

## Gideon Raath

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**From:** Lerato Mokoena <LMokoena@environment.gov.za>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 06 October 2020 09:59  
**To:** Gideon Raath  
**Cc:** Constance Musemburi; Wayne Hector  
**Subject:** FW: 2020-08-0004: CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE 100MW VREDE SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY AND 100MW  
**Attachments:** Vrede & Rondawel SEF PP Plan Combined 22.09.2020 GR.pdf  
**Importance:** High

Dear Gideon

Please note that your PPP Plan is acceptable to the Department and you may continue as proposed.

Regards  
Lerato Mokoena  
DEFF

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**From:** Gideon Raath [<mailto:gideon@savannahsa.com>]  
**Sent:** 22 September 2020 11:11 AM  
**To:** Constance Musemburi <[CMusemburi@environment.gov.za](mailto:CMusemburi@environment.gov.za)>  
**Cc:** Lerato Mokoena <[LMokoena@environment.gov.za](mailto:LMokoena@environment.gov.za)>; Gideon Raath <[gideon@savannahsa.com](mailto:gideon@savannahsa.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: 2020-08-0004: CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE 100MW VREDE SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY AND 100MW  
**Importance:** High

Good day Constance,

Please see attached the revised PP plan for the two S&EIR processes. Please note that the schematic illustration includes both Scoping Report and EIA Report. Please also refer to pages 4 – 12 of the plan for a detailing of the various tools across the various phases of the project.

Please will you review and let me know if this can be approved, or if further adjustments are required?

Thank you,

**Gideon Raath**  
Environmental and Permitting Consultant | Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd  
Tel: +27 (0)11 656 3237 | [REDACTED] | Fax: +27 (0)86 684 0547  
[SAWEA Award for Leading Environmental Consultant for Wind Projects in 2013 & 2015](#)

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**From:** Constance Musemburi <[CMusemburi@environment.gov.za](mailto:CMusemburi@environment.gov.za)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 25 August 2020 11:04  
**To:** Gideon Raath <[gideon@savannahsa.com](mailto:gideon@savannahsa.com)>  
**Cc:** Lerato Mokoena <[LMokoena@environment.gov.za](mailto:LMokoena@environment.gov.za)>  
**Subject:** RE: 2020-08-0004: CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE 100MW VREDE SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY AND 100MW

Dear Gideon

The abovementioned applications, your PP Plans and your email below refer;

Please note that the public participation plan submitted cannot be accepted by the Department as it does not provide adequate details with regards the public participation process to be followed in terms of Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment (S&EIR) process for the proposed development of the 100MW Vrede Solar Energy Facility and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), near Kroonstad, Free State Province and the proposed development of the 100MW Rondawel Solar Energy Facility and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), near Kroonstad, Free State Province. The schematics illustration provided is for a basic assessment process. This must be corrected. You are required to provide a schematic illustration for a full S&EIR process, providing each phase or stage of application with an overview of tools that are available to I&As for that stage of application.

The Department awaits the submission of an amended PPP plan for consideration.

Regards

Constance

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**From:** Gideon Raath [<mailto:gideon@savannahsa.com>]  
**Sent:** 19 August 2020 02:28 PM  
**To:** Constance Musemburi <[CMusemburi@environment.gov.za](mailto:CMusemburi@environment.gov.za)>  
**Cc:** Lerato Mokoena <[LMokoena@environment.gov.za](mailto:LMokoena@environment.gov.za)>; Gideon Raath <[gideon@savannahsa.com](mailto:gideon@savannahsa.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: 2020-08-0004: CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE 100MW VREDE SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY AND 100MW  
**Importance:** High

Good day Constance,

Thank you for getting in touch regarding the Vrede and Rondawel projects. I have conferred this side and want to thank you for the opportunity to conduct a meeting, however in the interest of time we now believe no meeting is necessary as you have indicated is your preference.

Please find attached the Public Participation Plans for your review and approval please. Please note, there is one PP plan for the grid connection projects (2xBAR) which are identical, and one PP plan for the two SEF S&EIR processes (also identical). Together these two PP plans address the 2xSEFs and the 2xBARs for grid connection.

Please let me know if you have any queries.

Thank you,

**Gideon Raath**

Environmental and Permitting Consultant | Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd  
Tel: +27 (0)11 656 3237 | [REDACTED] | Fax: +27 (0)86 684 0547

[SAWEA Award for Leading Environmental Consultant for Wind Projects in 2013 & 2015](#)

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**From:** Constance Musemburi <[CMusemburi@environment.gov.za](mailto:CMusemburi@environment.gov.za)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 13 August 2020 11:00  
**To:** Gideon Raath <[gideon@savannahsa.com](mailto:gideon@savannahsa.com)>  
**Cc:** Lerato Mokoena <[LMokoena@environment.gov.za](mailto:LMokoena@environment.gov.za)>  
**Subject:** FW: 2020-08-0004: CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE 100MW VREDE SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY AND 100MW

Dear Gideon

Your meeting request, the email below and our telephonic conversation yesterday refer;

From the information provided in the agenda, the Department deems a meeting is not required as the agenda issues can be clarified via email. However, from our telephonic conversation yesterday, you indicated that a meeting is required as there are "other things" you would want to ask.

