

APPENDIX C1:
Public Participation Plan and Approval

Rendani Rasivhetshele

From: Kevin Mathebula <KLMathebula@environment.gov.za>
Sent: Wednesday, September 29, 2021 11:45 AM
To: Rendani Rasivhetshele
Cc: Bathandwa Ncube
Subject: Approval of Public Participation (PP) Plan for the proposed BARLERIA, DICOMA AND SETARIA PV FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR LICHTENBURG, NWP

Dear Mr Rasivhetshele

The Public Participation PPPlan for the proposed Baleria, Dicoma and Setaria PV facility and associated infrastructure, near Lichtenburg, North West Province , received by this Department on 23 September 2021, refers.

Based on the information provided this Department decided to **approve** the PPPlan for the proposed project. You may proceed with the PP process in accordance with tasks contemplated in the PPPlan. Should you wish to deviate from the submitted PPPlan, the amended PPPlan must be submitted to the Department for approval prior commencement.

A copy of the PP Plan and this approval must be submitted as part of the application form when the application is lodged.

Also note that submission of a PP Plan and approval thereof do not negate your responsibility to comply with the requirements for public participation in terms of Regulations 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended.”

Yours sincerely`
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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN
IN TERMS OF THE DIRECTIONS REGARDING MEASURES TO ADDRESS, PREVENT AND COMBAT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 RELATING TO NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PERMITS AND LICENCES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BARLERIA PV FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NORTH WEST PROVINCE,
&
DEVELOPMENT OF THE DICOMA PV FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NORTH WEST PROVINCE,
&
DEVELOPMENT OF THE SETARIA PV FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Applications be submitted

The restrictions enforced in terms of Government Gazette 43096 which placed the country in a national state of disaster limiting the movement of people to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus has placed some limitations on the commencement and continuation of the public consultation as part of environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Basic Assessment processes. Considering these limitations, the following consultation process has been designed and will be implemented, on approval by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), to cater for the conducting of the public participation process which includes Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs), the competent authority, directly impacted landowners/occupiers, adjacent landowners/occupiers, relevant Organs of State departments, Municipalities, ward councillors and other key stakeholders.

PROJECT DETAILS

Barleria PV (Pty) Ltd, Dicoma PV (Pty) Ltd and Setaria PV (Pty) Ltd, are proposing the development of photovoltaic (PV) solar energy facilities (respectively known as Barleria PV, Dicoma PV and Setaria PV) and associated infrastructure located on sites approximately 5km northwest of the town of Lichtenburg in the North West Province. The solar energy facilities will comprise several arrays of PV panels and associated infrastructure and will have a contracted capacity of up to 75MW. The project sites fall under the Ditsobotla Local Municipality which is part of Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. The sites are accessible via a gravel road off the R505 which is located east of the project sites.

The infrastructure associated with each PV development includes:

- » PV modules and mounting structures
- » Inverters and transformers
- » Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)
- » Site and internal access roads (up to 8m wide)
- » Site offices and maintenance buildings, including workshop areas for maintenance and storage.
- » Temporary and permanent laydown area
- » Grid connection solution (two alternative locations assessed) within a 100m wide corridor, including:
 - 33kV cabling between the project components and the facility substation
 - A 132kV facility substation
 - A 132kV Eskom switching station

- A Loop-in-Loop out (LILO) overhead 132kV power line between the Eskom switching station and the existing Delareyville Munic–Watershed 1 88kV power line¹.

Two alternative locations for the grid connection infrastructure have been provided within an assessment corridor of 100m wide.

The proposed Barleria PV, Dicoma PV and Setaria PV facilities and associated infrastructure will be located on the following farm portions:

- » Portion 1 of the Farm Houthaalboomen 31
- » Portion 9 of the Farm Houthaalboomen 31
- » Portion 10 of the Farm Houthaalboomen 31
- » Portion 0 of Farm Talene 25
- » Portion 7 of Farm Elandsfontein 34

Each solar PV facility will be constructed as a separate stand-alone project and will be assessed through individual EIA processes. The EIA processes and public participation processes for each of the PV facilities will be undertaken concurrently, providing the public with an opportunity to understand the full extent of the development proposed and comment on each of the projects.

Scoping and EIA processes will be undertaken for the proposed three (3) Solar Energy Facilities

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

The public participation (PP) process will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Regulations 39 to 44 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, (GNR 326). The aim of the public participation process is primarily to ensure that:

- » information containing all relevant facts in respect of the proposed project is made available to potential stakeholders and I&APs;
- » participation by I&APs is facilitated in such a manner that all potential stakeholders and I&APs are provided with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed project; and
- » comments received from potential stakeholders and I&APs are recorded and incorporated into the EIA Assessment process.

