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Dear: North-South Corridor (NSC) Stakeholder

Date: 25 August 2017

Re: Participation in Research on the Development of a Conceptual Framework for Optimising the Business Model of the North-South Rail Corridor (NSC) in Southern Africa”

I am a member of the Wits Faculty of Engineering and also a part-time MSc student in the School of Mechanical, Industrial and Aeronautical Engineering at the University of the Witwatersrand, under the supervision of Dr Ian Campbell. My MSc title is: **“A Conceptual Framework for Optimising the Business Model of the North-South Rail Corridor (NSC) in Southern Africa”**.

The purpose of this study is to propose a conceptual framework for an optimised business model for the North-South Rail Corridor (NSC) in Southern Africa (from southern DRC to the ports in Mozambique and South Africa) by using a systems approach, in which the NSC is considered as the System of Interest. The specific focus is to conceptualise a model for a feasible rail solution for the NSC corridor.

The objectives of this research are to understand, conceptualise and structure the rail freight business model for the NSC, this research will thus interrogate the following:

- a. The socio-economic and political landscape;
- b. The nature and volumes of Trade (Demand and Supply) along the NSC;
- c. The Supply Chain Services required to support the NSC;
- d. Available Transportation Services (modes and infrastructure) serving the NSC;
- e. Which transport networks and routing options are available to customers and potential customers of the NSC?

The operations of the multi-country rail operators must be aligned and optimised to contribute to the value adding performance of the complete system. An optimised business model for the NSC is required. This business model needs to address the optimised freight traffic mix for the corridor when providing a value service to customers, whilst being sustainable for rail operators.

You are kindly invited to become a participant in this study as one of the respondents. You have been selected based on your participation in NSC forums and/or as representative of a prominent stakeholder in the NSC.

Participation in the study is voluntarily, and you may withdraw at any time. Anonymity and confidentiality of information provided will be protected and respected (a pseudonym will be used to conceal your identity). However, based on your position you may be identified from responses included in the research.

As a respondent to the questionnaire you will also be invited to a voluntarily one-on-one telecon with the researcher to clarify the understanding of your responses by the researcher. Minutes of this telecon will be provided to you for scrutiny before being included in the research analysis. If you do not wish to participate in the telecon, this will be respected.

The results of the study will form part of my MSc Eng Research Project Report, and may also be reported in academic papers and at conferences. A summary of the results of the research will be made available to you on request.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding the research and participation in the study. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully



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