

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)



### PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE LWAMONDO 100MW SOLAR PLANT

IDS REFERENCE NUMBER: IDS 340\_025

### ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION APPLICATION PROCESS MAY 2021

**Applicant:** Luzo Investments (Pty) Ltd

**Environmental Assessment Practitioner:** Information Decision Systems (Pty) Ltd

### INTRODUCTION

This Background Information Document (BID) serves to notify the public of the intention of Luzo Investments (Pty) Ltd to apply for an environmental authorisation, under the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) for the proposed establishment of a solar park with a generating capacity of 100MW within the Lwamondo village within the Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo Province. The Lwamondo village is within the Lwamondo Traditional Council where Thohoyandou is North East of the study area.

Information Decision Systems (Pty) Ltd (IDS) has been appointed by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) to manage the Special Needs and Skills Development Programme which is aimed at providing pro-bono environmental services to qualifying businesses. Under this programme, IDS undertakes environmental authorisation applications for applicants who can demonstrate that they have "special needs", in particular, where applicants cannot afford to undertake the necessary environmental authorisation process. This led to the IDS undertaking this Scoping and EIA for the proposed Lwamondo 100MW Solar Plant on Farm Chibase 213 Portion 0 and Farm Lomondo 252 Portion 0, within the Lwamondo village within the Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo Province. The Lwamondo village is within the Lwamondo Traditional Council where Thohoyandou is North East of the study area.

Information Decision Systems (Pty) Ltd has been appointed by DFFE on behalf of Luzo Investments (Pty) Ltd as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to undertake the Scoping and EIA process required to apply for Environmental Authorisation from the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental Affairs (DFFE). The competent authority (CA) in respect of the renewable energy projects is the DFFE, and the provincial authority i.e. Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism is the commenting authority.

### PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to provide members of the public with information about the proposed project. This information will allow readers to:

- Determine whether they are an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP).
- Understand the project in order to provide informed comments.
- Understand the applicable environmental authorisation process in order to participate meaningfully.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project development envisages the construction and operation of a solar park with a generating capacity of 100MW. The solar farm will be equipped with a cluster of photovoltaic (PV) panel arrays. There will be an on-site substation and transformer to step up the power generated from the PV panels and to facilitate the connection between the facility itself and the Eskom electricity grid. The power plant is of open-space free-standing type, and it is to be built using mono crystalline silicon PV



modules mounted with single axis tracking system with central inverter topology. The solar power plant proposes to generate 100 MW of electricity and will be comprised of a substation and an overhead power line to facilitate the connection between the solar energy facility and the Eskom electricity grid, access roads, staff accommodation, clinic, fire station, offices, canteen and parking bay.



