EKZNW's staff are limited. EKZNW could act as an advisor to the appointed botanist. EKZNW currently has a nursery at QEP run by Bridget Church, who could also assist and advise in this matter. She has previously undertaken rehabilitation of vegetation sites.	
3.27.	EG	Questioned how the DOT would approach the matter of establishing the nursery?	RT	Responded that they should be open to establishing a nursery prior to construction.	
3.28.	EG	Questioned how long it would take for the plants to grow and whether it was necessary to start the nursery now or at the start of construction.	RP, SC	Responded that the botanists should be consulted. Elsa Pooley should be contacted for advice on the appropriate time to establish the nursery. She specialises in botanical tours of Sani Pass. There may be a need to start growing certain plants now.	
3.29.	EG	Queried how people from Lesotho could be utilised in the establishment of a nursery. Perhaps a nursery could be established on the Lesotho side to grow the high altitude plant species?	RT	There has been a lot of liaison with Lesotho over such a project and it is seen as an international project. Lesotho will also be constructing a road on their side of the border.	
3.30.	RP	Requested that construction staff found poaching (animals or plants) in the area be fired immediately if found guilty.  Noted that the Pass is a route for contraband and other criminal activities such as gun running, movement of dagga and cattle theft. Security issues should be dealt with in the EIA. If this is not recognised in the EIA / ROD then EKZNW will definitely object.	RS	Responded that the EIA can only do so much. It can recognise and identify issues and make recommendations.	
			GF	Added that ARCUS GIBB as the environmental consultants, will definitely take heed of recommendations from EKZNW as the authorities that will be managing the site after construction has ended.	
3.31.	RF	Stated that the one of the big social issues will be rescues as many amateurs will be making it the summit without the adequate gear.  Questioned how parking and ablution be considered at the summit?	EG	Responded that there is only so much that this road project can do. The DOT's clients are those travelling from SA to Lesotho. EKZNW's clients are those travelling to look at the park. There is, however, a need to look at view sites with a large site possibly located at the top of the Pass.	



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			RT	This is to be discussed with DOT to see what roles the various parties will play.	
3.32.	GF	Stated that two main activities occurring at the top of the Pass would be vehicles turning around and people crossing the border. Perhaps the inclusion of an information centre should be considered?	IH	Responded that an information centre at the top of the Pass should rather not be considered.	
3.33.	BM	Noted that BCOCC (border control) could possibly be included with this. SARS are now the responsible party for the border as it is no longer the responsibility of the Department of Home Affairs.	RS	Noted that he has been in contact with the BCOCC.	
3.34.	RP	Noted that there is a need for an explicit plan to define where vehicles would park, the boundaries that are not to be crossed, the aspects of waste management (liquid and solid), fuel and oil spills and fire.	RT	Responded that from a construction point of view, these aspects will all be considered. However, the provision of ablution facilities will need to be discussed between the various parties.	
3.35.	GF	Commented that there is a need to define what is to be included in EIA. May need to do a separate EIA for the requirements up at the Lesotho border.			
3.36.	IH	Questioned whether staff would be located at the top of the Pass during construction.	EG	Responded that site camps are likely to be established at km 14 and km 25.	
3.37.	RP	Noted that the design of the view sites need to be defined in conjunction with EKZNW and the tour operators as they bring groups of people to the park and obviously want safe and secure facilities.  Around 60 000 people use the park per annum (Home Affairs figures). Politicians are talking about linking Bloemfontein and Durban through Lesotho.	EG	Questioned whether there would ever be limits to the number of people allowed to visit or use the Pass?  Noted that Prof Steven Piper said that 25 000 people visit the Pass annually.	
3.38.	RP	Stated that the proposed road upgrade would make it suitable for 4x2 vehicles to use the Pass and will increase traffic to the World Heritage Park (WHP).	RS	Responded that there may be need to limit number of people who has access to the road at the border post.	
3.39.	RP	Envisages that people would be stopped from accessing the Pass in very bad icy weather conditions.	SC	Responded that the EIA should also consider the impacts of ice and snow.	
3.40.	RP	Questioned where the construction camps would be located?	EG	Stated that there may be a lower camp outside the conservation area and potentially one at the border post.	

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3.41.	EG	Questioned with reference to the accommodation of staff if they would be allowed to stay overnight at the current border post or if they must sleep outside of the park.	RP	Generally the guideline is that only essential people stay overnight, particularly security.	
			GF	Noted that a specification of how site staff may heat themselves must be included in the EIA.	
3.42.	EG	Questioned what method of heating is preferred on site, a generator or coal.	RP	Responded that he prefers the use of generators or gas over coal. With coal there is a waste product that needs to be managed.	
3.43.	RS	Questioned where staff would be housed.	EG	Responded that the current staff accommodation sites for Phase 1 would be used. The bulk of the labour force will be housed off site.	
			BM	Staff are currently trucked in to the Phase 1 construction site. The problem was issues of theft at nearby farms and hence staff were rather brought in. Specialised labour would likely be accommodated in Himeville.	
3.44.	IH	Requested that any services (water piping and electrical conduits) planned to be installed along the Pass later be included now in this project. She will not support digging up the road later nor overhead transmission lines from km 14 to the summit.	RT	Responded that no service would be allowed under the road except for crossings. If there is need for a crossing then this will be accommodated with ducts. Noted that there is a need to liaise with Eskom and Telkom to identify if they need crossings and services installed.	RT
3.45.	RP	Questioned if the ECO will also have responsibilities with regard to social or eco-tourism and taxi operators aspects during the construction phase.	RS	Responded that the ECO would have a liaison function.	
			EG	On previous projects a project liaison or steering committee (PLC) would be set up that would have monthly meetings. Various parties would be represented on this committee. The ECO/EMO would be a member of the committee and be tasked with various responsibilities. The point of entry with regard to public liaison is to use the PLC and not the ECO.	
3.46.	BM	Stated that as manager for border post relocation he has found that the taxi operators are an important consideration. They were moved from a previous site to the border post. Currently, taxi operators have no permits to use Sani Pass as a taxi station. Taxi operators would therefore be an issue.	RS	Responded that he is not sure of how to deal with taxi operators at this point. Tour operators would likely be more easily dealt with around the table.	
			EG	Noted that the DOT would have a kick off meeting for stakeholders that would include the representatives of the taxi operators.	