Given the above, you are required to amend the agenda to include all the issues you would want to discuss. This would also give us enough information to prepare for the meeting, in the event that a meeting is required. Please send the amended agenda via email.

Regards

Constance

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**From:** Constance Musemburi  
**Sent:** 11 August 2020 01:09 PM  
**To:** 'gideon@savannahsa.com' <[gideon@savannahsa.com](mailto:gideon@savannahsa.com)>  
**Cc:** Lerato Mokoena <[LMokoena@environment.gov.za](mailto:LMokoena@environment.gov.za)>; Wayne Hector <[WHector@environment.gov.za](mailto:WHector@environment.gov.za)>  
**Subject:** RE: 2020-08-0004: CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE 100MW VREDE SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY AND 100MW

Dear Gideon

This email serves as an acknowledgement of your Pre-app meeting request. The Department will get back to you shortly with further meeting details.

Regards

Constance

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**From:** EIA Applications  
**Sent:** 07 August 2020 03:33 PM  
**To:** Constance Musemburi <[CMusemburi@environment.gov.za](mailto:CMusemburi@environment.gov.za)>  
**Cc:** Lerato Mokoena <[LMokoena@environment.gov.za](mailto:LMokoena@environment.gov.za)>; Wayne Hector <[WHector@environment.gov.za](mailto:WHector@environment.gov.za)>; Gideon Raath <[gideon@savannahsa.com](mailto:gideon@savannahsa.com)>  
**Subject:** 2020-08-0004

Dear Constance

Please note that you have been allocated an application:

**Type of Application:** Pre-Application Meeting Request;  
**Reference Number:** 2020-08-0004;  
**Date Received:** 04/08/2020;  
**Action Required:** Decide on meeting request.

Kindly let Ephron know which date the meeting is to be held, if it will be set.

\*EAP/Applicant: please use this reference number when submitting the application for EA/amendment application (page 1 of the application form), as well as attach the approved PP Plan if the application requires a PP process.

**EIA Applications**  
Integrated Environmental Authorisations  
Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries

Please note that this email is for the receipt and processing of online applications only, and is not monitored for responses. All queries must be directed to [EIAAdmin@environment.gov.za](mailto:EIAAdmin@environment.gov.za).

You are advised that this mailbox has a 48 hour response time.

*Please note that this mailbox has a 5mb mail limit.*

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**From:** Gideon Raath <[gideon@savannahsa.com](mailto:gideon@savannahsa.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, August 7, 2020 14:59

**To:** EIA Applications <[EIAApplications@environment.gov.za](mailto:EIAApplications@environment.gov.za)>

**Subject:** Request For Pre-Application Meeting For the Vrede and Rondawel SEF & grid connection EIAs, Kroonstad, Free State

Good Day,

Please find herewith attached the combined Pre-Application Meeting Request for the following projects:

- Proposed construction and operation of the **100MW Vrede Solar Energy Facility and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)**, located near Kroonstad in the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Fezile Dabi District of the Free State Province, South Africa.
- Proposed construction and operation of the **grid connection infrastructure for the 100MW Vrede Solar Energy Facility and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)**, located near Kroonstad in the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Fezile Dabi District of the Free State Province, South Africa.
- Proposed construction and operation of the **100MW Rondawel Solar Energy Facility and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)**, located near Kroonstad in the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Fezile Dabi District of the Free State Province, South Africa.
- Proposed construction and operation of the **grid connection infrastructure for the 100MW Rondawel Solar Energy Facility and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)**, located near Kroonstad in the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Fezile Dabi District of the Free State Province, South Africa.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss and obtain approval of the proposed public participation plan. These projects are all related to one proponent and are within close vicinity of each other, therefore the combined request.

Please confirm receipt of the request.

Kindly advise should you require any further information. Thank you.

Kind regards,



t: +27 (0)11 656 3237  
f: +27 (0) 86 684 0547

**Gideon Raath**  
Environmental & Permitting Consultant

e: [gideon@savannahsa.com](mailto:gideon@savannahsa.com)

SAWEA Award for Leading Environmental Consultant on Wind Projects in 2013 & 2015

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## Gideon Raath

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**From:** Brenda Ton  
**Sent:** Friday, 20 November 2020 13:30  
**To:** EIA Applications  
**Cc:** Gideon Raath; Ronald Baloyi; Nicolene Venter  
**Subject:** Application for EIA Draft Scoping Report - Vrede (SE2716)  
**Attachments:** 00 - Document Control Form Vrede.docx

Good day,

Please see attached document control form and proof of submission of the Application for EIA Draft Scoping Report for the Proposed construction and operation of the 100 MWac Vrede Photovoltaic Solar Energy Facility, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure located near Kroonstad in the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Fezile Dabi District in the Free State Province of South Africa - Ref.No.: TBA.



Should you require further assistance please do not hesitate to contact Gideon whom is cc'd in this email.

