

22 May 2023

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
Environment House
473 Steve Biko Street
Arcadia
Pretoria
0083

Attention: Ms Mmatlala Rabothata

**HARMONY JOEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, THEUNISSEN, FREE STATE PROVINCE
(DESTEA Reference No.: EMS/11(i),12(ii)(a)(c),14,19, 24(ii), 1,15, 4(b) (i)(gg), 10(b) (i)(gg)(hh),
12(b)(i), 14(ii)(a)(b)(i)(hh)/22/16
NEAS ref: FSP/EIA/0000492/2022)**

Clarification on Information Provided in the Draft EIA Report

Dear Ms. Rabothata,

Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd is managing an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the development of the Harmony Joel Solar PV Facility on a site near Theunissen, Free State Province (DESTEA Reference No.: EMS/11 (i),12(ii)(a)(c),14,19, 24(ii), 1,15, 4(b) (i)(gg), 10(b) (i)(gg)(hh), 12(b)(i), 14(ii)(a)(b)(i)(hh)/22/16; NEAS ref: FSP/EIA/0000492/2022). The EIA process is being conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Management Act (No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA), the 2014 EIA Regulations (as amended) (GNR 326). In accordance with the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, published in terms of Section 24(5) of the National Environmental Management Act (No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA), the applicant requires Environmental Authorisation (EA) from the Free State Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA), in consultation with the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) for the development of the proposed project.

In terms of Section 24(5) of NEMA, the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended, and Listing Notices (GNR 327, GNR 325, and GNR 324), the application for EA for the Harmony Joel Solar PV Facility is required to be supported by a Scoping & EIA process. The application was required to be supported by comprehensive, independent specialist studies undertaken in accordance with Appendix 6 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, and where relevant the gazetted protocols.

The draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report was prepared by Savannah Environmental and made available for a 30-day public review period from 24 March 2023 until 26 April 2023. During this

period, the following comment was recorded from the DFFE Biodiversity and Conservation Directorate:

“Based on the information provided in the report, the ecological and wetland specialist rated the cumulative impacts of the project and other projects in the area as high significance, yet the description of the cumulative impact indicates that the proposed solar development would not result in high cumulative impact. The Directorate Biodiversity Conservation requests clarification on the significance rating of the cumulative impact prior to decision making.”

The query raised by the Department is much appreciated. This has pointed to an error in the wording of both the specialist report, as well as the EIAR, and these have been updated as follows:

- The impact table on ecology and wetlands included under section 8.2 of the final EIAR has been corrected. The cumulative impact of the project and other projects in the area is a medium cumulative impact. The score of 60 is a medium impact in line with the methodology used by all specialists to assess impacts (refer to section 5.6 in the final EIAR)
- The impact table within the Ecology and Wetlands specialist report has been corrected to reflect the correct cumulative assessment rating associated with the score of 60.
- This comment has been recorded in the Comments and Responses Report (C&RR) which will be submitted as **Appendix C8** to the Final EIAR. The paragraph in section 8.8 of the Final EIAR has been updated as follows:
 - » The area surrounding the site does still contain fairly extensive natural portions, although mining operations and agricultural transformation does contribute toward a moderate degree of cumulative transformation. The cumulative impact of the project is scored as 60 which is a medium impact in line with the methodology used by all specialists to assess impacts (refer to section 5.6). The proposed solar development would therefore not result in a high cumulative impact to ecology and wetland features, although would contribute toward the overall cumulative transformation of the area. The cumulative impact is therefore acceptable.

Therefore, it is concluded that the ecological and wetland specialist rated the cumulative impacts of the project and other projects in the area as medium significance, which is consistent with the description of the cumulative impact, which indicates that the proposed solar development would not result in high cumulative impact.

