



NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT APPLICATION: BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)

GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE AUTHORISED PHOFU SOLAR POWER PLANT, NEAR VIERFONTEIN, FREE STATE PROVINCE

Phofu Solar Power Plant (RF) (Pty) Ltd proposes the development of grid connection infrastructure for the authorised 150MW Phofu Solar Power Plant (DFFE Ref.: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2543). The grid connection infrastructure includes a 132kV overhead power line and substation to enable the evacuation of the generated electricity from the 150MW Solar Power Plant to the national grid. This is considered to be the grid connection solution for the authorised solar power plant. Three alternative routes are considered prior to the lodging of the Application for Environmental Authorisation and submission of the Basic Assessment Report, however only one route / grid connection corridor will be put forward for assessment which will be based on technical feasibility and environmental sensitivity.

The development is located approximately 6km east of the town of Vierfontein and falls within the Moqhaka Local Municipality and the greater Fezile Dabi District Municipality. The three alternate routes under consideration cross specific properties within the area. The affected properties include:

- Portions 4 and 8 of Farm Groenfontein 313,
- Remaining Extent (RE) and Portions 1, 2 and 3 of Farm Marseilles 24,
- RE and Portion 3 of Farm Tweepunt 14,
- RE and Portions 1 and 2 of Farm Degrendel 67,
- The Farm Ratpan 441,
- Portion 3 of the Farm Fraai Uitzicht 189 and
- Portion 2 of the Farm Hormah 276.



The power line proposed to be developed will be up to 7km long (assessed within a 200m wide corridor) and the substation will be up to 2ha in extent. Associated infrastructure, such as access roads and laydown areas will also be developed.

Refer to the Locality Map provided with the BID.

Blue Crane Environmental has been appointed to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (Basic Assessment) process for the proposed grid connection infrastructure. The entire extent of the development is located within the Central Corridor of the Strategic Transmission Corridors and the Klerksdorp Renewable Energy Development Zone.

1. Purpose of the Background Information Document

You and/or the organisation /institution which you represent has been identified as a potential interested and/or affected party for the proposed development. This BID therefore aims to provide you with:

- An overview of the proposed development, including details of the location and infrastructure being proposed;
- An overview of the Basic Assessment process and independent specialist studies being undertaken;

- The details of how to get involved in the BA process, including to receive information, raise issues and comment and participate in the process as a whole.

2. Basic Assessment Process

Notice is hereby formally given, in terms of the 2014 EIA regulations (as amended in 2017) published in Government Notice No. R326 under Section 24(5) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (Act No. 107 of 1998), of the intent to lodge an Application for Environmental Authorisation (EA) and the undertaking of a Basic Assessment (BA) Process (i.t.o. Listing Notice 1, 2 and 3 – G.N. R327, 325 & 324).

The need for the BA process stems from listed activities triggered in terms of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended. Environmental Authorisation is required for certain listed activities that are considered to potentially have a negative impact on the environment. The following listed activities have been identified to be relevant to the proposed development:

- Activity 11 (GN.R. 327): *"The development of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity- (i) outside urban areas or industrial complexes with a capacity of*



more than 33 but less than 275 kilovolts.” (Overhead Power Line and Substation).

- *Activity 27 (GN.R 327): “The clearance of an area of 1 hectare or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation” (Substation).*
- *Activity 28(ii) (GN.R. 327): “Residential, mixed, retail, commercial, industrial or institutional developments where such land was used for agriculture or afforestation on or after 1998 and where such development (ii) will occur outside an urban area, where the total land to be developed is bigger than 1 hectare”(Re-zoning from agriculture for the placement of the Substation).*
- *Activity 56(ii) (GN.R. 327): “The widening of a road by more than 6 metres, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre (ii) where no reserve exists, where the existing road is wider than 8 metres...” (Widening of existing roads to ensure access to site).*

It is confirmed that the proposed project is listed under Listing Notice 1 (GN. R. 327), indicating the potential of the development to result in a significant environmental impact. As the developments trigger Listing Notice 1 a Basic Assessment Process will need to be undertaken as per the requirements of Regulation 19 and Appendix 1 of the EIA Regulations, as amended.

