



ZUNCKEL ECOLOGICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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Londolozi Game Reserve (Pty) Ltd

Application for Environmental Authorisation
for the development of a 1MW solar array on Sparta Farms 259KU.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

April 2023

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT?

The purpose of this document is to:

- ◆ Inform Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) about the proposed project, and to invite them to participate in the Environmental Impact Assessment process;
- ◆ Provide a brief background on the proposed project; and
- ◆ Explain the aims and objectives of the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND TO THIS DEVELOPMENT?

Londolozi Game Reserve (Pty) Ltd wishes to increase its renewable energy generation capacity by developing a 1MW solar array covering an area of just more than 1 hectare. This will increase the resilience of their operations to the fickleness of the South African grid supply as well as reduce their reliance on non-renewable sources of energy.

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

As state above, the intention is to develop a 1MW solar array covering an area of 1 hectare. The area selected for the array will be terraced to accommodate the solar panels and the excavated soil will be used to construct berms around the array so that it is not visible from the ground. In order to limit the amount of earth works required and the height of the berms, the panels will be secured as low to the ground as possible, i.e. lowest end 500mm above the ground. The berms will be vegetated with plant material recovered from the earth works. Included in the development will be the necessary transmission infrastructure which will be buried in a trench taking the shortest route from the array to the existing solar plant.

WHERE IS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT?

The proposed development is planned to be located on the Marthly section of Sparta Farms 259KU on the Londolozi Game Reserve, within the Sabi Sands Game Reserve. The site is within the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, the Ehlanzeni District Municipality and the Mpumalanga Province. There are three alternative sites located to the west and south of the existing development footprint as illustrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

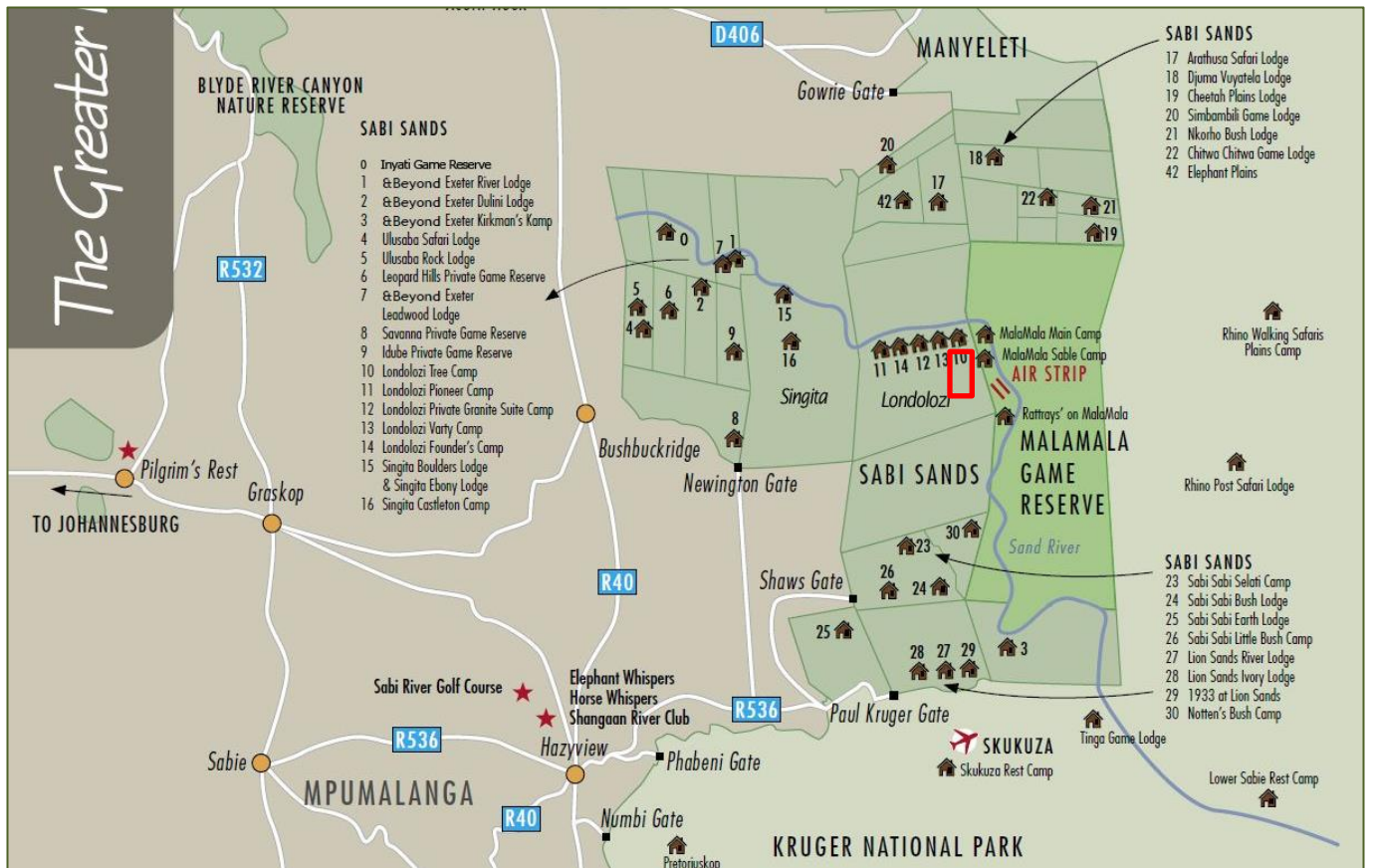


Figure 1: Location of the proposed development on the property Marthly on the Londolozi Game Reserve in the Sabi Sands Game Reserve.



