



Press Statement:

October 26, 2022

NEMA issues certificate of approval to Makuutu Rare Earth Elements project

The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has issued a certificate of approval to Rwenzori Rare Minerals Limited for Environment and Social Impacts for the Makuutu Rare Earth Elements (REE) project in the districts of Bugweri, Mayuge and Bugiri.

The National Environment Act No.5, 2019 requires any project deemed to have significant impacts on the environment such as mining and mineral processing projects to undertake mandatory Environment and Social Impact Assessment and the Makuutu REE project falls under this category. The project comprises mineral processing plant and supporting infrastructure.

The approval follows a comprehensive review of the Environment and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) studies undertaken by the developer and subjected to NEMA scrutiny including public disclosure of three public hearings; provision of written information on the project and ESIA (in English and local languages from the project area); and stakeholder engagement meetings. The ESIA was also made available online for public scrutiny and feedback regarding the environmental and social concerns that would arise from the project.

As an initial stage to the ESIA process, the Scoping Study and Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Makuutu Project ESIA were prepared and submitted to NEMA for review and consideration.

Key among the concerns noted during the ESIA review process were social challenges in the form of displacement of project affected persons. To address this, the developer is required to develop and implement a comprehensive Compensation and Resettlement Action Plan and ensure that livelihoods of the Project Affected Persons are enhanced.

Further, the developer must ensure that the mining and excavation activities do not interfere with the natural hydrological functioning of wetlands, streams, or other water

bodies in the project area, ensures biodiversity conservation and prevents pollution of all kinds. The project is also conditioned to ensure that artifacts of historical value discovered during the mining are handed over to the Department of Museums and Monuments.

The developer is also required to Liaise with Busoga Kingdom and the respective chiefdoms thereunder, to implement programmes and measures aimed at ensuring preservation of cultural heritage within the project area in accordance with the Institution of Traditional or Cultural Leaders Act, 2011 and Historical Monuments Act, 1968.

In addition, the developer is also obligated to develop and implement a robust Environment Management System (EMS) as well as a water resources management and protection plan for the major rivers; Nahidadala, Lumbuye, Kitumbezi, Naigombwa and Kituto; seasonal streams and wetlands within the vicinity of the project.

The Makuutu Project will deliver significant social, environmental and economic benefits to local communities, to Uganda as a nation and to the world through the supply of critical REE metals necessary for the world to transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy.

Notes to Editor;

A comprehensive list of all the conditions of approval forms part of the ESIA certificate of approval which is available at NEMA.

ENDS

For more information:

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