Further to the above, specific geographic characteristics may be relevant to the affected properties and the surrounding areas (i.e. CBAs, Protected Areas, NPAES etc.) which could trigger listed activities under Listing Notice 3, GN.R 324 of the EIA Regulations. These activities will only be identified once the independent specialist studies have been completed.

The Free State Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA) has been identified as the competent authority for the proposed development and will therefore be the decision-maker on the Application for Environmental Authorisation.

3. Environmental Impacts and Independent Specialist studies

Potential environmental impacts could occur as part of the development of the proposed grid connection infrastructure. These impacts need to be assessed fully as part of the BA process and appropriate mitigation measures need to be recommended by independent specialists as part of the Environmental Management Programme. The following preliminary impacts are expected to occur:

- Biodiversity – which includes ecology, wetlands, fauna and flora and assesses the potential impact and the associated



disturbance of vegetation on the ecology and biodiversity (including critical biodiversity areas and broad-scale processes).

- Avifauna – which includes seasonal survey and assesses the impact on avifaunal habitats and sensitive species.
- Soils and agricultural potential - which assesses the significance of loss of agricultural land and soil degradation and/or erosion.
- Heritage - which includes archaeology and palaeontology and assesses the potential of disturbance to or destruction of heritage sites and fossils during the construction phase through excavation activities.
- Visual – which include the visual quality of the area and assesses the impact of grid infrastructure on the aesthetics of the area.

Specialist studies will be informed by existing information, field observations and input from the public participation process. As an I&AP, your input is considered as an important part of the process, and we urge you to become involved.

4. Public Participation Process

The sharing of information forms the basis of the public participation process and offers you the opportunity to become actively involved in the BA process from the outset. The Public Participation process will

be undertaken in line with the requirements of Chapter 6 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

Comment and input from I&APs are encouraged in order to ensure that all potential impacts are considered within the ambit of the study.

In terms of Section 24J of the NEMA, Act 107 of 1998 and the Department of Environmental Affairs Public Participation Guideline 2017, as part of the BA process, an I&AP has the responsibility to:

- Submit comment within the specified timeframes communicated;
- Submit comment directly to the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP), which is Blue Crane Environmental; and
- Disclose any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which that I&AP may have in the approval or refusal of the Application for Environmental Authorisation.

5. How to become involved

If you consider yourself an I&AP, we urge you to participate in the process and provide comment, or raise those issues and concerns which affect and/or interest you, and about which you would like more information. Become involved by:



- Responding (by phone, email, WhatsApp) to our notification and invitation for your involvement;
- Getting in touch relevant contact person and registering as an I&AP on the project database;
- Contacting Blue Crane Environmental with queries or comments; and
- Reviewing and commenting on the project documentation including the BA Report within the timeframe prescribed by Blue Crane Environmental.

6. Comments and Queries

Kindly direct all comments, queries and responses to:

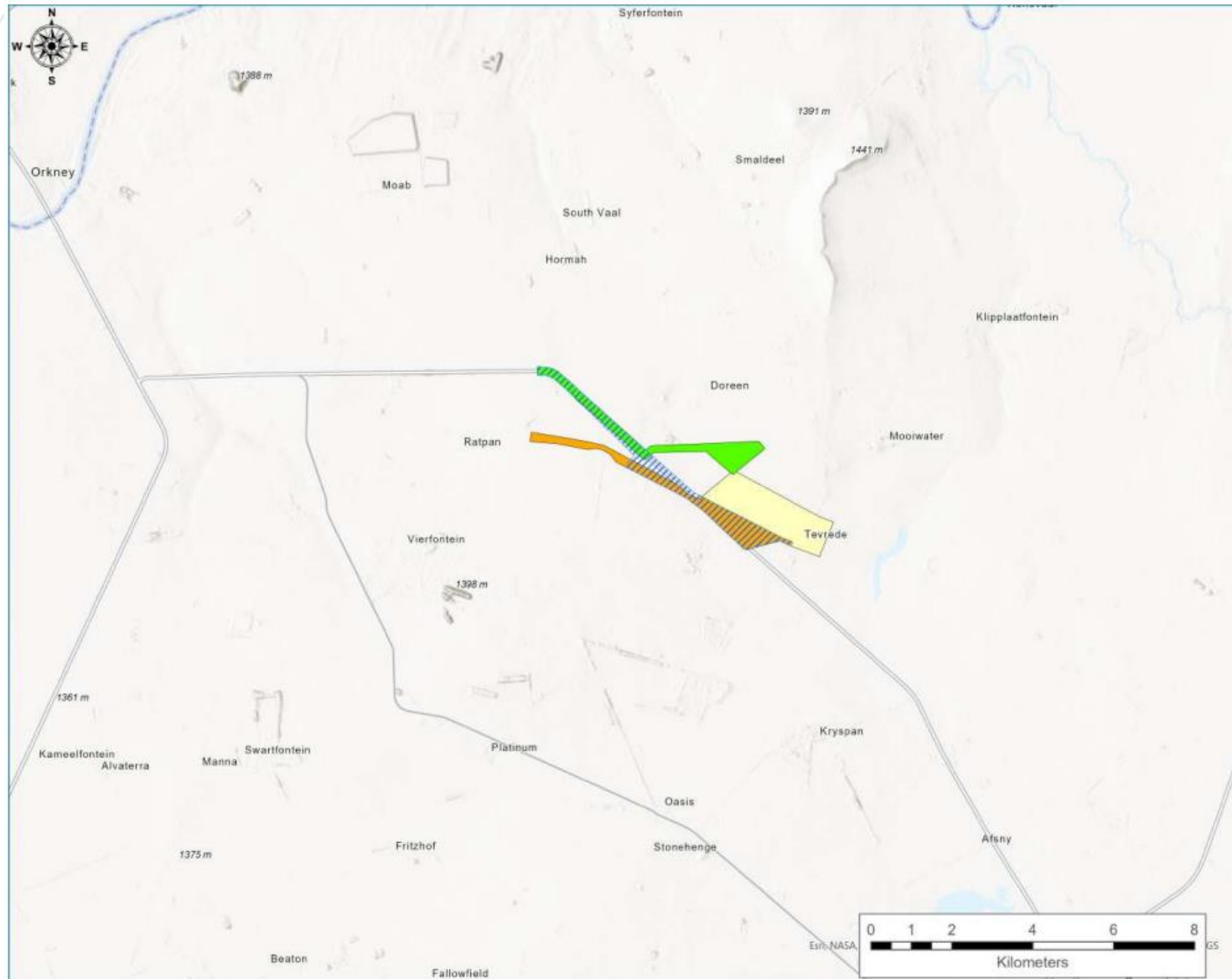
Blue Crane Environmental

Lisa de Lange / Marelle Botha

Cell: 084 920 3111 / 082 493 5166

E-mail: phofu@bcrane.co.za

Alternatively, please visit our website at www.bcrane.co.za or scan the QR Code in the document header.



LEGEND

Phofu SPP Grid Connection

-  Option A
-  Option B
-  Option C
-  Phofu SPP



Data Source:
Phofu Solar Power Plant (RF)(Pty) Ltd

Project No.: 2306	Coordinates (DDM): 26°50,05646228'E 27°4,62475727'S
Date Exported: 2023/06/18 22:38	

LOCALITY MAP: GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE AUTHORISED PHOFU SOLAR POWER PLANT NEAR VIERFONTEIN, FREE STATE PROVINCE