Figure 2: The location of the three alternative sites for the proposed solar array and transmission infrastructure.

WHY IS A BASIC ASSESSMENT NECESSARY?

The following Listed Activities have been identified as being relevant to the proposed development discussed above:

Activity under Listing Notice 1 (National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998, GNR 985, GG 38282 of 4 December 2014, as amended in GG 40772, GN No. 324 of 7 April 2017):

Activity 1: The development of facilities or infrastructure for the generation of electricity from a renewable resource where—
(ii) the output is 10 megawatts or less but the total extent of the facility covers an area in excess of 1 hectare (note that the berms surrounding the array will bring to total area to more than 1 ha.

Activity 27: The clearance of an area of 1 hectares or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation.

Activity under Listing Notice 3 (National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998, GNR 985, GG 38282 of 4 December 2014, as amended in GG 40772, GN No. 324 of 7 April 2017):

Activity 12: The clearance of an area of 300 square metres or more of indigenous vegetation iii. On land, where, at the time of the coming into effect of this Notice or thereafter such land was zoned open space, conservation or had an equivalent zoning or proclamation in terms of NEMPAA.

Activity 14: The development of—(ii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 10 square metres or more; where such development occurs—within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse f. Mpumalanga i. Outside urban areas: (aa) A protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA, excluding conservancies.

WHAT IS THE AIM OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)?

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process aims to:

- ◆ Inform and involve all potentially interested and affected parties (I&APs) of the proposed development;
- ◆ Identify the potential impacts (positive and negative) that the proposed development may have on the ecological and socio-economic environment;
- ◆ Provide recommendations based on the identified impacts and conduct further specialist studies if necessary; and
- ◆ Provide the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) with enough information to make an informed decision regarding the proposed development.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE EIA PROCESS FOR A BASIC ASSESSMENT?

The EIA Basic Assessment process can be described as follows:

1. Application Form:

An official Application Form is required to be completed and circulated with the Draft Basic Assessment Report to a number of authorities including Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Agency, the Local & District Municipalities, etc. It provides information on the property, a description of the proposed development and lists the relevant listed activities which are triggered by this proposed development.

2. Public Participation:

The general public are notified of the proposed development through newspaper adverts (Mpumalanga News and the Lowvelder) and site notices placed at Newington and Shaw's Gates and through direct consultation. This Background information Document will be circulated to neighbouring landowners, relevant authorities and any other persons registered as I&APs following the advert and site notice and a contacts data base will be compiled and maintained throughout the process.

3. Identification of Impacts and Alternatives

Environmental issues, concerns, development constraints and possible development alternatives will be identified using professional judgement, project information, experience of similar projects, a review of available literature, site visits, and consultation with authorities and the public.

4. Impact Evaluation

The significance of environmental issues will be evaluated in terms of their expected extent, intensity, duration and probability of occurrence.

5. Mitigation and Management Measures

Measures to manage and minimise impacts to within acceptable levels, as well as measures to maximise the socio-economic benefits associated with the development, will be identified and recorded in the Basic Assessment Report.

6. Reporting

The draft Basic Assessment Report and any other Specialist Reports, such as a Heritage Impact Assessment, will be made available for review and comment by all I&APs and relevant authorities. A Final Basic Assessment Report will be compiled and will include comments received on the circulated draft Basic Assessment Report.

7. Authority Decision

The Final Basic Assessment Report will be used by the Mpumalanga DARDLEA as the basis for the decision on whether the proposed development should be approved or not.

WHAT POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS HAVE INITIALLY BEEN IDENTIFIED?

The following issues have been identified as potentially problematic and will, amongst other issues, be investigated during the Basic Assessment Process:

- ◆ No significant impacts during the planning phase;
- ◆ During construction: local disturbance to indigenous vegetation and wildlife.
- ◆ Negative impacts during the operation phase: loss of access by large mammals to the area under the solar array.

HOW CAN I&APs COMMENT ON THIS DEVELOPMENT?

The need for the involvement of interested and affected parties (I&APs) is of critical importance. All I&APs (neighbours, authorities, organisations etc.) are invited to comment on the proposed development. Comments can be communicated to the EAP by post, telephone, fax or email (contact details are provided below).

In order to ensure that your comments are addressed and incorporated into the draft Basic Assessment Report, please ensure that you register and we have received your comments by the 31st May 2023. Please use the structure below to guide your inputs into this process. You will be notified when other related reports are available for review and comment as well as to other steps in the process.



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Postal Code:			
Tel No:		Cell No:	
Fax No:		E-mail:	

COMMENTS:

1. The following issues must be addressed in the basic assessment of the proposed development:

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2. Please add the following persons to your list of interested and affected parties:

Name:	Organisation:
Telephone:	
Address:	
Name:	Organisation:
Telephone:	
Address:	

3. Any other comments:

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Thank you for your participation.