

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT & INVITATION TO COMMENT:

Proposed Development of the Gehrlicher Ikhwezi PV Solar Energy Facility of up to 10 MW, East London

AIM OF THIS DOCUMENT

The aim of this Background Information Document is to provide people affected by and interested in the proposed project with information about this project, the process being followed and to provide them with an opportunity to be involved in the EIA process.

Interested and Affected Parties (IAPs) may raise issues of concern. These will be examined and included in the Reports.

The findings of the EIA will be provided to the DEA for final decision making, as to whether or not the project should go ahead and if so under what conditions.

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Your involvement in this process is critical, and will help ensure that all relevant issues are raised and assessed in the EIA process



Figure 1: Illustration of photovoltaic (PV) arrays on a solar power plant.

BACKGROUND

Gehrlicher Ikhwezi (Pty) Ltd (hereafter referred to as Gehrlicher Ikhwezi) proposes to construct a Photovoltaic (PV) solar energy facility of up to 10 Mega Watts (MW) on land located within the East London Industrial Development Zone (ELIDZ). The construction will take place in two phases as follows:

- Phase 1 – construction of pilot scale 1-2 MW PV facility on 1-2 ha of parking area (see attached map).
- Phase 2 – extension of pilot facility to 10 MW on 17-18 ha of land located on 8 portions of open space located within the ELIDZ (see attached map).

The first phase of the development will entail constructing the pilot scale 1 – 2 MW PV facility in an existing parking facility where the PV panels will replace existing shade covers. The area affected is estimated to be in the region of 1 - 2 ha. The second phase will be subject to the performance of Phase 1, where construction will eventually extend up to 10 MW situated on portions of open space land (determined not to be environmentally sensitive) located in the ELIDZ not exceeding 17-18 ha. Electricity generated from the proposed project will be connected onto the ELIDZ electricity grid.

It is also the intention of the project developers to make application for the generation of Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) in terms of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) program under the Kyoto Protocol.

Coastal and Environmental Services (CES) has been appointed by Gehrlicher Ikhwezi as the independent consultant to undertake the necessary environmental investigations for the PV facility, and to apply for the required authorisation from the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). This is in fulfilment of the requirements of South Africa's environmental legislation, details of which, together with an overview of the environmental impact assessment process, are provided in this document.

Notice is hereby given in terms of Regulation 54(2) published in Government Notice No. R543 under Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998), of the intent to submit an application for an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Please refer to Figures 2 and 3 for a locality map and a provisional layout map for the proposed Ikhwezi 10 MW Solar Energy Facility.

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RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA)(Act No 107 of 1998, as amended in 2010) identifies activities in terms of section 24(2)(a) and (d) which may not commence without an authorisation from the competent authority, who in this case is Department of Environmental Affairs, (DEA- National). In order to apply for authorisation for the development, assessment and communication of potential impacts of the activities must follow the procedure as described in regulations 26 to 35 of Government Notice No. R 543 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2010), promulgated in terms of section 24(5) of NEMA as amended.

The proposed project is subject to a Basic Environmental Impact Assessment in terms of the activities listed in Table 1.

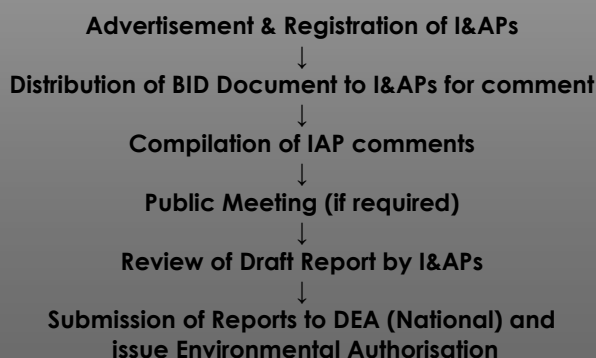
Table 1: Listed activities triggered by the proposed development

GN. R544	Listed activity
1	The construction of facilities for the generation of electricity where – (ii) the output is 10 megawatts or less but the total extent of the facility covers an area in excess of 1 hectare
23	The transformation of undeveloped, vacant or derelict land to – (i) residential, retail, commercial, recreational, industrial or institutional use, inside an urban area, and where the total area to be transformed is 5 hectares or more, but less than 20 hectares.
24	The transformation of land bigger than 1000 square metres in size, to residential, retail, commercial, recreational, industrial or institutional use, where, at the time of the coming into effect of this Schedule such land was zoned open space, conservation or had equivalent zoning.

APPROACH TO THIS BASIC ASSESSMENT

This phase serves primarily to inform the public and relevant authorities about the proposed project and to determine any impacts. The potential impact on the surrounding will be extensively addressed by specialists and a Basic Assessment Report, along with the Specialist Reports, will then be submitted and a decision will be made by relevant authorities.

Basic Assessment Process



HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED

A Public participation Process (PPP) is being conducted as part of the BA. The aim of the PPP is to allow everyone who is interested in, or likely to be affected by the proposed development to provide input into the process.

The Public Participation Process will include:

- Advertisement in the Daily Despatch
- Notice Boards on site
- Circulation of the BID to all I&APs
- Review of the report by all registered I&APs
- Comments period

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Figure 2: Locality map of the proposed Gehrlicher Ikhwezi Solar PV Energy Facility in the East London IDZ



Figure 3: Provisional schematic layout map of the proposed Gehrlicher Ikhwezi 10 MW PV Solar Energy Facility – Map shows open space areas and car park area (yellow) where first 1-2 MW facility will be located.