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		Perhaps the Registrar should be encouraged to go to the PLC to come up with proposals.  The DOT will be need to liaise with Lesotho for a short term solution.	RT	Noted that the border control post is not a DOT project and the taxi rank is the KwaSani Municipality's issue. However, this issue is complicated as the BCOCC also has requirements with regard to the location of the taxi rank and the border post. Stopping people from entering the Pass or country will be a PLC issue.	
3.47.	RS	Noted that taxi operators do not have any problems with the road being upgraded, but with the road being closed.	GF	Responded that the DOT may need to look at another service such as the use of a helicopter as an alternative. Also as an emergency plan should something go wrong.	
			EG	Noted that most construction sites have detours, although this is not really feasible for this project.	
3.48.	SC	Use of helicopter for non-emergency situation will not be considered i.e. "flips" or shuttle service from the bottom to the top or vice versa.			
3.49.	RP, JF	Stated that a vehicle shuttle service would be useful during construction. One going up and one down on each side of the construction areas.			
3.50.	RS	Asked who the contact person from EKZNW would be for this project.	RP	Responded that IH and BM could be contacted with regards to this project.	
4.	<b>WAY FORWARD</b>				
4.1.	RS	Noted that he is in the process of liaising with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT). Danie Smit will be case officer from DEAT on this project. A representative from EKZNW is needed to attend a site visit with DEAT. After agreement with DEAT of how the process should unfold, stakeholder meetings will be arranged. From there ARCUS GIBB will undertake public participation on a wider scale with the key stakeholders and general public.  Noted that he has spoken to Di Dold of the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) and she is keen to assist with facilitating interactions with stakeholders.  From this point ARCUS GIBB will start with the compilation of the Scoping Report.	RP	Responded that the proposed way forward with regard to the EIA process is endorsed.	
4.2.3	GF	Requested that EG provide an indication of the proposed	EG	Responded that all solutions to potential design issues	

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		design programme.		would not be place by the time that public participation meetings commence. However, SSI could table various proposals as to how they intend to manage certain issues.	
4.3.	RS	Stated that ARCUS GIBB intend to approach the public with an open mind and get as much buy in as is possible.	RP	<p>Suggested that the media be used to advertise the project in good light. DEAT have a responsibility to inform the World Heritage Centre in Paris of this project that is taking place to rectify current damage that is occurring on site.</p> <p>There was an issue previously at Cathkin Park where a local wrote to the World Heritage Centre in Paris and caused upheavals where there was no real issue. The complaint was investigated by the IUCA and a public hearing was held to address the complaint. This was all in vain as the complaint was not a real issue.</p> <p>Thus, being prepared and involving good environmental reporters e.g. Tony Carney is a good idea.</p>	
4.4.	Boy	Stated that if the DOT does buy into making a press release then this must be reviewed by EKZNW's Communications Department to checked first. Noted that he has compiled a communication strategy and provided this to DOT.	RT	<p>Responded that it must be noted that a lot of gossip around the proposed project is already taking place. If a press release is made then there will be responses in the media. It will, therefore, not be a once-off press activity.</p> <p>The timing of the press release must be considered. It may need a bit more information before making any press release because questions will be asked and answers need to be available.</p>	
			RS	Responded that ARCUS GIBB would field questions and try to get assistance from the public with respect to the project. ARCUS GIBB will arrange a forum workshop with key authorities and interest groups.	
4.5.	RP	Stated that the right people should be involved in media activities e.g. Sani Saunter, Wilderness Action Group, Di Dold, Steven Piper, Elsa Pooley, Berg Watch, Municipality, Mountain Club etc.	JF	Noted that the stakeholder list from Border Post Relocation EIA is very thorough.	
4.6.	RS	Stated that ARCUS GIBB will also be identifying and			

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		considering issues and concerns from other projects e.g. Border Post and Phase 1 EIAs.			
4.7.	GF	Noted that there would be people that are completely opposed to the project.	IH	Noted that there is a perception within the general public that the road will definitely go ahead.	
			RP	Added that the part of the construction that is already taking place is an indication that the project will take place. The decision has been made by the heads of state.	
4.8.	EG	Stated that the road will not be designed for huge traffic volumes. Design will only be for short wheeled vehicles, up to possibly 35 seater buses or combi's.			
4.9.	RF	Questioned what the proposed process was to tie in with the new border post and the associated timing issues?  The design will possibly be finalised in June/July.	EG	Responded that there are no designs for the border post available as yet.	
			BM	Stated that he would be in contact with EG as soon as the design for the border post is complete.	