

APPENDIX C9:
Public Participation Plan and Approval

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT AREA FOR THE AUTHORISED 75MW SANNASPOS PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, FREE STATE PROVINCE

Application be submitted

The restrictions enforced in terms of Government Gazette 43096 which placed the country in a national state of disaster limiting the movement of people to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus has placed some limitations on the commencement and continuation of the public consultation as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. Considering these limitations, the following consultation process has been designed and will be implemented, on approval by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), to cater for the conducting of the public participation process which includes Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs), the competent authority, directly impacted landowners/occupiers, adjacent landowners/occupiers, relevant Organs of State (OoS) departments, Municipalities, ward councillors and other key stakeholders.

PROJECT DETAILS

ENGIE Sannaspos Solar Project (Pty) Ltd obtained an Environmental Authorisation for the proposed Sannaspos PV Plant Phase 1 and associated infrastructure, located on Portion 0 of Farm 1808 Besemkop and Portion 0 of Farm 2962 Lejwe, within the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, Free State Province in May 2013 (**DFFE Reference No.: 14/12/16/3/3/2/360**). The project has been selected as a Preferred Bidder project under Round 5 of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme (REIPPPP).

The proposed facility will have a contracted capacity of 75MW (90MW installed capacity) and will include the following infrastructure:

- » PV arrays and inverters
- » Cabling between project components, laid underground as far as possible
- » An on-site 132kV Independent Power Producer (IPP) substation to facilitate the grid connection
- » Internal access roads.
- » Guard house
- » Laydown, Campsite, and assembly area.
- » Office and Control centre.

A developmental footprint of 150 ha in extent is authorised for the facility and associated infrastructure. In order to implement the project, **an additional 50ha is required**. This additional area is located within the properties assessed for the project.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

The public participation (PP) process will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Regulations 39 to 44 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, (GNR 326). The aim of the public participation process is primarily to ensure that:

- » information containing all relevant facts in respect of the proposed project is made available to potential stakeholders and I&APs;
- » participation by I&APs is facilitated in such a manner that all potential stakeholders and I&APs are provided with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed project; and
- » comments received from potential stakeholders and I&APs are recorded and incorporated into the EIA process.

The traditional means and opportunities available for the undertaking of public participation are still covered and implemented as part of this plan considering the current limitations in terms of the Regulations to limit risks associated with COVID-19. Alternative means of undertaking consultation have been designed and will be implemented by Savannah Environmental to ensure that I&APs are afforded sufficient opportunity to raise comments on the project through an interactive web-based platform readily available and accessible to any person illustrating interest in the project and enables the public participation process to be undertaken in line with Regulations 41 to 44 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

The use of online tools enables stakeholders and I&APs to explore the project-specific content in their own time and allows them to participate in a meaningful way in the consultation process. The online platform allows for project information to be shared and made available. The online platform allows the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to visually present details regarding the project and our consultation documentation, including project maps and plans, presentations and reports available for review.

Access to the project documentation via the Savannah Environmental website will be unrestricted to all I&APs. I&APs wanting to access the project information via this portal will be required to register and will receive a unique code (via an automated system) to access the report of interest. This step and the online portal support the EAP in maintaining a complete and accurate record and database of all parties who have interest in the project (and who choose to access the report via the online portal), in line with the requirements of the Regulations.

The online platform considers the limitations applied by the Disaster Management Act Regulations prohibiting the gathering of people, as well as limitations which certain I&APs may have in terms of access to computers and internet as well as access to public spaces not open for operation or which have restricted access.

The benefits of the online platform include:

- Ability to create a dedicated project-specific online platform to enable easy access to project-related information.
- Ability to reach a wider audience, allowing more widespread consultation for major infrastructure projects.
- Allowing stakeholders and I&APs the opportunity to engage on a project without leaving their office or home.
- Enabling stakeholders and I&APs to register their interest in a project (for inclusion on the project database), and automatically gaining access to comprehensive project documentation.
- Enabling the EAP to maintain a complete database of I&APs through maintaining a record of persons accessing the online stakeholder consultation platform.
- Enabling the EAP and stakeholders/I&APs to meet virtually.

Where I&APs do not have the applicable facilities (i.e., access to internet, mobile phones, or computers), provision has been made to include these I&APs in the consultation process by consulting with the Ward Councillor, the ward committee members, community representatives and local community forum members. Hard copy documentation can be made available but will only be provided where appropriate sanitary conditions can be maintained.

The schematic illustration overleaf provides an overview of the tools that are available to I&APs and stakeholders to access project information and interact with the public participation team to obtain project information and resolve any queries that may arise, and to meet the requirements for public participation.



The PP plan, as set out in the table below, has been drafted for the above-mentioned project to ensure compliance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations and that reasonable opportunity is provided to

I&APs and that all administrative actions are reasonable. Proof of all notifications will be included in the public participation appendix included in the Scoping & EIA reports.

The PP plan is submitted to the DFFE for discussion and agreement before the PP process is undertaken for the proposed project.

Public Participation Plan: Discussion of approach and methodology to meet the requirements of the Regulations, applicable to all abovementioned applications for environmental authorisation (combined where possible).