Thank you and kind regards,



t: +27 (0)11 656 3237  
f: +27 (0) 86 684 0547

**Brenda Ton**  
Office & Administrator Manager

e: [brenda@savannahsa.com](mailto:brenda@savannahsa.com)

SAWEA Award for Leading Environmental Consultant on Wind Projects in 2013 & 2015

## Gideon Raath

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**From:** Julliet Mahlangu <JMMahlangu@environment.gov.za>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 24 November 2020 09:46  
**To:** Gideon Raath  
**Cc:** Salome Mambane; Constance Musemburi; Ephron Maradwa; EIAAdmin; eugene.marais@mainstreammrp.com  
**Subject:** 14/12/16/3/3/2/2038  
**Attachments:** Closure Letter to Stakeholders.pdf

Dear Gideon Raath

14/12/16/3/3/2/2038

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE NEW APPLICATION AND DRAFT SCOPING REPORT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION FOLLOWING A SCOPING ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE 100MW VREDE SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY AND BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, FREE STATE PROVINCE.

The Department confirms having received the Application form and draft Scoping Report for Environmental Authorisation for the abovementioned project on 20 November 2020. You have submitted these documents to comply with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended.

Kindly note that your application for Environmental Authorisation falls within the ambit of an application applied for in terms of Part 3 of Chapter 4 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended. You are therefore referred to Regulation 21 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended.

Please take note of Regulation 40(3) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states that potential Interested & Affected Parties, including the Competent Authority, may be provided with an opportunity to comment on reports and plans contemplated in Regulation 40(1) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, prior to the submission of an application but must be provided an opportunity to comment on such reports once an application has been submitted to the Competent Authority.

Note that in terms of Regulation 45 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, this application will lapse if the applicant fails to meet any of the time-frames prescribed in terms of these Regulations, unless an extension has been granted by the Department in terms of Regulation 3(7) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.

Kindly quote the abovementioned reference number in any future correspondence in respect of the application.

Yours in admin  
EIA Applications  
Integrated Environmental Authorisations  
Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries

Julliet Mahlangu  
Integrated Environmental Authorisations:  
Coordination, Strategic Planning and Support  
Tel: (012) 399 9320  
Email: EIAAdmin@environment.gov.za



**environmental affairs**

Department:  
Environmental Affairs  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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## Gideon Raath

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**From:** EIAAdmin <EIAAdmin@environment.gov.za>  
**Sent:** Monday, 14 December 2020 10:08  
**To:** Gideon Raath; Eugene.marais@mainstreamrp.com; nkoen@destea.gov.za; mms@moqhaka.gov.za  
**Cc:** Constance Musemburi; EIAAdmin  
**Subject:** 14/12/16/3/3/2/2038 & 2039  
**Attachments:** 14-12-16-3-3-2-2038.pdf; 14-12-16-3-3-2-2039.pdf; Closure Letter.pdf

Good day.

Please find herein the attached letters for the above mentioned.

I hope you find all in order.

Thank you.

Kind Regards,  
Integrated Environmental Authorisations:  
IEM Systems and Tools Coordination  
Tel (012) 399 8630 / 9370 / 9367  
Email: [EIAAdmin@environment.gov.za](mailto:EIAAdmin@environment.gov.za)



***Please be informed that the Departmental EIA related templates were updated. It can be downloaded from the Departmental web address at [https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms#legal\\_authorisations](https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms#legal_authorisations).***



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# environment, forestry & fisheries

Department:  
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 447· PRETORIA · 0001· Environment House ·473 Steve Biko Road, Arcadia, · PRETORIA

DEFF Reference: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2038

Enquiries: Ms Constance Musemburi

Telephone: (012) 399 9416 E-mail: [CMusemburi@environment.gov.za](mailto:CMusemburi@environment.gov.za)

Mr Gideon Raath  
Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd  
P. O Box 148  
**SUNNINGHILL**  
2157

Telephone Number: (011) 656 3237/3256/3251  
Email Address: [gideon@savannahsa.com](mailto:gideon@savannahsa.com)

## PER MAIL / E-MAIL

Dear Mr Raath

### COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT SCOPING REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE 100 MW VREDE PHOTOVOLTAIC SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY, BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE LOCATED NEAR KROONSTAD IN THE MOQHAKA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, FREE STATE PROVINCE.

The application form and draft Scoping Report (SR) dated November 2020, received by this Department on 20 November 2020 and acknowledged on the 24 November 2020, refer.

This letter serves to inform you that the following information must be included to the final SR:

#### (a) Listed Activities

- It is noted that activity 11 (i) of Listing Notice 1 has been applied for however the draft SR on page 10 mentions that "*The grid connection solution for the Vrede Solar PV facility forms part of a separate application for environmental authorisation subject to a Basic Assessment, to be submitted in due course. This application will be submitted separately and does therefore not form part of this application*". Please confirm why is this activity applied for in this application?
- For each listed activity, where possible, please ensure that the proposed threshold/footprint associated with the listed activity are included, i.e. the footprint of infrastructure in m<sup>2</sup>, the removal of material in m<sup>3</sup>, the clearance of land in ha or m<sup>2</sup>, number of BESS per site (each individual unit, if applicable), the storage of hazardous goods in m<sup>3</sup>, road dimensions etc.
- Please confirm the relevance of activity 12 (b) ((ii) of Listing Notice 3 (985) to this development and whether the Free State Biodiversity Spatial Plan has been adopted.
- Please ensure that all relevant listed activities are applied for, are specific and can be linked to the development activity or infrastructure as described in the project description. Only activities applicable to the development must be applied for and assessed.
- If the activities applied for in the application form differ from those mentioned in the final SR, an amended application form must be submitted. Please note that the Department's application form template has been amended and can be downloaded from the following link <https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms>.

