

Eskom expects \$476m World Bank loan decision by November

By [Wendell Roelf](#)

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Eskom expects a final decision on a new \$476m World Bank loan to repurpose its Komati coal-fired power plant into a renewable station before November's COP27 climate summit, chief executive Andre de Ruyter said on Friday, 16 September.



Source: Reuters/Siphiwe Sibeko

The money will be used for three packages, which includes decommissioning certain parts of the 1,000 megawatt (MW) Komati power plant that is currently only using one unit to despatch 125MW of power when needed, as Eskom battles its worst period of power cuts since it started more than a decade ago.

The World Bank loan is separate from the \$8.5bn financial package to help South Africa, one of the world's biggest polluters, move away from its reliance on coal-fired power plants that supply the bulk of its electricity needs.

"The second one (package) is for the repurposing, which includes 100MW of solar, 150MW of battery storage and 40-70MW of wind all around Komati. The benefit, of course, is we can use existing transmission infrastructure," De Ruyter told journalists on the sidelines of an oil and gas conference.



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Addressing the just transition

The final package is about addressing the "just component" and helping ensure that the impact for employees and

contractors in the coal value chain was minimised, he said.

Situated in Mpumalanga halfway between Middelburg and Bethel, Komati was first fired up in 1961 and was mothballed for almost two decades before a decision was taken in 2004 to reinstate the station to help alleviate power outages.

"We were in Washington last week, really productive and positive meetings," De Ruyter said, adding that he expected a final decision on the loan before the end of November.

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