The traditional means and opportunities available for the undertaking of public participation are still covered and implemented as part of this plan considering the current limitations in terms of the Regulations to limit risks associated with COVID-19. Alternative means of undertaking consultation has been designed and will be implemented by Savannah Environmental to ensure that I&APs are afforded sufficient opportunity to raise comments on the project through an interactive web-based platform readily available and accessible to any person illustrating interest in the project and enables the public participation process to be undertaken in line with Regulations 41 to 44 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

The use of online tools enables stakeholders and I&APs to explore the project-specific content in their own time and allows them to participate in a meaningful way in the consultation process. The online platform

¹ The LILO corridor intersects with several existing parallel Eskom power lines(Watershed-Sephaku 1 132kV, Dudfield–Watershed 2 88kV, Dudfield-Watershed 1 88kV, and Watershed-Klerksdorp North 1 132kV). Therefore, should the connection to the Delareyville Munic–Watershed 1 88kV not be technically feasible, connection to the above mentioned power lines would still be within the assessed LILO corridor and considered feasible through the construction of a shorter LILO connection.

allows for project information to be shared and made available. The online stakeholder engagement platform allows the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to visually present details regarding the project and our consultation documentation, including project maps and plans, presentations and posters regarding the project, and reports available for review.

Access to the project documentation via the Savannah Environmental website will be unrestricted to all I&APs. I&APs wanting to access the project information via this portal will be required to register and will receive a unique code (via an automated system) to access the report of interest. This step and the online portal support the EAP in maintaining a complete and accurate record and database of all parties who have interest in the project (and who choose to access the report via the online portal), in line with the requirements of the Regulations.

The online stakeholder engagement platform considers the limitations applied by the Disaster Management Act Regulations prohibiting the gathering of people, as well as limitations which certain I&APs may have in terms of access to computers and internet as well as access to public spaces not open for operation or which have restricted access.

The benefits of the online stakeholder engagement platform include:

- Ability to create a dedicated project-specific online platform to enable easy access to project-related information.
- Ability to reach a wider audience, allowing more widespread consultation for major infrastructure projects.
- Allowing stakeholders and I&APs the opportunity to engage on a project without leaving their office or home.
- Enabling stakeholders and I&APs to register their interest in a project (for inclusion on the project database), and automatically gaining access to comprehensive project documentation.
- Enabling the EAP to maintain a complete database of I&APs through maintaining a record of persons accessing the online stakeholder consultation platform.
- Enabling the EAP and stakeholders/I&APs to meet virtually.

Where I&APs do not have the applicable facilities (i.e. access to internet, mobile phones, or computers), provision has been made to include these I&APs in the consultation process by consulting with the Ward Councillor, the ward committee members, community representatives and local community forum members. Hard copy documentation can be made available but will only be provided where appropriate sanitary conditions can be maintained.

The schematic illustration overleaf provides an overview of the tools that are available to I&APs and stakeholders to access project information and interact with the public participation team to obtain project information and resolve any queries that may arise, and to meet the requirements for public participation.

| | |
|---|---|
| i. Stakeholder identification and register of I&APs | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Register as an I&AP on the online platform, via completion of a form and provision of contact information, by responding to an advert, or sending a 'please call me' which will be responded to• State interest in the project• Receive all project related information via email or other appropriate means. |
| ii. Advertisements and notifications | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newspaper advertisements or radio live reads, site notices, written notifications provide information and details on where to access project information.• Notifications regarding the EIA processes and availability of project reports for public review to be sent via email, post or SMS notifications. |
| iii. Public Involvement and consultation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Availability of project information via the online platform or other appropriate means.• An opportunity for I&APs and stakeholders to request virtual meetings with the project team. |
| iv. Comment on the Scoping & EIA reports | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Availability of the project reports via the online platform for a minimum 30-day comment period.• Submission of comments via email or post to the PP team.• Comments recorded and responded to, as part of the process. |
| v. Identification and recording of comments | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comments and Responses Report, including all comments received throughout the process to be included in the reporting. |

The PP plan, as set out in the table below, has been drafted for the above-mentioned projects to ensure compliance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations and that reasonable opportunity is provided to I&APs and that all administrative actions are reasonable. Proof of all notifications will be included in the public participation appendix included in the Scoping and EIA reports.

The PP plan is submitted to the DFFE for discussion and agreement before the PP process is undertaken for the proposed project.

Public Participation Plan: Discussion of approach and methodology to meet the requirements of the Regulations, applicable to all abovementioned applications for environmental authorisation (combined where possible).

