

Our reference: 230607-03

Your reference: EMPr Amendment

Date: August 2023

Physical address:

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
Attention: Chief Director: Integrated Environmental
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ATTENTION: CHIEF DIRECTOR: INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATIONS - DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT (DFFE)

REQUEST FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (EMPR) AMENDMENT APPLICATION FOR THE VIRGINIA 3 SOLAR PARK, LOCATED WITHIN THE MATJHABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, FREE STATE PROVINCE

On behalf of the **Applicant:**
URSA Energy (RF) (Pty) Ltd

Please find attached to this cover letter, the electronic copy of the completed **EMPr Amendment Application form and the associated Appendices**, and the **amended EMPr** for the above-mentioned Project.

The Applicant proposes to submit an Application for an EMPr Amendment and the updating of a layout for final approval for the Virginia 3 Solar PV Park located on the Farm Blomskraal 216, Ventersburg RD, Matjhabeng Local Municipality, Lejweleputswa District Municipality, Free State Province. The Virginia 3 Solar Park PVESF and Generic EMPrs and layout are already approved and will be updated to enhance the resolution of the EMPrs and to reflect the current EA. The project was awarded Preferred Bidder Status under the 6th round of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) and is listed as a Strategic Infrastructure Project (SIP) 8.

We provide the following pre-amble as context for this EMPr Amendment Process:

1. An Environmental Authorisation (EA) (DFFE Ref: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2101, dated 23 May 2022) was granted for the Virginia 3 Solar PV Park.
 - a. An amendment was made to the EA and approved on 13 June 2023 (DFFE Ref No. 14/12/16/3/3/2/2101/AM1, 13 June 2023) for several non-substantive administrative amendments.

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2. Please note that a Part 1 Amendment Process is running concurrently to this EMPr Amendment process. The purpose of the Part 1 Amendment is to drop the 132kV step up and switching station from the Virginia 2 Solar Park as it no longer forms part of the final layout and project scope. Subsequently the Generic EMPr for the substation falls away.
3. The DFFE requires that the Part 1 AA is ideally decided on prior to the EMPr Amendment and Final Layout being decided on (this process has already commenced). This Project is a BID winning project with restrictive timeframes, therefore, the proposed submission sequence discussed with the DFFE is provided below:
 - a. The Part 1 AA will be submitted, reflecting the changes required by the DFFE.
 - b. Whilst this submission and decision is in process we will proceed with the PPP for the EMPr Amendment and Final Layout.
 - c. Given the 30-day decision timeframe on the Part 1 AA, this decision will be reached before the Final EMPr and Final Layout are received by the DFFE for a decision, which will likely be almost immediately after the Part 1 AA Decision
 - d. The I&APs and commenting authorities will be notified that a dovetailed process is underway for the P1AA and they will be informed of the outcome of the P1AA.
4. The **current Application** for the EMPr Amendment Process proposes to undertake the following amendments:
 - a. The Final layout and EMPr are approved as per Conditions 13 and 14 of the EA (14/12/16/3/3/2/2101/AM1, 13 June 2023) respectively. The EMPr amendment is conducted according to Regulation 37, and to ensure that Specific conditions of the EA, Conditions 33 to 38, are addressed in the EMPr.
 - b. Two versions of the Virginia 3 Solar Park EMPr will be submitted:
 - '230607-03 Virginia 3 EMPr Amendment - with changes': The amended EMPr showing all the changes. Added information is underlined and removed information is crossed out/~~strikethrough~~.
 - '230607-03 Virginia 3 EMPr Amendment – CLEAN': This version is the EMPr above which has been tidied up. The strikethrough information has been removed to make the EMPr more user friendly.
 - '230607 Virginia 3 EMPr AA- Addendum Management Plans'- These management plans are not new information. They were extracted from the original EMPr and placed into their own document in order to make the EMPr more streamlined. This document must be read in conjunction with the Management plan reports (Annexure 1A, 2A, 3A, 5A, 5B) of the original BAR process (February 2022).
5. The Applicant wishes to undertake the **following amendments** for the EMPr Amendment:
 - a. **Removing reference** to the **132kV step-up substation and switching station** from the approved Virginia 3 Solar Park EMPr. The Virginia 3 Solar Park will connect to the Virginia 1 Solar Park 132kV step-up substation via 33kV cables.
 - Subsequently the Virginia 3 Solar Park Generic Substation EMPr will be dropped from the Virginia 3 Solar Park as it will no longer apply.

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- b. **Reference** to the **Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)** (10ha) will be **dropped** from the approved Virginia 3 Solar Park EMPr. Please note that on completion of construction the temporary construction camp area will be replaced with Solar Panels. This will not increase the initially assessed impact nor will it increase the maximum generating output capacity at the point of delivery.
- c. The approved layout will be updated to reflect the dropping of the 132kV step-up substation and switching station and the BESS.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any clarification or additional information.

Yours Faithfully,



FABIO VENTURI

Certified Environmental Scientist (SAIEES)

Environmental Assessment Practitioners Association of South Africa (Founding Member, Reg #2021/4088)

On behalf of The Terramanzi Group (Pty) Ltd