MS

- It is noted that Activity 14 is triggered since hazardous goods will be stored on site and the electrolyte for the BESS will also periodically be refilled.

### **Project Description**

The project describes the construction of the onsite substation. The inclusion of the onsite substation is questioned as the Department understands that the grid connection solution will be separate application. You are required to amend the application from and the SR to exclude information with regards to the 33/132kV on-site substation including its associated equipment and infrastructure and grid Connection 132kV power line so as to avoid confusion.

### **(b) Alternatives**

- Please note that all reference to a basic assessment process in the report must be corrected as this is a scoping and environmental impact assessment. This is a serious fatal flaw.
- Please ensure that a description of any identified alternatives for the proposed activity that are feasible and reasonable, including the advantages and disadvantages that the proposed activity or alternatives will have on the environment and on the community that may be affected by the activity as per Appendix 2 (1) (c) (d) and 2 (h) of GN R.982 of 2014, as amended is provided. Alternatively, you should submit written proof of an investigation and motivation if no reasonable or feasible alternatives exist in terms of Appendix 2 (2)(x)(xi).

### **(c) Specialist Studies**

- Please note that the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Scoping Report must be reviewed by an independent peer reviewer.
- Please note that the specialist studies to be conducted must provide their comments and recommendations on the preferred alternatives.
- Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations, the EAP must clearly indicate the most reasonable recommendation and substantiate this with defensible reasons; and where necessary, include further expertise advice.
- The specialist studies must also provide a detailed description of all limitations to their studies. All specialist studies must be conducted in the right season and providing that as a limitation, will not be accepted.

### **(d) Cumulative Assessment**

Should there be any other similar projects within a 30km radius of the proposed development site, the cumulative impact assessment for all identified and assessed impacts must be refined to indicate the following:

- a) Identified cumulative impacts must be clearly defined, and where possible the size of the identified impact must be quantified and indicated, i.e. hectares of cumulatively transformed land.
- b) Detailed process flow and proof must be provided, to indicate how the specialist's recommendations, mitigation measures and conclusions from the various similar developments in the area were taken into consideration in the assessment of cumulative impacts and when the conclusion and mitigation measures were drafted for this project.
- c) The cumulative impacts significance rating must also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development.
- d) A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed.

**(e) Public Participation Process**

- Please ensure that comments from all relevant stakeholders are submitted to the Department with the final SR. This includes but is not limited to the Free State Department of Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA), the Department of Transport, the Moqhaka Local Municipality, the Fezile Dabi District Municipality, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL), the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), BirdLife SA, the Department of Mineral Resources; Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries: Directorate Biodiversity and Conservation.
- Please ensure that all issues raised and comments received during the circulation of the draft SR from registered I&APs and organs of state which have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are adequately addressed in the final SR. Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders must be included in the final SR. Should you be unable to obtain comments, proof should be submitted to the Department of the attempts that were made to obtain comments.
- A Comments and Response trail report (C&R) must be submitted with the final SR. The C&R report must incorporate all comments for this development. The C&R report must be a separate document from the main report and the format must be in the table format. Please note that a response such as "noted" is not regarded as an adequate response to I&AP's comments.
- The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations 2014 as amended.

**General**

You are further reminded to comply with Regulation 21(1) of the NEMA EIA Regulations 2014, as amended, which states that:

*"If S&EIR must be applied to an application, the applicant must, within 44 days of receipt of the application by the competent authority, submit to the competent authority a scoping report which has been subjected to a public participation process of at least 30 days and which reflects the incorporation of comments received, including any comments of the competent authority"*

You are further reminded that the final SR to be submitted to this Department must comply with all the requirements in terms of the scope of assessment and content of Scoping reports in accordance with Appendix 2 and Regulation 21(1) of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended.

Further note that in terms of Regulation 45 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended, this application will lapse if the applicant fails to meet any of the timeframes prescribed in terms of these Regulations, unless an extension has been granted in terms of Regulation 3(7).

You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.

Yours sincerely



**Mr Sabelo Malaza**  
**Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations**  
**Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries**  
**Signed by: Ms Milicent Solomons**  
**Designation: Director: Priority Infrastructure Projects**  
**Date: 10/12/2020.**

cc:	Mr Eugene Marais	South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd	E-mail: <a href="mailto:eugene.marais@mainstreammrp.com">eugene.marais@mainstreammrp.com</a>
	Mr N Koen	DESTEА	E-mail: <a href="mailto:nkoen@destea.gov.za">nkoen@destea.gov.za</a>
	Simon Mqwathi	Hantam Local Municipality	E-mail: <a href="mailto:mms@moqhaka.gov.za">mms@moqhaka.gov.za</a>



environment, forestry  
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Department:  
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 447 · PRETORIA · 0001 · Environment House · 473 Steve Biko, Arcadia · PRETORIA

Enquiries: EIAApplications  
E-mail: EIAApplications@environment.gov.za

TO	ALL STAKEHOLDERS
FROM	MR. SABELO MALAZA CHIEF DIRECTOR: INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATIONS
SUBJECT	TIMEFRAMES PRESCRIBED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT, SECTION 24G AND INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATIONS DURING THE PERIOD INCLUDING 15 DECEMBER 2020 TO 05 JANUARY 2021
DATE OF LETTER	23 November 2020

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) wishes to inform all stakeholders of the provision in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2014, as amended, of the mandatory exclusion from 15 December to 05 January. Regulation 3(2) of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended, states that *"For any action contemplated in terms of these Regulations for which a timeframe is prescribed, the period of 15 December to 5 January must be excluded in the reckoning of days."*

Kindly be informed that the Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations in the DEFF **will not be receiving** applications for Environmental Authorisations (EA) in terms of Chapter 4 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended; applications for amendments to EA's and Environmental Management Programme in terms of Chapter 5 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended; or any other application/approval required in terms of the Regulations during the period of **15 December 2020 until 05 January 2021**. The above also applies in terms of NEMA Section 24G applications.

