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Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd
Care of Candy Mahlangu

Per email: Candy@savannahsa.com

Dear Candy

PART 1 AMENDMENT: VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Proposed Boesmanland Solar Farm near Aggeneys in the Northern Cape Province

1. PROJECT TITLE

The establishment of the Boesmanland Solar Farm on Portion 6 (a Portion of Portion 2) of Farm 62 Zuurwater, Aggeneys in the Northern Cape Province.

2. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE AMENDMENT

Extension of the validity of the Environmental Authorisation (EA)

Boesmanland Solar Farm (Pty) Ltd is proposing to amend the EA for the Boesmanland Solar Farm, by extending the EA validity by an additional ten (10) years. Extension of the validity of the EA will ensure that the EA remains valid for the undertaking of the authorised activities.

Condition 7 of the First Issue Environmental Authorisation, Issued on 16 July 2013, DEA Reference 14/12/16/3/3/2/222 (12/12/20/2602) states that:

“This activity must commence within a period of three (3) years from the date of issue. If commencement of the activity does not occur within that period, the authorisation lapses and a new application for environmental authorisation must be made in order for the activity to be undertaken.”

Consequent amendments to extend the validity of the authorisation have been made as follows:

- 14/12/16/3/3/2/222/AM1 – authorised on the 22 February 2016 extending the validity to 16 July 2018
- 14/12/16/3/3/2/222/AM2 – authorised on the 30 July 2018 extending the validity to 16 July 2020
- The most recent 14/12//16/3/2/2222/AM3 – 12 August 2020 extending the validity to 16 July 2023 which states the following.

“This activity must commence within a period of ten (10) years from the date of issue of the authorisation (i.e. the authorisation lapses on 16 July 2023). If commencement of the activity does not occur within that period, the authorisation lapses and a new application for

environmental authorisation must be made in order for the activity to be undertaken.”

The applicant, Boesmanland Solar Farm (Pty) Ltd thus requests that the Competent Authority amends Condition 7 of the original EA (Page 6) as amended (DFFE Reference: 14/12//16/3/2/2222/AM3; dated 12 August 2020) as follows:

“This activity must commence within a period of twenty (20) years from the date of issue of the authorisation (i.e. the EA lapses on 16 July 2033). If commencement of the activity does not occur within that period, the authorisation lapses and a new application for environmental authorisation must be made in order for the activity to be undertaken”.

Amend the email address of the EA Holder

The email address of the holder of the environmental authorisation as authorised in EA Amendment 3 (14/12/16/3/3/2/222/AM3) for the requested consolidated EA (on the relevant pages) needs to be amended to reflect the new email contact details:

From: m.michalowska@redrocket.energy
To: m.logan@redrocket.energy

Include gridline infrastructure properties into the EA

The overhead powerlines transverse two properties. The two properties were assessed in the EIA but were not included in the EA.

Property details of Linear Activities		
Black Mountain Mine	Portion 1 of Farm Aggeneys 56 C05300000000056000001	Linear Activity consent not required
Aggeneis Eskom Substation	Portion 2 of Farm Aggeneys C05300000000056000002	Linear Activity consent not required

3. ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT

The reviewer has assessed the proposed amendment to the extension of the validity of the EA (including the change of email address and the inclusion of the gridline infrastructure properties) and has drawn the following conclusions:

3.1. The Affected Environment

The description of the affected environment, as described in the final Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report remains unchanged. There have been no change in land use for the proposed development site, no new developments have been constructed on or near the development site, and the land use zonation (agriculture) remains the same.

The above conclusion was verified through consultation with the project proponent and the current land owner(s).

3.2. Terms of reference for the Visual Impact Assessment (VIA)

The terms of reference for the original VIA report included:

- Determine the potential visual exposure of the proposed project infrastructure
- Determine the visual distance/observer proximity to the project infrastructure
- Identify potential sensitive visual receptors and areas of higher viewer incidence
- Determine the visual absorption capacity of the landscape
- Calculate a visual impact index to identify the magnitude of the visual impact on potentially affected areas/receptors
- Determine the significance of the potential visual impact
- Provide mitigation measures to alleviate the potential visual impacts

These activities, analyses and conclusions are still relevant in light of the proposed amendment to the extension of the validity of the EA.

3.3. Impact rating assessment and impact mitigation measures

The proposed extension of the validity of the EA by an additional ten years is not expected to alter the influence of the project infrastructure on *areas of higher viewer incidence* (observers traveling along the roads within the region) or *potential sensitive visual receptors* (residents of homesteads in closer proximity to the infrastructure).

The proposed amendment to the validity of the EA is consequently not expected to influence the anticipated visual impact, as stated in the original EIA report (i.e. the proposed development site would be set back from the N14 National road by at least 5km and would not be visible from any main roads or other important public vantage points).

Additional to this, the proposed development would not materially alter existing views from the N14 or any other known area or site considered to be of moderate to high local, provincial or national aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value cultural significance.

From a visual perspective, the proposed amendment will therefore require no (zero) changes to the significance rating within the original visual assessment that was used to inform the approved EIA. In addition to this, no new mitigation measures are required.

There are no new assessment guidelines which are now relevant to the authorised development which were not undertaken as part of the initial visual assessment. Additional to this, and as stated above, there have been no changes to the environment of the proposed development site or the surrounding environment.

3.4. Cumulative visual impact

It is worth noting that the proposed Boesmanland Solar Farm is located within the Springbok Renewable Energy Development Zone No. 8 (REDZ8) as determined by the *Strategic Environmental Assessment for Wind and Solar Photovoltaic Energy in South Africa* (2015 – CSIR/DEA) and within the Northern Corridor of the Strategic Transmission Corridors.

REDZ are described as:

“areas where large scale wind and solar PV energy facilities can be developed in terms of SIP 8 and in a manner that limits significant negative impacts on the environment, while yielding the highest possible socio-economic benefits to the country.”

Strategic Transmission Corridors are:

“areas where long term electricity grid infrastructure will be developed and where an integrated decision-making process for applications for environmental authorisation in terms of the National Environmental Act (1998) will be followed.”

The consolidation and concentration of renewable energy facilities (and associated grid connection infrastructure) within these zones are therefore preferred and the cumulative visual impact is deemed to be of an acceptable level i.e. the amendment is not expected to alter the potential cumulative visual impact rating as stated in the original EIA report:

“In context of the broader landscape, the cumulative impacts are not likely to be highly significant given the extensive intact nature of the landscape as a whole”.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed amendment will require no changes to the impact significance ratings as stated within the original EIA report which was used to inform the approved EA. In addition to this, no new mitigation measures are required.

It is suggested that the amendment to the validity of the EA be supported, subject to the conditions and recommendations as stipulated in the original EA, and according to the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) and suggested mitigation measures, as provided in the original EIA report.

5. REFERENCES

Cape Environmental Assessment Practitioners (Pty) Ltd, 2013. Proposed Boesmanland Solar Farm. *Final Impact Assessment Report and Environmental Management Programme*.

https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/gazetted_notices/Nema107of1998_electricitygridinfrastructuredevelopmentactivities_n113.pdf

<https://redzs.csir.co.za>

Feel free to contact me at any time, should you have any queries.

Kind regards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. du P.' with a stylized flourish.

Lourens du Plessis (PrGISc)