Regulation	Approach & Methodology to meet requirements
<p>Regulation 40(1), Regulation 40(3) & Regulation 43 – provide all potential or registered interested and affected parties, including the competent authority, access to project related information, access to the Scoping & EIA reports which will be made available for a period of at least 30 days to submit comments on draft reports prior to submission of final reports for decision-making.</p>	<p><u>Notification of EIA processes to be distributed using the following means:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail • Dedicated project page on the online platform (i.e., Savannah Environmental website). • Post / fax (where email or other electronic means are not possible) • Site notices placed on site. • Advertisement in one local newspaper. <p><u>Notification of availability of reports and period for review using the following means:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper adverts, including details of the review period, where the Scoping & EIA reports can be accessed and details of the Savannah Environmental website. • Notification letter (to be sent via email, fax, or post) to identified and registered I&APs. • Notifications to communities via one of the following, where available: Ward Councillor, ward committee members, identified and confirmed community representatives, and local community forum members. • SMS and/ or WhatsApp notifications where no other multimedia means are available. <p><u>Availability of reports for review:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports available on the Savannah Environmental website for download. • Electronic copies can be made available to parties via a secure Dropbox link (or other means) that will be emailed upon request for the documentation. • CDs or USBs to be posted, if requested. • Hard copy project documentation and reports to be available only where appropriate sanitary conditions can be maintained. • Reports will be submitted to the DFFE using the DFFE online portal. • Reports will be submitted to OoS and commenting authorities via an agreed electronic platform (such as on CD, or via a secure Dropbox link or WeTransfer, etc.). <p><u>Submission of comments to PP team:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written comments can be submitted via email, post or fax.

Regulation	Approach & Methodology to meet requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any comments provided telephonically, which has been confirmed via e-mail, or via instant message will be transcribed and recorded as formal comments and included in the Comments and Responses Report and the applicable appendix to the Scoping & EIA Reports. <p><u>Opportunity and means of consultation where applicable facilities are not available to I&APs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post and/or fax (where email or other means are not possible) • Placement of site notice on all affected properties. • Advertisements in printed media (local newspaper). • Consultation and communication through one of the following, where available: the ward councillor, ward committee members and confirmed community representatives and local community forum members. It has been assumed that these forums would be suitable for notifications to occupiers where access to these parties is not available through other means (such as direct consultation). However, landowners will also be contacted regarding the best way to notify and consult occupiers, where required. • SMS or WhatsApp notification (including <i>please call me</i>) – Savannah Environmental has a dedicated mobile phone • CDs / USBs to be posted, if requested (and where a computer is available). • Hard copy reports to be available only where sanitary conditions can be maintained.
<p>Regulation 40(2) - Provide access to all project information that has the potential to influence any decision regarding the application, unless protected by law, and must include consultation with Competent Authority, Organs of State & registered I&APs.</p> <p>Regulation 41(6) – Relevant information available and accessible</p>	<p>Provision of project information and consultation via various means including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephonic consultation. • Email correspondence. • Correspondence sent via post / fax (where email or other electronic means are not possible) • SMS and/or WhatsApp. • The Savannah Environmental online platform will include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ A means to register on the project database and provide details of their interest in the project ◦ Project maps (as applicable) • Virtual focus group meetings, where required, using an appropriate platform agreeable to all parties (such as Zoom, Skype or MS Teams). The meetings will be recorded, and the attendees' details captured in an attendance register. • Communities will be consulted via one of the following, where available: the relevant Ward Councillor, ward committee members, community representative or local community forum

Regulation	Approach & Methodology to meet requirements
	<p>members, as determined and confirmed during the consultation process. It has been assumed that these forums would be suitable for notifications to community members where access to these parties is not available through other means (such as direct consultation).</p> <p><u>Opportunity and means of consultation where applicable facilities are not available to I&APs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephonic consultation. • Post (where email or other means are not possible) • SMS and/or WhatsApp. • Consultation and communication through one of the following, where available: the ward councillor, ward committee members and confirmed community representatives and local community forum members.
Regulation 41(2)(a) – Site notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site notices will be placed at affected properties by the EAP, landowner or specialist, depending on specific travel restrictions applicable at the time. • Size and content will be in accordance with Regulation 41(3) & 41(4).
Regulation 41(2)(b) – Written notification to affected and neighbouring landowners and occupiers; municipality; ward councillors; Organs of State & other parties required by the CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification letter to be sent via email, fax, or post. <p><u>Opportunity and means of consultation where applicable facilities are not available to I&APs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post (where email or other means are not possible) • SMS or WhatsApp notification.
Regulation 41(2)(c) – (e) – Advertisements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverts will be placed in a local newspaper announcing the EIA process and availability of the various reports.
Regulation 42 – Project database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I&APs to be identified through a process of networking and referral, obtaining information from the existing stakeholder database for the PV facility, liaison with potentially affected parties in the greater surrounding area and a registration process involving the completion of a reply form or response to adverts. • OoS, key stakeholders and affected and surrounding landowners will be identified and registered on the project database. • Other stakeholders will be required to formally register their interest in the project through either directly contacting the Savannah Environmental Public Participation team via email or fax or use of the Savannah Environmental website. • To access the Savannah Environmental online platform for a specific project, I&APs will be required to provide their details such that they are automatically registered on the project database.

