

1 August 2013

South African Heritage Resources Agency
111 Harrington Road
Cape Town
8001

Tel: 0214624502
Email: mgalimberti@sahra.org.za

Dear Ms. Mariagrazia Galimberti

**PROPOSED BLACKWOOD SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY, FREE STATE PROVINCE
(DEA REF: 14/16/3/3/3/2/281)**

NOTIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Blackwood Solar Energy Facility (Pty) Ltd is proposing to establish a commercial photovoltaic solar energy facility and associated infrastructure on a site located within the Tokologo Local Municipality. The site identified for consideration within an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is located in the Free State Province, and lies approximately 45km south-west of Boshof and 25km south-east of Kimberley. The solar energy facility is proposed to accommodate an array of photovoltaic (PV) panels with a generating capacity of 75MW.

The Blackwood Solar Energy Facility is proposed to be located on the Remainder of portion 1 of the farm Pandamsfontein 1593. It is proposed to make use of either static or tracking solar panel technology for this facility. Other infrastructure associated with the facility will include:

- » PV panels with a generating capacity of 75MW;
- » Cabling between the project components, to be lain underground where practical;
- » An on-site substation and overhead power line to facilitate the connection between the solar energy facility and the Eskom grid via one of the following options:
 - A loop in loop out of the 132kV power line which traverses the site;
 - Evacuate the power directly into the Boundary Substation via an overhead power line of approximately 20km in length;
- » Internal access roads and fencing; and
- » Workshop area for maintenance, storage and offices.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

In terms of sections 24 and 24D of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No 107 of 1998), as read with the EIA Regulations of GN R543 – R546, a Scoping and EIA process is required to be undertaken for the project. Rodicon Trading and Investments (Pty) Ltd requires authorisation from the National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) (in consultation with the Free State Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DETEA)) for the undertaking of the proposed project.

In order to obtain authorisation, comprehensive, independent environmental studies must be undertaken in accordance with the EIA Regulations. This project has been registered with the National DEA under application reference number **14/12/16/3/3/2/281**.

Blackwood Solar Energy Facility (Pty) Ltd has appointed **Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd**, as the independent environmental consultant, to undertake the required Scoping Phase and EIA to identify and assess all the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project, and propose appropriate mitigation and management measures in an Environmental Management Programme (EMP). As part of these environmental studies, I&APs will be actively involved through the public involvement process also being undertaken by Savannah Environmental. 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.

Please find herewith the **Background Information Document (BID)** for the solar energy facility project. Please could you kindly confirm that you would like to be registered as and Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) on the project's database. Please could you kindly complete the attached Stakeholder Reply Form and send it to the undersigned via fax, post or email.

Please could you submit your formal comments by sending written correspondence in this regard. All comments received will be submitted in the Scoping and EIA reports which will be submitted to the DEA. Comments can be made as written submission of fax, post or email.

AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT SCOPING REPORT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

In accordance with the EIA Regulations, a Draft Scoping Report will be available for public review and comment by I&APs and stakeholders. You will be informed of the 30-day public review period which will occur in September 2013. Comments can be made as written submission via fax, post or email.

PUBLIC MEETING

In order to facilitate comments on the Draft Scoping Report, a public meeting will be held during the public review period. All I&APs will be informed of the public meeting details in September 2013. The aim of the public meeting is to provide you with more information regarding the proposed project (including technical details, project process and timeframes etc.), to provide a summary of the findings of the Draft Scoping Report, to invite comment on the proposed project, and to further discuss possible issues of specific concern to you which may need to be addressed.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require additional information and/or clarification regarding the proposed project. 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

(not signed, sent via email)