

Rössing Uranium's expansion projects: Scoping report out...

The scoping report for the Social and Environmental Impact Assessment of Rössing Uranium mine's expansion projects is now available for public inspection.

The announcement was made this week by Marie Hoadley, who coordinates the public engagement between the environmental assessment consultants and Rössing's stakeholders.

The report can be found on Rössing's website www.rossing.com while printed reports can be studied at the Windhoek Community Library, Lüderitz Street; the Rössing Foundation Library, Arandis; The Rössing Uranium offices, 1st floor, Stadtmitte, Swakopmund; the Walvis Bay Public Library and at the Spitzkoppe Community Hall.

The issuing of the report follows a number of public meetings which the mine held in Walvis Bay, Swakopmund and Arandis from August 2007 onwards. At the public meetings the expansion plans were explained and comments asked. In addition, meetings were held with individuals and focus groups to develop a comprehensive understanding of stakeholder's concerns and their recommendations.

The purpose of the scoping report is to outline the mine's expansion projects and their identified potential social and environmental impacts, should these projects be approved and implemented.

It also includes descriptions of how mitigation options for the identified impacts will be researched by specialist teams.

Part of Rössing's expansion plans are to build a sulphuric acid plant at its mining site near Arandis along with sulphur storage and the transportation infrastructure in the Walvis Bay harbour and at the mine.

Also planned is to build a radiometric ore sorting plant at the mine site to improve the efficiency of uranium extraction from the mined ore.

Included in the mine's expansion plans is to start a small satellite open pit close to the current main open pit within Rössing's mining license area.

The main issues which were raised during public meetings include workplace health and safety concerns, air and water pollution as well as blasting noise and vibration.

Also raised were the possible human and environmental threats from transporting, storing and processing sulphur and sulphuric acid in and between Walvis Bay and the mine site.

Other issues raised were on biodiversity implications, particularly in the new mining area as well as regional implications of bulk water and energy supply.

Housing implications, services such as schools, medical care and water availability and negative social impacts from newcomers seeking work were also raised.

Rössing's Social and Environmental Impact Assessment and the drafting of the mitigation plans will continue until the end of this year while another round of public meetings is planned for January 2008 to inform the stakeholders about the outcome of the assessment.

The public is welcome to raise any further comments with the public participation coordinator, Marie Hoadley at mariehoadley@iafrica.com, Private Bag 5005, Swakopmund, Namibia, fax +264 64 520 2286.