Regulation	Approach & Methodology to meet requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The register of I&APs will contain the names of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ all persons who requested to be registered on the database through the use of the Savannah Environmental website, or in writing and disclosed their interest in the project; ○ all OoS which hold jurisdiction in respect of the activity to which the application relates; and ○ all persons who submitted written comments or attended virtual meeting/s and viewed virtual presentations on the Savannah Environmental website during the public participation process. • The information captured on the project database will contain the names, organisation and contact details, as required. It must be noted that personal details will not be shared in public documentation in accordance with the requirements of the POPI Act.
Regulation 44 – Comments to be recorded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written comments can be submitted via email, post or fax. • Any comments provided telephonically or via instant message will be transcribed and recorded as formal comments. • All comments received throughout the EIA processes will be acknowledged and captured in the comments and responses report (C&RR) with a relevant response. • The C&RR and all comments received will be included in the final report submitted to the CA. <p><u>Opportunity and means of consultation where applicable facilities are not available to I&APs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I&APs without the applicable electronic facilities to access the Savannah Environmental website will be provided with the opportunity to submit their comments and communicate with the public participation team via SMS, WhatsApp or by sending a Please-call-me notification. These comments will be transcribed and recorded as formal comments. • Written comments via post or fax (where email or other means are not possible). • Comment submission telephonically and instant messaging (SMS and/or WhatsApp). • Sending a Please-call-me notification to the Public Participation team so that contact can be made.
Regulation 4(2) – Notification of decision on application	<p><u>Notification of Environmental Authorisation (EA) using the following means:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification letter with details as outlined in EA issued will be sent via email, fax, or post. • Notifications that the EA has been issued and where to download and/or obtain a copy to communities via one of the following, where available: Ward Councillor and his/her ward committee members and identified and confirmed community representatives. • SMS or WhatsApp notification.

Regulation	Approach & Methodology to meet requirements
	<p><u>Opportunity and means of consultation where applicable facilities are not available to I&APs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post (where email or other means are not possible)• Communication via one of the following, where available: the ward councillor, ward committee members and confirmed community representatives and local community forum members.• SMS and/or WhatsApp.

Tamryn Lee Goddard

From: Zama Langa <ZLANGA@dffe.gov.za>
Sent: Tuesday, 30 November 2021 09:59
To: Tamryn Lee Goddard; Jo-Anne Thomas
Cc: Dr. Danie Smit; Julliet Mahlangu; Ephron Maradwa
Subject: Additional footprint for the Engie Sannasport Solar Project - PPP Plan Approval 2021-11-0021

Dear Tamryn

The Public Participation Process (PPP) Plan for the abovementioned project received by this department on 18 November 2021, refer.

The Department has evaluated the Public Participation Plan which is submitted as per Minister Directive dated 05 June 2020 in response to Covid-19 pandemic and the minutes of the pre application meeting hereby approves the plan and minutes for the abovementioned project.

You may proceed with the public participation process in accordance with the tasks contemplated in the PPP plan. Should you wish to deviate from the submitted PPP Plan, the amended PPP Plan must be submitted to the Department for approval prior commencement.

Please ensure that the PPP plan forms part of the report that will be submitted to the department. Kindly ensure that all I&APs are consulted as per requirement of 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 Authorization being granted by the Department.

Regards,
Zamalanga

From: EIA Applications <EIAApplications@dffe.gov.za>
Sent: Thursday, 25 November 2021 14:30
To: Julliet Mahlangu <JMMahlangu@dffe.gov.za>
Cc: Zama Langa <ZLANGA@dffe.gov.za>; Dr. Danie Smit <DSMIT@dffe.gov.za>; Jo-Anne Thomas <joanne@savannahsa.com>; reggie.niemand@engie.com
Subject: 2021-11-0021

Dear Julliet.

Please note that you have been allocated an application:

Type of Application: Pre-Application Meeting Request;
Reference Number: 2021-11-0021;
Date Received: 18/11/2021;
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 Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

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@dffe.gov.za.

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

Please note that this mailbox has a 5mb mail limit. No zip files are to be attached in any email.

From: Tamryn Lee Goddard <tamryn@savannahsa.com>
Sent: Friday, 19 November 2021 10:51
To: EIA Applications <EIAApplications@dffe.gov.za>
Cc: Jo-Anne Thomas <joanne@savannahsa.com>
Subject: FW: Additional footprint for the Engie Sannasport Solar Project - Request for Pre-Application Meeting

Good day,

Please find attached pre-application meeting request for the proposed additional footprint for the Engie Sannasport Solar Project. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries regarding the project or the application.

Please note and as stated in the application form, we do not require a meeting but do need approval of the PP Plan. Please advise if you require a meeting and a suitable date.

Thank you and kind regards,

savannah

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

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