Decisions/comments on applications and their associated notifications will also not be issued between 15 December 2020 and 05 January 2021.

Any timeframes associated with the public participation process must exclude the period 15 December 2020 to 05 January 2021. The timeframe of 30 days for all Interested and Affected Parties to comment on applications must also exclude this period. In accordance with Regulation 3(3) of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended, only in exceptional circumstances and if agreed to by the Department, may the applicant conduct any public participation during this period.

The following applies to the online system for receiving of EIA applications (Novell S Flir), as well as the EIA Applications mailbox:

- The mailbox and online system (Novell S Flir), will be closed from 16h00 on 14 December 2020 till 08h00 on 06 January 2021.
- Stakeholders will not be able to upload documents to the online system (Novell S Flir), during this period. The system will be closed and no passwords will be issued.
- The mailbox will not process any emails during this period, and any emails sent during this period will only be considered on 06 January 2021. You are therefore requested to only submit emails after the closure period, to ensure that your requests are attended to accordingly. This will prevent emails/requests being unaccounted for during this period.

M.S

The CD: IEA of the DEFF will reopen for submission of applications and/or reports, and will only consider emails on the EIA Applications mailbox from the 06 January 2021.

Yours faithfully



**Mr Sabelo Malaza**  
**Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations**  
**Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries**

Date: 23/11/2020

## Gideon Raath

---

**From:** Ronald Baloyi  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 20 January 2021 09:31  
**To:** Gideon Raath  
**Cc:** Nicolene Venter  
**Subject:** FW: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2038

Hi Gideon,

Please see email below from DEFF.

Thanks

**Ronald Baloyi**

Public Participation Co-ordinator and Administrator | Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd  
Tel: +27 (0)11 656 3237 | Fax: +27 (0)60 978 8396

[SAWEA Award for Leading Environmental Consultant for Wind Projects in 2013 & 2015](#)

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**From:** Ephron Maradwa <EMaradwa@environment.gov.za>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 20 January 2021 09:13  
**To:** Ronald Baloyi <Ronald@savannahsa.com>  
**Cc:** Constance Musemburi <CMusemburi@environment.gov.za>; EIAAdmin <EIAAdmin@environment.gov.za>  
**Subject:** 14/12/16/3/3/2/2038

Dear Ronald

14/12/16/3/3/2/2038

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE FINAL SCOPING REPORT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE 100MW VREDE SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY AND BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, FREE STATE PROVINCE.

The Department confirms having received the final Scoping Report for the abovementioned project on 15 January 2021. You have submitted these documents to comply with the National Environmental Management Act, 1998(Act No. 107 of 1998) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended

You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.

Kindly quote the abovementioned reference number in any future correspondence in respect of the application.



Yours in admin

EIA Applications

Integrated Environmental Authorisations

Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries

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# environment, forestry & fisheries

Department:  
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 447· PRETORIA 0001 Environment House 473 Steve Biko Road, Arcadia· PRETORIA

DEFF Reference: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2038

Enquiries: Ms Constance Musemburi

Telephone: (012) 399 9416 E-mail: [Cmusemburi@environment.gov.za](mailto:Cmusemburi@environment.gov.za)

Mr Gideon Raath  
Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd  
P. O Box 148  
**SUNNINGHILL**  
2157

Telephone Number: (011) 656 3237/3256/3251  
Email Address: [gideon@savannahsa.com](mailto:gideon@savannahsa.com)

## PER MAIL / E-MAIL

Dear Mr Raath

### ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINAL SCOPING REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE 100 MW VREDE PHOTOVOLTAIC SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY, BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE LOCATED NEAR KROONSTAD IN THE MOQHAKA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, FREE STATE PROVINCE.

The final Scoping Report (FSR) and the Plan of Study for Environmental Impact Assessment (PoSEIA) dated January 2021 and received by the Department on 15 January 2021, refer.

The Department has evaluated the submitted FSR and the PoSEIA dated January 2021 and is satisfied that the documents comply with the minimum requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended. The FSR is hereby accepted by the Department in terms of Regulation 22(1)(a) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

You may proceed with the environmental impact assessment process in accordance with the tasks contemplated in the PoSEIA as required in terms of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

In addition, the following amendments and additional information are required for the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR):

#### **(a) Listed Activities**

- (i) The listed activities represented in the EIAR and the application form must be the same and correct
- (ii) Note that for every activity, a sub-activity must be selected i.e. Listing Notice 1, Activity 12(ii)(a). The EIAR must assess the correct sub listed activity for each listed activity applied for.
- (iii) The EIAR must provide an assessment of the impacts and mitigation measures for each of the listed activities applied for.