A summary of the cumulative impacts for the Harmony Joel Solar PV Facility is included in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Summary of the cumulative impact significance for the Harmony Joel Solar PV Facility

Specialist assessment	Overall impact of the proposed project considered in isolation	Cumulative impact of the project and other projects in the area
Ecology	Medium	Medium
Avifauna	Low to Medium (depending on the impact being considered)	Medium
Land use, soil and agricultural potential	Low to Medium (depending on the impact being considered)	Low to Medium (depending on the impact being considered)
Heritage (archaeology and palaeontology)	Low	Low

Visual	Medium	Medium
Socio-Economic	Low to Medium (depending on the impact being considered)	Low to Medium (depending on the impact being considered)

Based on the specialist cumulative assessment and findings, the development of the Harmony Joel Solar PV Facility and its contribution to the overall impact of all renewable energy facilities to be developed within a 30km radius, it can be concluded that the Harmony Joel Solar PV Facility cumulative impacts will be of a medium to low significance. It was concluded that the development of the 18MW Harmony Joel Solar PV Facility will not contribute significantly toward the cumulative impacts in this area due to the proposed location being adjacent to an active mining site. The cumulative impact attributed to this facility is therefore acceptable.

Acknowledgment of the above response would be appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Kind regards

Chantelle Geyer
Environmental Consultant
Savannah Environmental



Chantelle Geyer

From: Chantelle Geyer
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2023 12:08 PM
To: MMatlala Rabothata
Cc: molokwanen@destea.gov.za; Nicolene Venter
Subject: Response to comment on Harmony Joel DEIR
Attachments: SE3270 - Harmony Joel Letter to DFFE Biodiversity Final.pdf

Good day Ms. Rabothata,

I hope you are doing well.

Kindly find attached a formal response letter to your comment on the Harmony Joel DEIR.

This response has also been added to the Comments and Responses Report (attached as Appendix C8 to the FEIR).

Kind regards,



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Chantelle Geyer
Junior Environmental Consultant

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(i)(gg), 10(b) (i)(gg)(hh), 12(b)(i), 14(ii)(a)(b)(i)(hh)/22/16
NEAS ref: FSP/EIA/0000492/2022
Enquiries: Ms. N. Molokwane
113 St. Andrews Building, Bloemfontein
Tel: (051) - 400 4831
Email: molokwanen@destea.gov.za

To: Ms. Jo-Anne Thomas
Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd
P. O. Box 148
Sunninghill
2191

Cell: 082 755 5628
Email: joanne@savannahsa.com

Dear Ms. Thomas,

**RE: ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF
18MW HARMONY JOEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, THEUNISSEN BLOEMFONTEIN, FREE
STATE PROVINCE.**

The Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA) - "The Department" has reviewed your Draft EIA Report for the above-mentioned application.

Therefore, you may proceed compiling the Final EIA Report, as there are no comments at the moment. The Final EIA Report must be submitted in the form of one (1) hard copy and one (1) soft copy.

Please note that the activity applied for may not commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by this Department.

Regards,

Ms. N. Molokwane
Environmental Officer Production Grade A: EIM
Date: 05/05/2023

CHIEF DIRECTORATE: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & PROTECTION
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e-mail: nkoen@destea.gov.za

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(i)(gg), 10(b) (i)(gg)(hh), 12(b)(i), 14(ii)(a)(b)(i)(hh)/22/16
NEAS ref: FSP/EIA/0000492/2022
Enquiries: Ms. N. Molokwane
113 St. Andrews Building, Bloemfontein
Tel: (051) - 400 4831
Email: molokwanen@destea.gov.za

To: Ms. Jo-Anne Thomas
Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd
P. O. Box 148
Sunninghill
2191

Cell: 082 755 5628
Email: joanne@savannahsa.com

Dear Ms. Thomas,

**RE: ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF
18MW HARMONY JOEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, THEUNISSEN BLOEMFONTEIN, FREE
STATE PROVINCE.**

The Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA) - "The Department" would like to inform you that the Final Scoping Report and Plan of Study for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which was received by the Department on the 10th January 2023, for the above-mentioned application has been accepted.