Figure 1: An example of a solar plant

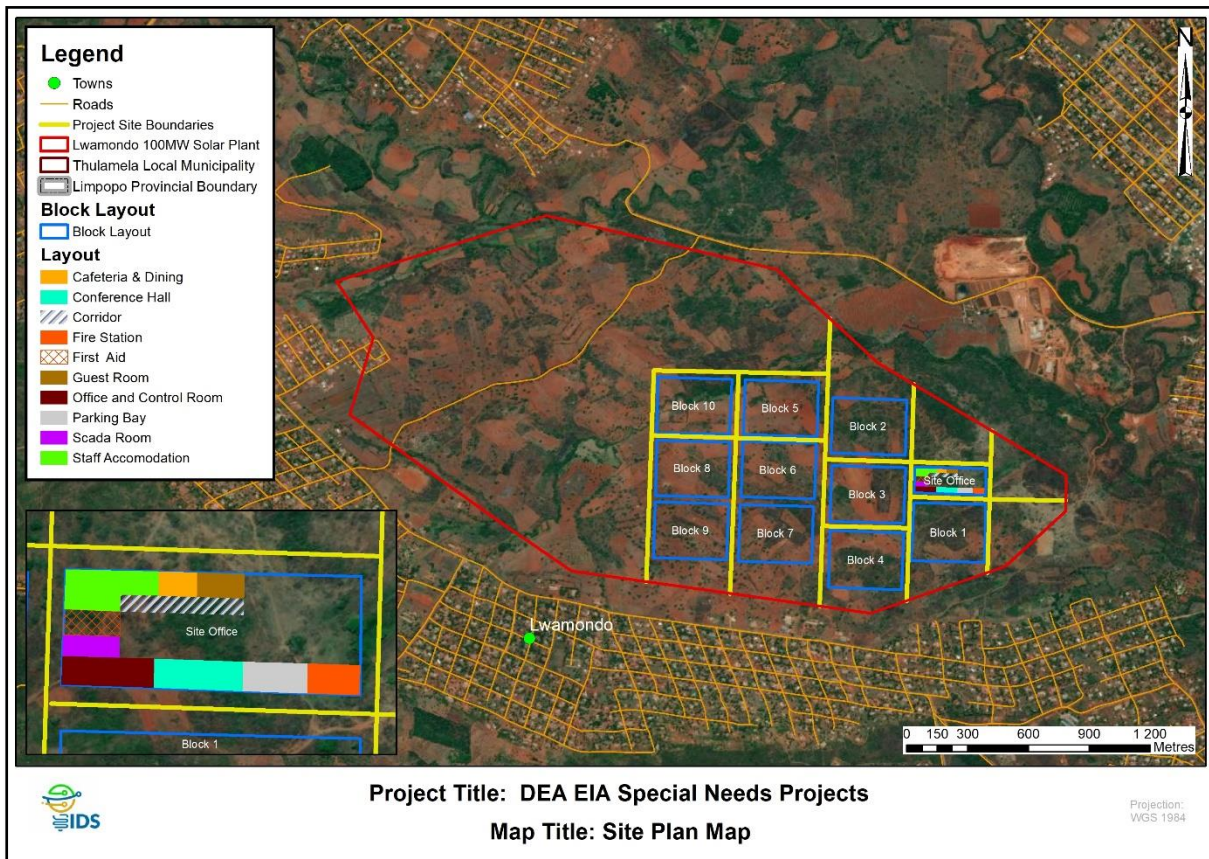


Figure 2: Site Plan

The proposed facility, which will be entirely contained within the identified farm portion, will have a developmental footprint of slightly less than the 5 km<sup>2</sup> extent within an approximately 8 km<sup>2</sup> site. The solar power plant proposes to generate 100 MW of electricity and will be comprised of the following infrastructure:

- A single substation and an overhead power line to facilitate the connection between the solar energy facility and the Eskom electricity grid;
- Access roads;



- Staff accommodation;
- Clinic;
- Canteen;
- Offices;
- Fire station; and
- Parking bay.

## GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES

The proposed Lwamondo Solar Plant is located within the Lwamondo village under the jurisdiction of the Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo Province. The Lwamondo village is within the Lwamondo Traditional Council where Thohoyandou is North East of the study area. **Table 1** below indicates the geographic coordinates of the study area.

*Table 1: Geographic coordinates of the proposed solar power plant*

Site name	Latitude (S)	Longitude (E)
Lwamondo Solar Plant	23° 0'31.06"S	30°22'21.90"E

## ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY

The study area is situated within Critical Biodiversity Area 1, Ecological Support Area 2 and is noted as a focus area for land-based protected areas expansion according to the Limpopo Conservation 2013. As a result, a very high sensitivity has been allocated to the study area. In addition, a vulnerable ecosystem has been noted. Due to the slope of the study area being between 1:4 and 1:10, a high sensitivity is noted for landscape. According to the DFFE Screening Tool, the study area is within a very high agricultural land indicated for subsistence farming. The study area is located within 100m of a watercourse which is noted on the centre of the site. In addition, a wetland has been noted within 500m of the study. A very high sensitivity is noted due to the presence of a strategic water source area on site.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION PROCESS

Environmental authorisation is being applied for with the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA) (Act No. 108 of 1998) and the 2014 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations as amended in April 2017.

### Scoping and EIA Process

The proposed solar farm triggers listed activities in Listing Notice 1 (GN R. 327), Listing Notice 2 (GN R. 325), and Listing Notice 3 (GN R. 324), of the EIA Regulations 2014 as amended in April 2017. Consequently, these activities require the undertaking of a Scoping and EIA Process inclusive of technical studies and public participation.

Listed activities triggered by the Solar Plant activities are indicated below:

Number and date of relevant notice	Activity Number Triggered
Government Notice, No. R. 327, April 2017 (LN1)	11, 12, 19, 24
Government Notice, No. R. 325, April 2017 (LN2)	1, 14, 15
Government Notice, No. R. 324, April 2017 (LN3)	4, 14



## POTENTIAL ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

There are various issues and associated potential positive and/or negative impacts associated with the proposed project. I&APs are invited to raise issues of concern and to submit comments. These issues will be investigated during the Scoping and EIA Process; and relevant associated impacts identified and assessed, and mitigation measures proposed.

### INVITATION TO COMMENT

Public participation enables people who are interested in or affected by the proposed project to highlight issues or concerns that need to be addressed during the planning and assessment processes. If you would like to participate in this Environmental Authorisation application process and receive all relevant correspondence, you are requested to register as an I&AP with IDS. Written comment may be submitted via mail, fax or e-mail (details below).