- (iv) Kindly include the proposed threshold for each activity. For each listed activity, where possible, provide the proposed threshold/footprint associated with the listed activity i.e. the footprint of infrastructure in m<sup>2</sup>, the removal of material in m<sup>3</sup>, the clearance of land in m<sup>2</sup>, number of BESS per site (each individual unit, if applicable), the storage of hazardous goods in m<sup>3</sup>, road dimensions etc.
- (v) If the activities applied for in the application form differ from those mentioned in the final SR, an amended application form must be submitted. Please note that the latest version of the Department's application form template can be downloaded from the following link <https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms>.

### **(b) Public Participation**

- i. Please ensure that comments from all relevant stakeholders are submitted to the Department with the EIAR. This includes but is not limited to the Free State Department of Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTE), the Department of Transport, the Mqhasha Local Municipality, the Fezile Dabi District Municipality, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL), the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), BirdLife SA, the Department of Mineral Resources & Energy; Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Department of Environment, Forestry & Fisheries: Directorate Biodiversity and Conservation.
- (i) Please ensure that all issues raised and comments received during the circulation of the draft SR and draft EIAR from registered I&APs and organs of state which have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are adequately addressed in the final EIAR. Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders must be included in the final EIAR. Should you be unable to obtain comments, proof should be submitted to the Department of the attempts that were made to obtain comments.
- (ii) A Comments and Response trail report (C&R) must be submitted with the final EIAR. The C&R report must incorporate all comments for this development. The C&R report must be a separate document from the main report and the format must be in the table format as indicated in Appendix 1 of this comments letter. Please refrain from summarising comments made by I&APs. All comments from I&APs must be copied verbatim and responded to clearly. Please note that a response such as "noted" is not regarded as an adequate response to I&AP's comments.
- (iii) Comments from I&APs must not be split and arranged into categories. Comments from each submission must be responded to individually.
- (iv) The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

### **(c) Alternatives**

- (i) Please provide a description of each of the preferred alternative type and provide detailed motivation on why it is preferred.
- (ii) The applicant must determine the need for decommissioning of existing facilities, structures or infrastructure. This information must inform whether there is a need to update the application form and/or to amend the terms of reference for the specialist studies.

#### **(d) Layout & Sensitivity Maps**

- (i) The EIAR must provide the four corner coordinate points for the proposed development site (note that if the site has numerous bend points, at each bend point coordinates must be provided) as well as the start, middle and end point of all linear activities for each of the sites. Coordinates must be in the format as prescribed in the 2014 NEMA Regulations, as amended.
- (ii) The EIAR must provide the following:
  - Clear indication of the envisioned area for the proposed solar and BESS facility; i.e. placing of BESS, PV panels and all associated infrastructure should be mapped at an appropriate scale.
  - Clear description of all associated infrastructure. This description must include, but is not limited to the following:
    - Power lines;
    - Internal roads infrastructure; and
    - All supporting onsite infrastructure such as laydown area, guard house and control room etc.
- (iii) A copy of the final preferred layout map. All available biodiversity information must be used in the finalisation of the layout map. Existing infrastructure must be used as far as possible e.g. roads. The layout map must indicate the following:
  - Permanent laydown area footprint;
  - Internal roads indicating width (construction period width and operation period width) and with numbered sections between the other site elements which they serve (to make commenting on sections possible);
  - Wetlands, drainage lines, rivers, stream and water crossing of roads and cables indicating the type of bridging structures that will be used;
  - The location of sensitive environmental features on site e.g. CBAs, heritage sites, wetlands, drainage lines etc. that will be affected by the facility and its associated infrastructure;
  - Location of access and service roads;
  - All existing infrastructure on the site, especially railway lines and roads;
  - Buffer areas;
  - Buildings, including accommodation; and
  - All "no-go" areas.
- (iv) An environmental sensitivity map indicating environmental sensitive areas and features identified during the assessment process.
- (v) A map combining the final layout map superimposed (overlain) on the environmental sensitivity map.
- (vi) Google Maps will not be accepted.

#### **(e) Specialist assessments**

- (i) The EAP must ensure that the terms of reference for all the identified specialist studies must include the following:
  - A detailed description of the study's methodology; indication of the locations and descriptions of the development footprint, and all other associated infrastructures that they have assessed and are recommending for authorisations.
  - Provide a detailed description of all limitations to the studies. All specialist studies must be conducted in the right season and providing that as a limitation will not be allowed.

- Please note that the Department considers a 'no-go' area, as an area where no development of any infrastructure is allowed; therefore, no development of associated infrastructure including access roads is allowed in the 'no-go' areas.
  - Should the specialist definition of 'no-go' area differ from the Departments definition; this must be clearly indicated. The specialist must also indicate the 'no-go' area's buffer if applicable.
  - **All specialist studies must be final, and provide detailed/practical mitigation measures for the preferred alternative and recommendations, and must not recommend further studies to be completed post EA.**
  - Should a specialist recommend specific mitigation measures, these must be clearly indicated.
  - Outcomes regarding the radiological study must be clearly explained in the subsequent reports. It must be illustrated whether the findings of the previous radiological study or a new study will be commissioned.
  - Regarding cumulative impacts:
    - Clearly defined cumulative impacts and where possible the size of the identified impact must be quantified and indicated, i.e. hectares of cumulatively transformed land.
    - A detailed process flow to indicate how the specialist's recommendations, mitigation measures and conclusions from the various similar developments in the area were taken into consideration in the assessment of cumulative impacts and when the conclusion and mitigation measures were drafted for this project.
    - Identified cumulative impacts associated with the proposed development must be rated with the significance rating methodology used in the process.
    - The significance rating must also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development.
    - A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed.
- (ii) Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations, the EAP must clearly indicate the most reasonable recommendation and substantiate this with defensible reasons; and where necessary, include further expertise advice.
- (iii) The following Specialist Assessments will form part of the EIAR:
- Agricultural Impact Assessment
  - Terrestrial Ecological Study
  - Heritage Impact Assessment
  - Socio-Economic Impact Assessment
  - Visual Impact Assessment