You may proceed with undertaking of the EIA in accordance with the tasks that are outlined in the Plan of Study for EIA. The Draft EIA Report must be submitted in the form of 1 hard copy and 1 soft copy.

Please note that the activity applied for may not commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by this Department.

Regards,

Ms. N. Molokwane
Environmental Officer Production Grade A: EIM
Date: 03/02/2023

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(i)(gg), 10(b) (i)(gg)(hh), 12(b)(i), 14(ii)(a)(b)(i)(hh)/22/16
NEAS ref: FSP/EIA/0000492/2022
Enquiries: Ms. N. Molokwane
113 St. Andrews Building, Bloemfontein
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Email: molokwanen@destea.gov.za

To: Ms. Jo-Anne Thomas
Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd
P. O. Box 148
Sunninghill
2191

Cell: 082 755 5628
Email: joanne@savannahsa.com

Dear Ms. Thomas,

RE: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE FINAL SCOPING REPORT AND THE PLAN OF STUDY FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF 18MW HARMONY JOEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, THEUNISSEN BLOEMFONTEIN, FREE STATE PROVINCE.

The Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA) - 'the Department' acknowledges receipt of your Final Scoping Report and the Plan of Study received on the 10th January 2023, for the above-mentioned project.

At present in progress is review of the the Final Scoping Report for further processing of this application.

Please note that the activity applied for may not commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by this Department.

Regards,

Ms. N. Molokwane
Environmental Officer Production Grade A: EIM
Date: 10/01/2023

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(i)(gg),10(b)(i)(gg)(hh),12(b)(i),14(ii)(a)(b)(i)(hh)/22/16
NEAS ref: FSP/EIA/0000492/2022
Enquiries: Ms. N. Molokwane
113 St. Andrews Building, Bloemfontein
Tel: (051) - 400 4831
Email: molokwanen@destea.gov.za

To: Ms. Jo-Anne Thomas
Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd
P. O. Box 148
Sunninghill
2191

Cell: 082 755 5628

Email: joanne@savannahsa.com

Dear Ms. Thomas,

RE: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE APPLICATION FORM AND THE DRAFT SCOPING REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF 18MW HARMONY JOEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, THEUNISSEN BLOEMFONTEIN, FREE STATE PROVINCE.

The Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA) - 'the Department' acknowledges receipt of your application form and the Draft Scoping Report on the 16th November 2022, for the above-mentioned project.

Kindly note that your application is assigned to **Ms. N. Molokwane** as the case officer and all correspondence regarding this application should be forwarded to the case officer at the above provided contact details. The application has been allocated the Departmental reference number **Ref No: EMS/11(i),12(ii)(a)(c),14,19,24(ii),1,15,4(b)(i)(gg),10(b)(i)(gg)(hh),12(b)(i),14(ii)(a)(b)(i)(hh)/22/16** and the National Environmental Authorisation System (NEAS) **Ref No: FSP/EIA/0000492/2022**. Both the indicated reference numbers should be quoted at all times throughout the EIA process and the project life cycle e.g. documents, emails, letters, etc. In the below indicated manner:

DESTEA Ref. No: EMS/11(i),12(ii)(a)(c),14,19,24(ii),1,15,4(b)(i)(gg),10(b)(i)(gg)(hh),12(b)(i),14(ii)(a)(b)(i)(hh)/22/16
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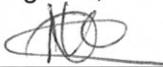
RE: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE APPLICATION FORM AND THE DRAFT SCOPING REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF 18MW HARMONY JOEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, THEUNISSEN BLOEMFONTEIN, FREE STATE PROVINCE.

At present in progress is review of the the Draft Scoping Report, which is subjected to 30 days of public participation process to give comments as per sub-regulation 21 (1) and Chapter 6 in terms of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations as amended.

The NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) Regulation 45 cautions the EAP that, this application will deemed as having lapsed by the Competent Authority (CA) in this case DESTEA, if the application fails to meet any of the time-frames prescribed in terms of these regulations, unless extension has been granted in terms of Regulation 3(7). Furthermore, potential cumulative impacts of each activity applied for should be reflected within the EIA process.

Please note that the activity applied for may not commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by this Department.

Regards,



Ms. N. Molokwane
Environmental Officer Production Grade A: EIM

Date: 24/11/2022

Ansoné Esterhuizen

From: Grace Mkhosana <mkhosana@destea.gov.za>
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2022 10:31 AM
To: Ansoné Esterhuizen
Subject: RE: Application submission

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good day Ansone,

We are currently experiencing challenges with our server its up and down so I don't want to risk and tell you to submit digital copies in case our emails will be down.

Kind regards,
Grace Mkhosana
DESTEА

From: Ansoné Esterhuizen <Ansonе@savannahsa.com>
Sent: Friday, August 19, 2022 11:37 AM
To: Grace Mkhosana <mkhosana@destea.gov.za>
Subject: Application submission

Hi Grace

I hope you are well, I would just like to check what the best way is to submit and EIA application and report to your department, we are working on projects with escalated timelines and would like to be able to get the reports and acknowledgment from the department as soon as possible

The application forms state that a copy must be hand delivered to the office, would it be possible to send digital copies onto of the hard copies just to ensure we don't lose any days?

Regards,



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Ansoné Esterhuizen
Environmental Consultant

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Ansoné Esterhuizen

From: Grace Mkhosana <mkhosana@destea.gov.za>
Sent: Monday, July 11, 2022 10:59 AM
To: Ansoné Esterhuizen
Cc: Karen Jodas; Kristen Shaw; Dimakatso Mokoena; Lorato Moalosi; Boipelo P.R. Mogorosi; Disebo Masoetsa
Subject: RE: Initiation of various EIA's in the Free state province

Good day Ansone,

This serves to confirm that the Department's Basic Assessment Templates meet the requirements in terms of the EIA Regulations 2014 as amended.

Kind regards,
Grace Mkhosana
DESTEA

From: Ansoné Esterhuizen <Ansone@savannahsa.com>
Sent: Monday, July 11, 2022 10:53 AM
To: Grace Mkhosana <mkhosana@destea.gov.za>
Cc: Karen Jodas <karen@savannahsa.com>; Kristen Shaw <Kristen@savannahsa.com>; Dimakatso Mokoena <mokoena@destea.gov.za>; Lorato Moalosi <moalosi@destea.gov.za>; Boipelo P.R. Mogorosi <mogorosib@destea.gov.za>
Subject: RE: Initiation of various EIA's in the Free state province

Good day Grace

We simply require confirmation of the reporting formats, however based on the comments previously received from the department we are making use of the Free State's Basic Assessment Templates.

We would appreciate confirmation that this meets the department's requirements, and that the department acknowledges its role as the competent authority for these projects.

Regards,

savannah
environmental

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From: Grace Mkhosana <mkhosana@destea.gov.za>
Sent: Monday, July 11, 2022 10:31 AM

To: Ansoné Esterhuizen <Ansone@savannahsa.com>
Cc: Karen Jodas <karen@savannahsa.com>; Kristen Shaw <Kristen@savannahsa.com>; Dimakatso Mokoena <mokoenad@destea.gov.za>; Lorato Moalosi <moalosi@destea.gov.za>; Boipelo P.R. Mogorosi <mogorosib@destea.gov.za>
Subject: RE: Initiation of various EIA's in the Free state province

Good day Ansoné,

Thank you for the information so we would like to know what are the issues that you want to discuss with the Department.

