

15 July 2014

South African Heritage Resources Agency
111 Harrington Street
Cape Town
8000

Dear Mariagrazia Galimberti

PROPOSED NEWCASTLE SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY NEAR NEWCASTLE, KWAZULU-NATAL

NOTIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS BASIC ASSESSMENT

Building Energy SpA, an Independent Power Producer (IPP), is proposing the establishment of a small-scale commercial solar energy facility (using photovoltaic technology) of approximately 5 MW in capacity. The facility is proposed to be located approximately 8km southeast of the town of Newcastle, on the Remainder of Erf 13661, in the Kwa-Zulu Natal. The proposed project will be referred to as the **Newcastle Solar Energy Facility**.

The purpose of the project is to generate electricity for export into the national electricity grid. The project forms part of the Department of Energy's (DoE) Small Projects Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement (REIPPP) Programme and has received First Stage One approval in this bidding programme. The REIPPP Programme has been designed to contribute towards the South African government's renewable energy target of 17.8 GW by 2030 and to stimulate the renewable energy industry in South Africa. The Small Projects programme has been introduced to provide opportunities for local companies to become involved in this larger programme.

The facility development footprint will be less than 10 ha in extent within which the following infrastructure will be established:

- » Arrays of photovoltaic (PV) panels with a capacity of up to 5 MW.
- » Mounting structures to be either rammed steel piles or piles with pre-manufactured concrete footing to support the PV panels.
- » Cabling between the project components, to be lain underground.
- » Inverters/Transformer enclosures.
- » An on-site switching station.

- » An overhead power line of approximately 1400 m to facilitate the connection between the solar energy facility and the existing Karbochem Plant Substation located to the west of the facility.
- » Internal access roads.
- » Fencing and workshop area for maintenance, storage and an on-site office.

BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

In terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations published in terms of Section 24(5) of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, Act No. 107 of 1998), Building Energy requires authorisation from the National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) in consultation with the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Rural Development (DAEA) for the undertaking of the proposed development. In terms of sections 24 and 24D of the National Environmental Management Act (No 107 of 1998), as read with the EIA Regulations of GN R543, GN544, R545, R546 (as amended), a Basic Assessment process is required to be undertaken for the proposed project.

In order to obtain authorisation, comprehensive, independent environmental studies must be undertaken in accordance with the EIA Regulations. Building Energy has appointed Savannah Environmental as the independent environmental consultant to undertake the Basic Assessment process to identify and assess the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project, and to propose appropriate mitigation and management measures within the framework of an Environmental Management Programme (EMPr).

The public participation process, which forms part of the overall EIA process, will also be undertaken by Savannah Environmental. The department and/or the organisation which you represent has been identified as a commenting authority for the proposed project. **In this regard, please can you provide us with the name and contact details of the relevant contact person at your department who we would liaise with regarding this project.** By registering on the project database, you will receive all information relating to the project and will be provided with an opportunity to provide comment and input into the EIA process.

Our team welcomes your participation and looks forward to your involvement throughout this process.

Kind Regards



MRS GABRIELE WOOD
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL CONSULTANT
SAVANNAH ENVIRONMENTAL