**(f) General**

- i. The proposed development must consider the requirements of the custodians/authorities of existing infrastructure on site when designing the layout.
- ii. The EIAR must provide the technical details for the proposed facility in a table format as well as their description and/or dimensions. A sample for the minimum information required is listed under Annexure 2 below.
- iii. Should a Water Use License be required, proof of application for a license must to be submitted.
- iv. The EAP must provide landowner consent for all farm portions affected by the proposed project, whether the project component is linear or not, i.e. all farm portions where the access road, solar panels and associated infrastructure is to be located.

- v. A construction and operational phase EMPr that includes mitigation and monitoring measures must be submitted with the final EIAR. The EMPr must include a detailed fire management and protection plan.
- vi. Should the applicant wish to expand the footprint of the proposed development, implications to public participation, listed activities (application form), scope of the specialist studies and impacts and mitigations must be considered and reflected clearly.

The applicant is hereby reminded to comply with the requirements of Regulation 45 of GN R982 of 04 December 2014, as amendment, with regard to the time period allowed for complying with the requirements of the Regulations.

You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an environmental authorisation being granted by the Department.

Yours faithfully



**Mr Sabelo Malaza**  
**Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations**  
**Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries**  
**Signed by: Ms Millicent Solomons**  
**Designation: Director: Priority Infrastructure Projects**  
**Date: 24/02/2021.**

cc:	Mr Eugene Marais	South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd	E-mail: <a href="mailto:eugene.marais@mainstreammrp.com">eugene.marais@mainstreammrp.com</a>
	Mr N Koen	DESTEА	E-mail: <a href="mailto:nkoen@destea.gov.za">nkoen@destea.gov.za</a>
	Simon Mqwathi	Hantam Local Municipality	E-mail: <a href="mailto:mms@moghaka.gov.za">mms@moghaka.gov.za</a>

**Annexure 1**

Format for Comments and Response Trail Report:

<b>Date of comment, format of comment name of organisation/I&amp;AP</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Response from EAP/Applicant/Specialist</b>
27/01/2016 Email Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries: Priority Infrastructure Projects (John Doe)	Please record C&R trail report in this format  Please update the contact details of the provincial environmental authority	EAP: (Noted) The C&R trail report has been updated into the desired format, see Appendix K  EAP: Details of provincial authority have been updated, see page 16 of the Application form

**Annexure 2: Sample of technical details for the proposed facility**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Description / dimensions</b>
Height of PV panels	
Area of PV Array	
Number of inverters required	
Area occupied by inverter / transformer stations / substations	
Capacity of on-site substation	
Area occupied by both permanent and construction laydown areas	
Area occupied by buildings	
Length of internal roads	
Width of internal roads	
Proximity to grid connection	
Height of fencing	
Type of fencing	
BESS infrastructure	



# forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X 447· PRETORIA 0001· Environment House 473 Steve Biko Road, Arcadia,· PRETORIA

**DEA Reference:** 14/12/16/3/3/2/2038

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## PER MAIL / E-MAIL

Dear Mr Raath

### **COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE 100 MW VREDE PHOTOVOLTAIC SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY, BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE LOCATED NEAR KROONSTAD IN THE MOQHAKA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, FREE STATE PROVINCE.**

The Application for Environmental Authorisation and draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAr) received by the Department on 20 November 2020 and 30 April 2021, respectively, refer.

This letter serves to inform you that the following information must be included in the final EIAr:

#### **(a) Listed Activities**

- Please ensure that all relevant listed activities are applied for, are specific (**i.e. the exact threshold must be presented in the application form**) and can be linked to the development activity or infrastructure as described in the project description. Only activities applicable to the development must be applied for and assessed.
- If the activities applied for in the application form differ from those mentioned in the final EIAr, an amended application form must be submitted. Please note that the Department's application form template has been amended and can be downloaded from the following link <https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms>.
- The final EIAr must provide the technical details for the proposed facility in table format as well as their description and/or dimensions.
- It is imperative that the relevant authorities are continuously involved throughout the environmental impact assessment process as the development property possibly falls within geographically designated areas in terms of numerous GN R. 985 Activities. Written comments must be obtained from the relevant authorities and submitted to this Department.