Kind regards,
Grace Mkhosana
DESTEA

From: Ansoné Esterhuizen <Ansone@savannahsa.com>
Sent: Friday, July 8, 2022 2:05 PM
To: Grace Mkhosana <mkhosana@destea.gov.za>
Cc: Karen Jodas <karen@savannahsa.com>; Kristen Shaw <Kristen@savannahsa.com>; Dimakatso Mokoena <mokoenad@destea.gov.za>
Subject: RE: Initiation of various EIA's in the Free state province

Good day Grace

Thank you for getting back to me. Please see attached the project information with maps. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards,



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From: Grace Mkhosana <mkhosana@destea.gov.za>
Sent: Friday, July 8, 2022 9:18 AM
To: Ansoné Esterhuizen <Ansone@savannahsa.com>
Cc: Karen Jodas <karen@savannahsa.com>; Kristen Shaw <Kristen@savannahsa.com>; Dimakatso Mokoena <mokoenad@destea.gov.za>
Subject: RE: Initiation of various EIA's in the Free state province

Good day Ansoné,

To avoid further delays, Is it possible for you to send BID regarding the above matter so that we can determine if pre-application consultation meeting will be necessary. Almost 99% of our Environmental Management Committee members will be out on site inspections the whole of next week.

Kind regards,
Grace Mkhosana
DESTEА

From: Ansoné Esterhuizen <Ansone@savannahsa.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 5, 2022 3:38 PM
To: Grace Mkhosana <mkhosana@destea.gov.za>
Cc: Karen Jodas <karen@savannahsa.com>; Kristen Shaw <Kristen@savannahsa.com>; Dimakatso Mokoena <mokoenad@destea.gov.za>
Subject: RE: Initiation of various EIA's in the Free state province

Good Afternoon Grace,

I have tried calling you, I hope you had a wonderful time on leave. I just wanted to follow up with you regarding the below request. We would like to have a pre application meeting with the department as soon as possible.

Thanks so much

Regards,



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Environmental Consultant

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From: Ansoné Esterhuizen
Sent: Monday, June 20, 2022 12:42 PM
To: 'Grace Mkhosana' <mkhosana@destea.gov.za>
Cc: Karen Jodas <karen@savannahsa.com>; Kristen Shaw <Kristen@savannahsa.com>; 'Dimakatso Mokoena' <mokoenad@destea.gov.za>
Subject: RE: Initiation of various EIA's in the Free state province

Hi Grace

I have tried to call you, please let me know if there is a more effective way to get a hold of you, it would be greatly appreciated.

I just want to follow up if we could have the pre application meeting this week? If that would suite you.

Regards,



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Ansoné Esterhuizen
Environmental Consultant

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From: Ansoné Esterhuizen
Sent: Wednesday, June 15, 2022 10:16 AM
To: Grace Mkhosana <mkhosana@destea.gov.za>
Cc: Karen Jodas <karen@savannahsa.com>; Kristen Shaw <Kristen@savannahsa.com>; Dimakatso Mokoena <mokoena@destea.gov.za>
Subject: RE: Initiation of various EIA's in the Free state province

Hi Grace

Thank you for getting back to me. No application will be lodged with the DMR and therefore presume that DESTEA is the correct competent authority.

We are currently finalizing the project information for most of our sites and therefore can not provide you with the completed BIDs for the projects as of yet, and ask however for you to consider the project scopes as follow:

1x BAR for **Central: 10MW**

1x BAR for **Moab + Noligwa: 120MW**. This site is located with the Klerksdorp REDZ, and a BAR process will be required for this PV project.

1x Scoping/EIA for **Harmony 1: 40MW**

1x Scoping/EIA for **Joel: 40MW**

From Savannah's side, we would like to request a formal meeting with the department to brief you on the projects and to clarify some of the questions, such as template usage, submission requirements, developer queries, and environmental sensitivities noted.

If the is fine with you, could you perhaps provide me with some dates that you or the case officers at DESTEA will be available? This will be greatly appreciated.

