

EIAs: how to avoid risky delays

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Consulting Engineers & Project Management

Environmental Management & Control

WHILE the timeframes for business and industry to complete environmental impact assessment (EIA) processes may sound generous to some, in reality they are very tight –and represent a significant project risk if for any reason they are not met.

That’s according to Principal Environmental Consultant in the SRK Consulting’s Eastern Cape team, Nicola Rump, who added that there are very specific timeframes for EIAs and for Basic Assessment processes set by the 2014 EIA regulations – both for whole process and the interim steps within that process.

“These timeframes in fact allow very little time for reporting, and even less for accommodating changes to project design.”

The danger of exceeding these stipulations is that applications will lapse, forcing the applicant to re-apply and face the associated costs and project delays, she cautioned.

“In our experience, meeting these timeframes often requires a significant amount of work to be completed before an application is lodged, especially for large complex projects where the required studies may take up to 12 months or more to conduct.”

Project managers, therefore, need to put proper and timely planning in place for environmental authorisation and other associated permitting requirements, if delays are to be avoided.

“Engaging a well-qualified and experienced environmental professional at an early stage in project planning is vital – to advise the client on mitigating project risks,” said Rump.

“They can also suggest improvements to the project design, to minimise the risk of authorisation not being granted – and can help ensure the required planning is completed before lodging an application.”

In the Eastern Cape, SRK has a team of 10 dedicated environmental consulting professionals with a wide range of expertise and experience in business and industry.

