

Environmental plan for construction of SKA published

Amendments to the Integrated Environmental Management Plan required to manage the impacts associated with the development of the first phase of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) in the Northern Cape, without further environmental approval required, have been published.



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“The amendments are necessary as the proposed construction camps would pose a risk to the optimal functioning of the Meerkat radio telescopes currently in operation,” the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment said.

The amendments include the acknowledgement of the declaration of portions of the SKA site as the Meerkat National Park; the increase in the size of the land core area; the development of a perimeter road along the boundary fence; and the development of a solar farm to contribute to the electricity needs of the facility.

Additional environmental assessments undertaken

The Adoption of Amended Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 of the Integrated Environmental Management Plan for Phase 1 of the Square Kilometre Array and Amendment to the Conditions of Exclusion were published by the minister of forestry, fisheries and the environment Barbara Creecy. They were published in terms of the National Environmental Management Act in Government Gazette 44230 (Notice No. 250) on 25 March 2020.

“An amendment to the originally adopted plan was requested by the National Research Foundation, the organisation that is responsible for the development of the SKA.

To support the request for amendments, additional environmental assessments were undertaken and it was concluded that the activities would not impact negatively on the environment.

It was therefore decided that the amendments to the original plan be approved.

Access the gazette [here](#).

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