### **(b) Public Participation Process**

- Please ensure that comments from all relevant stakeholders are submitted to the Department with the final EIAr. This includes but is not limited to the Free State Department of Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA), the Department of Transport, the Moqhaka Local Municipality, the Fezile Dabi District Municipality, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL), the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), BirdLife SA, the Department of Mineral Resources; Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries: Directorate Biodiversity and Conservation.
- A Comments and Response trail report (C&R) must be submitted with the final EIAr. The C&R report must incorporate all comments for this development. The C&R report must be a separate document from the main report and the format must be in the table format. All comments from I&APs must be responded to adequately. A response such as "noted" is not regarded as an adequate response to I&AP's comments. Comments from each submission must be responded to individually. The dates in which comments were received must be recorded in the C&R. Your responses to the issues raised by the Department must be included in the comments and response (C&R) report, in table format.
- The final EIAr must comply with all conditions of the acceptance of the scoping report (SR) dated 24 February 2021. The final EIAr must address all comments received on the SR and the draft EIAr, including this letter.
- The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

### **(c) Cumulative Assessment**

- Should there be any other similar projects within a 30km radius of the proposed development site, the cumulative impact assessment for all identified and assessed impacts must be refined to indicate the following:
  - Identified cumulative impacts must be clearly defined, and where possible the size of the identified impact must be quantified and indicated, i.e. hectares of cumulatively transformed land.
  - Detailed process flow and proof must be provided, to indicate how the specialist's recommendations, mitigation measures and conclusions from the various similar developments in the area were taken into consideration in the assessment of cumulative impacts and when the conclusion and mitigation measures were drafted for this project.
  - The cumulative impacts significance rating must also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development.
  - A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed.

### **(d) Specialist Declaration of Interest**

- A copy of the layout map must be submitted with the final report. All available biodiversity information must be used in the finalisation of the layout map. Existing infrastructure must be used as far as possible e.g. roads. The layout map must indicate the following:
  - (a) The location of the BESS, PV facility and associated infrastructure;
  - (b) All supporting onsite infrastructure e.g. roads (existing and proposed);
  - (c) The location of sensitive environmental features on site e.g. CBAs, heritage sites, wetlands, drainage lines etc. that will be affected;
  - (d) Buffer areas; and
  - (e) All "no-go" areas.
  - (f) The above map must be overlain with a sensitivity map and a cumulative map which shows neighbouring renewable energy developments and existing grid infrastructure.
- Google maps will not be accepted.

- Specialist Declaration of Interest forms must be attached to the final EIAr. You are therefore requested to submit original signed Specialist Declaration of Interest forms for each specialist study conducted. The forms are available on Department's website (please use the Department's template).
- Recommendations provided by specialist reports must be considered and used to inform the preferred layout alternative.

**(e) Undertaking of an Oath**

- Please note that the final EIAr must have an undertaking under oath/ affirmation by the EAP.
- Based on the above, you are therefore required to include an undertaking under oath or affirmation by the EAP (administered by a Commissioner of Oaths) as per Appendix 3 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states that the EIAr must include:  
*"an undertaking under oath or affirmation by the EAP in relation to:*
  - (i) the correctness of the information provided in the reports;*
  - (ii) the inclusion of comments and inputs from stakeholders and I&APs;*
  - (iii) the inclusion of inputs and recommendations from the specialist reports where relevant; and*
  - (iv) any information provided by the EAP to interested and affected parties and any responses by the EAP to comments or inputs made by interested and affected parties".*

**(f) Details and Expertise of the EAP**

- Please ensure that the Final EIAr includes the details and expertise of the EAP, including a curriculum vitae, in order to comply with the requirements of Appendix 3 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

**(g) Environmental Management Programme**

- The EMPr must also include the following:
- All recommendations and mitigation measures recorded in the EIAr and the specialist studies conducted.
- An environmental sensitivity map indicating environmental sensitive areas and features identified during the assessment process.
- In addition to the above, the EMPr must comply with Appendix 4 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

**General**

Please also ensure that the final EIAr includes the period for which the Environmental Authorisation is required and the date on which the activity will be concluded as per Appendix 3 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

You are further reminded to comply with Regulation 23(1)(a) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states that: *"The applicant must within 106 days of the acceptance of the scoping report submit to the competent authority -*

*(a) an environmental impact assessment report inclusive of any specialist reports, and an EMPr, which must have been subjected to a public participation process of at least 30 days and which reflects the incorporation of comments received, including any comments of the competent authority."*

Should there be significant changes or new information that has been added to the EIAr or EMPr which changes or information was not contained in the reports or plans consulted on during the initial public participation process, you are required to comply with Regulation 23(1)(b) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states: *"The applicant must within 106 days of the acceptance of the scoping report submit to the competent authority - (b) a notification in writing that the reports, and an EMPr, will be submitted within 156 days of acceptance of the scoping report by the competent authority, or where regulation 21(2) applies, within 156 days of receipt of application by the competent authority, as significant changes have been made or significant*

*new information has been added to the environmental impact assessment report or EMPr, which changes or information was not contained in the reports or plans consulted on during the initial public participation process contemplated in subregulation (1)(a) and that the revised environmental impact assessment report or EMPr will be subjected to another public participation process of at least 30 days”.*

Should you fail to meet any of the timeframes stipulated in Regulation 23 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, your application will lapse.

You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.

Yours sincerely



**Mr Sabelo Malaza**

**Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations  
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment**

**Signed by: Ms Millicent Solomons**

**Designation: Director: Priority Infrastructure Projects**

**Date: 24/05/2021.**

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