Looking forward to your response

Regards,



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Ansoné Esterhuizen
Environmental Consultant

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From: Grace Mkhosana <mkhosana@destea.gov.za>
Sent: Thursday, May 26, 2022 11:18 AM
To: Ansoné Esterhuizen <Ansone@savannahsa.com>
Cc: Karen Jodas <karen@savannahsa.com>; Kristen Shaw <Kristen@savannahsa.com>; Dimakatso Mokoena <mokoenad@destea.gov.za>
Subject: RE: Initiation of various EIA's in the Free state province

Good day Ansone,
We would like to find out if there are no applications that are going to be lodged with DMR in relation to the proposed development. If there are any, then DMR will be Competent Authority, if not DESTEA is the Competent Authority. With regard to the template we prefer that you use ours. For pre-consultation meeting we would request that you send us BID highlighting concerns for clarity. Then we will determine if pre-consultation meeting is necessary or not.

Kind regards,
Grace Mkhosana
DESTEA

From: Ansoné Esterhuizen <Ansone@savannahsa.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 25, 2022 4:06 PM
To: Grace Mkhosana <mkhosana@destea.gov.za>
Cc: Karen Jodas <karen@savannahsa.com>; Kristen Shaw <Kristen@savannahsa.com>
Subject: Initiation of various EIA's in the Free state province

Good afternoon, Grace,

We have recently submitted an enquiry to DFFE to enquire about the competent authority in mine solar PV applications we are in the process of compiling. As per the DFFE email attached they have elected that the competent authority would be provincial. We would like to find out if the department requires or would be open to any pre application meetings.

Here is a brief overview of the projects:

Solar PV Facilities and grid connection infrastructure which are planned to be located on Harmony-owned properties. There are multiple projects which will be done in phases. The first phase includes the following **4 projects:**

1x BAR for **Central: 10MW**

1x BAR for **Moab + Noligwa: 120MW**. This site is located with the Klerksdorp REDZ, and a BAR process will be required for this PV project.

1x Scoping/EIA for **Harmony 1: 40MW**

1x Scoping/EIA for **Joel: 40MW**

Additionally, in the case of the REDZ Basic assessment, we would like to find out if we could use our own template usually submitted to the DFFE or if it has to be provincial.

Please let me know if you have any queries in this regard.

Regards,



Ansoné Esterhuizen
Environmental Consultant

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

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Ansoné Esterhuizen

From: Ansoné Esterhuizen
Sent: Monday, June 20, 2022 12:42 PM
To: 'Grace Mkhosana'
Cc: Karen Jodas; Kristen Shaw; 'Dimakatso Mokoena'
Subject: RE: Initiation of various EIA's in the Free state province

Hi Grace

I have tried to call you, please let me know if there is a more effective way to get a hold of you, it would be greatly appreciated.

I just want to follow up if we could have the pre application meeting this week? If that would suite you.
Regards,



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From: Ansoné Esterhuizen
Sent: Wednesday, June 15, 2022 10:16 AM
To: Grace Mkhosana <mkhosana@destea.gov.za>
Cc: Karen Jodas <karen@savannahsa.com>; Kristen Shaw <Kristen@savannahsa.com>; Dimakatso Mokoena <mokoena@destea.gov.za>
Subject: RE: Initiation of various EIA's in the Free state province

Hi Grace

Thank you for getting back to me. No application will be lodged with the DMR and therefore presume that DESTEA is the correct competent authority.

We are currently finalizing the project information for most of our sites and therefore can not provide you with the completed BIDs for the projects as of yet, and ask however for you to consider the project scopes as follow:

1x BAR for **Central: 10MW**

1x BAR for **Moab + Noligwa: 120MW**. This site is located with the Klerksdorp REDZ, and a BAR process will be required for this PV project.

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From Savannah's side, we would like to request a formal meeting with the department to brief you on the projects and to clarify some of the questions, such as template usage, submission requirements, developer queries, and environmental sensitivities noted.

If the is fine with you, could you perhaps provide me with some dates that you or the case officers at DESTEA will be available? This will be greatly appreciated.

Looking forward to your response

Regards,



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DESTEA

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