The deadline for comment in this first round of public consultation is **05 June 2021**. Thereafter, all registered I&APs will be notified of the availability of the draft Scoping Report and will be afforded thirty (30) days to review and submit further comment. In addition, the report link will be made available on social media platforms i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn, Google Drive and Dropbox.

#### **FOR REGISTRATION, COMMENT AND ENQUIRIES:**

Information Decision Systems (Pty) Ltd  
Ms. Vanessa Nkosi  
PO Box 689, Rivonia, 2128  
**Tel:** 087 353 2576 **Fax:** 086 685 7767  
**Email:** [Vanessa@ids-cc.co.za](mailto:Vanessa@ids-cc.co.za)



# SCOPING AND EIA PROCESS

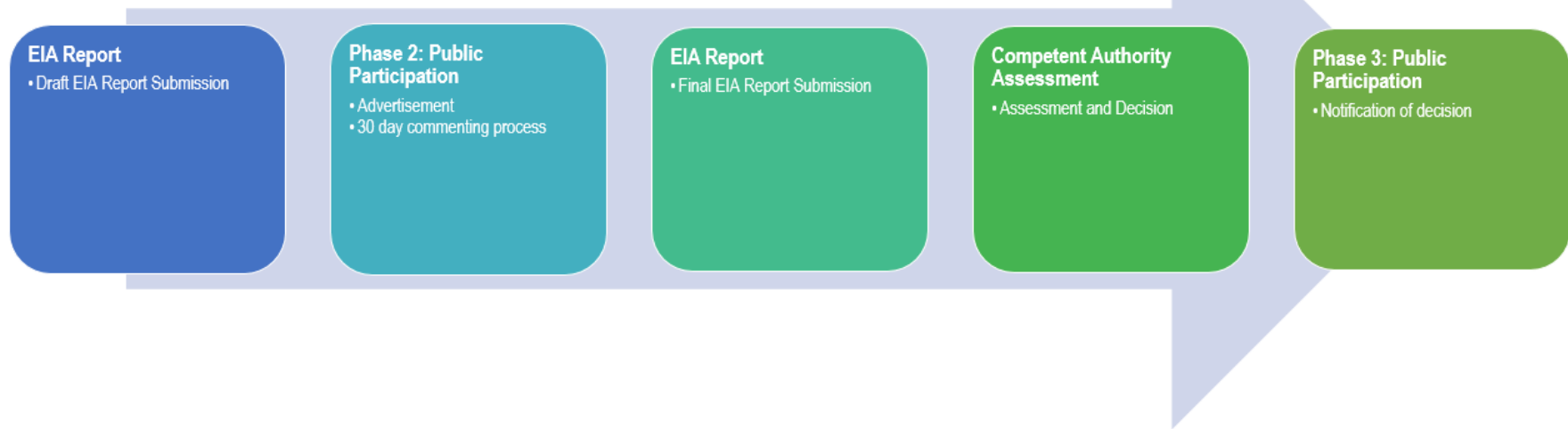
## SCOPING PHASE



↑  
You are Here



## EIA PHASE



**COMMENT/RESPONSE FORM**

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE LWAMONDO 100MW SOLAR PLANT**

IDS REFERENCE NUMBER: IDS 340\_025

*Please complete and return*

<b>TO:</b> Ms Vanessa Nkosi	
<b>COMPANY:</b> Information Decision System (Pty) Ltd	
<b>POSTAL:</b> P. O. Box 689, Rivonia, 2128	
<b>PHONE:</b> 087 353 2576	<b>FAX:</b> 086 685 7767
<b>EMAIL:</b> vanessa@ids-cc.co.za	
<b>FROM (Your Name):</b>	
<b>ORGANISATION / COMPANY:</b>	
<b>PHONE:</b>	<b>FAX:</b>
<b>EMAIL:</b>	
<b>Your particular area of interest in the project:</b>	
<b>Organisation Represent:</b>	
<b>Capacity (e.g. Chairperson, member, etc.):</b>	

1. Do you have any concerns about the proposed development (i.e. construction and / or operational phase of the proposed project) that you feel should be addressed within the Scoping and EIA process?  
\_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If "yes", please list your main areas of concern in point form.

- i) \_\_\_\_\_
- ii) \_\_\_\_\_

2. What concerns do you have about the construction phase in particular?  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What concerns do you have about the operational phase of the process?  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is there any other information you feel should be included/considered in the assessment of the project?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you have any other comment?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you want to be kept informed of the process/ provided with documentations produced?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

