



**GAPS/ WEAKNESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE EACOP  
ESIA REPORT DATED JANUARY 2019**

**INTRODUCTION**

On July 23, 2019, NEMA invited the public to make written comments on the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project. The invitation was made in line with Regulations 19 and 20 of the 1998 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. NEMA extended deadline for receiving comments from the public from August 30, 2019 to September 15, 2019. After receipt of the comments, PAU and NEMA will organise public hearings on the ESIA. NEMA is mandated to organise the public hearings as under regulation 21(2) of the 1998 EIA Regulations, projects of a transboundary nature such as the EACOP must be subjected to public hearings.

No	<b>Weaknesses in the ESIA report</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
1.	<p><b>Limited mitigation measures on heating of the pipeline</b> The ESIA report recognizes that, because of the waxy nature of Uganda’s oil, it will be heated at 50 degrees centigrade to enable it flow and has proposed to have heating points at different intervals along the pipeline route.</p> <p>In addition, the ESIA has identified accompanying impacts on the surrounding communities and environment. However, out of the proposed 37 heating points in the 1,445km distance 35 will be located in 296 km pipeline in the Ugandan side while only 2 will be in 1,149 Km distance at the Tanzanian Side.</p>	<p>NEMA should halt the approval process and demand the developer to incorporate Polyurethane foam insulating technology and reduce the heating points from the current 35 to 4 on the Ugandan side. This will reduce the impacts on the environment and surrounding communities who will be affected by the project.</p>

	<p>The reason for difference of the heating points is the technology choice where Polyurethane foam has been preferred on the Tanzanian side. The ESIA has not given justification as to why no insulating is done on the Uganda side hence requiring 35 heating points which maximizes environmental impacts and social impacts on the pipeline route.</p> <p>The purpose of the ESIA is to help us choose the best technology and mitigation measures that address the impacts.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Lacks mitigation measures for critical and endangered ecosystems</b></p> <p>The ESIA report has further recognized that the pipeline will impact some of the critical ecosystems such as The Wambabya and Taala Forest Reserve. In addition some ecosystems such as Guineo Congolian semi-evergreen forest and riverine and swamp forest (wetland forests) which are listed as vulnerable while others as critically endangered by IUCN red list will be affected.</p> <p>Amidst the recognition of their importance and vulnerability, the ESIA report did not proposed mitigation measures for the conservation of such ecosystems but instead proposed further furthers which should have been covered in the ESIA report.</p>	<p>The ESIA in its current form does not provide sufficient information on the critical and endangered ecosystem that will be impacted by the project. The information is insufficient to enable effective decision-making.</p> <p>NEMA should request the developer to carry all the further assessments on these ecosystems as required by the ESIA before the project is approved. The studies should cover other species including Bohor reedbuck, African golden cat, hippopotamus and spot-necked otter which are directly affected by the project in Wambabya and Bugoma Forest Reserves.</p>
3.	<p><b>Impacts of digging trenches on rivers crossed by the pipelines</b></p> <p>In the ESIA report, the pipeline will pass through rivers, swamps, wetlands and other water ecosystems where digging of trenches is proposed as mitigation measure. However, the ESIA report has not indicated what the depth, width of the trenches that will be dug and what impacts it could cause on the water system. This is in terms of destabilizing the water flow, contamination and mitigation measures as this could affected the communities depending on these water</p>	<p>NEMA should demand for further information on the size of digging trenches on rivers, swamps and wetlands for the pipeline to cross and potential impacts of such activities on the water flow system and such information should be included in the ESIA report.</p>

	bodies downstream.	
4.	<p><b>Trans boundary impacts not identified</b></p> <p>The ESIA report indicated that the EACOP pipeline will cross several rich biodiversity systems while running from the oil field in Hoima to Tanga in Tanzania exporting crude. The pipeline will cross rivers and wetlands belonging to shared resources such as Lake Albert, Victoria Nile and Lake Victoria.</p> <p>Lake Albert is shared between Uganda and the DRC while River Nile is shared with eleven countries including South Sudan, Sudan, Egypt and others. Several countries including Sudan and Egypt primarily rely on the river to provide fresh water. On the other hand, Lake Victoria is shared between Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. Any impact such as oil spills from the pipeline could affect nationals in the above countries.</p> <p>However, the ESIA report does not identify any possible trans boundary impacts that might be generated by the pipeline.</p> <p>Even if the most advanced technology is used in the construction of an oil pipeline, potential impacts are sometime generated, for instance, countries like Nigeria, Mexico, and USA have experienced oil spills, which have created impacts beyond their own borders, and Uganda is not exceptional.</p> <p>Further, the ESIA report points out that during transportation of crude oil, some residual impacts may remain but have been graded as not significant meaning no further action may be undertaken to mitigate them.</p> <p>It should be noted that impacts arising from project such as oil are volatile and could significantly impact on the environment and people.</p>	<p>The ESIA report approval should be halted until key information regarding the trans boundary impacts are addressed. This include the impacts that may be generated in Uganda and affect communities in the Tanzanian side and vice versa. In addition, the residual impacts of the project should have clear mitigation measures indicating how they will be addressed.</p>

5.	<p><b>Inadequate grievance handling mechanism</b></p> <p>The ESIA report has provided for the establishment of a grievance handling mechanism, it limit the affected persons to follow the established framework with a no judicial action if negotiations fails.</p> <p>This framework does not give the aggrieved parties an opportunity to seek redress in courts.</p> <p>In addition, the project proponents and liaison officers establish the grievance handling mechanism, where the accused remain a judge in their own case.</p>	<p>The ESIA report should not be approved because it lacks a complete grievance handling mechanism that gives the affected parties an opportunity to seek redress out of the proposed framework.</p> <p>Grievances handling mechanism is very important for handling disputes that communities and other stakeholders may have against the project developers which should be handled by an independent entity.</p>
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**Conclusion**

As concerned youth take this opportunity to recommend NEMA to halt the EACOP ESIA report because the report does not safe guard our environment and community livelihoods. The approval of EACOP ESIA report without addressing the above gaps, it will prone our environment to the oil curse.

Thank you.

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**Cyrus Kabaale**

**Concerned youth**