| Regulation | Approach & Methodology to meet requirements |
|---|---|
| <p>Regulation 40(1), Regulation 40(3) & Regulation 43 – provide all potential or registered interested and affected parties, including the competent authority, access to project related information, access to the EIA Assessment reports which will be made available for a period of at least 30 days to submit comments on draft reports prior to submission of final reports for decision-making.</p> | <p><u>Notification of EIA processes to be distributed using the following means:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail • Dedicated project page on the Savannah Environmental online stakeholder engagement platform • Post (where email or other means are not possible) • Site notices placed on site • Advertisement in the media. <p><u>Notification of availability of reports and period for review using the following means:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper adverts, including details of where the report can be accessed and details of the Savannah Environmental website. • Notification letter (to be sent via email, fax or post) to identified and registered I&APs. • Notifications to communities via one of the following, where available: Ward Councillor, ward committee members, identified and confirmed community representatives, and local community forum members. • SMS and/ or WhatsApp notifications where no other means are available. <p><u>Availability of reports for review:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports available on the Savannah Environmental website for download. • Electronic copies can be made available to parties via a secure Dropbox link (or other means) that will be emailed upon request for the documentation. • CDs or USBs to be posted, if requested. • Hard copy project documentation and reports to be available only where appropriate sanitary conditions can be maintained. • Report will be submitted to the DFFE using the DFFE online portal. • Report will be submitted to Organs of State and commenting authorities via an agreed electronic platform (such as on CD, or via a secure Dropbox link or WeTransfer, etc.). <p><u>Submission of comments to PP team:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written comments can be submitted via email, post or fax. • Any comments provided telephonically or via instant message will be transcribed and recorded as formal comments. |

| Regulation | Approach & Methodology to meet requirements |
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| | <p><u>Opportunity and means of consultation where applicable facilities are not available to I&APs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post (where email or other means are not possible) • Placement of site notice on all affected properties. • Advertisement in media (local newspaper). • Consultation and communication through one of the following, where available: the ward councillor, ward committee members and confirmed community representatives and local community forum members. It has been assumed that these forums would be suitable for notifications to occupiers where access to these parties is not available through other means (such as direct consultation). • SMS or WhatsApp notification. • CDs to be posted, if requested (and where a computer is available). • Hard copy report only where sanitary conditions can be maintained. |
| <p>Regulation 40(2) - Provide access to all project information that has the potential to influence any decision regarding the application, unless protected by law, and must include consultation with Competent Authority, Organs of State & registered I&APs.</p> <p>Regulation 41(6) – Relevant information available and accessible</p> | <p>Provision of project information and consultation via various means including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephonic consultation. • Email correspondence. • Correspondence sent via post (where email or other means are not possible) • SMS and/or WhatsApp. • The Savannah Environmental online stakeholder engagement platform will include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ A means to register on the project database and provide details of their interest in the project ◦ Project maps (as applicable) • Virtual focus group meetings using an appropriate platform agreeable to all parties (such as Zoom, Skype or Teams). The meetings will be recorded, and the attendees' details captured in an attendance register. Confirmation of their attendance will also be requested by e-mail and the correspondence will be included in the report. • Communities will be consulted via one of the following, where available: the relevant Ward Councillor, ward committee members, community representative or local community forum members, as determined and confirmed during the consultation process. It has been assumed that these forums would be suitable for notifications to community members where access to these parties is not available through other means (such as direct consultation). <p><u>Opportunity and means of consultation where applicable facilities are not available to I&APs:</u></p> |

| Regulation | Approach & Methodology to meet requirements |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephonic consultation. • Post (where email or other means are not possible) • SMS and/or WhatsApp. • Consultation and communication through one of the following, where available: the ward councillor, ward committee members and confirmed community representatives and local community forum members. |
| Regulation 41(2)(a) – Site notice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site notices will be placed at affected properties by the EAP, landowner or specialist, depending on specific travel restrictions applicable at the time. • Size and content will be in accordance with Regulation 41(3) & 41(4). |
| Regulation 41(2)(b) – Written notification to affected and neighbouring landowners and occupiers; municipality; ward councillors; Organs of State & other parties required by the CA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification letter to be sent via email, fax or post. <p><u>Opportunity and means of consultation where applicable facilities are not available to I&APs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post (where email or other means are not possible) • SMS or WhatsApp notification. |
| Regulation 41(2)(c) – (e) – Advertisements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverts will be placed in a local newspaper or live reads on local radio stations announcing the EIA process and availability of the various reports. |
| Regulation 42 – Project database | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I&APs to be identified through a process of networking and referral, obtaining information from the Savannah Environmental existing stakeholder database, liaison with potentially affected parties in the greater surrounding area and a registration process involving the completion of a reply form or response to adverts. • Organs of State, key stakeholders and affected and surrounding landowners will be identified and registered on the project database. • Other stakeholders will be required to formally register their interest in the project through either directly contacting the Savannah Environmental Public Participation team via email or fax or use of the Savannah Environmental website. • To access the Savannah Environmental online stakeholder engagement platform for a specific project, I&APs will be required to provide their details such that they are automatically registered on the project database. • The register of I&APs will contain the names of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ all persons who requested to be registered on the database through the use of the Savannah Environmental website, or in writing and disclosed their interest in the project; ○ all Organs of State which hold jurisdiction in respect of the activity to which the application relates; and |

| Regulation | Approach & Methodology to meet requirements |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ all persons who submitted written comments or attended virtual meeting/s and viewed virtual presentations on the Savannah Environmental website during the public participation process. The information captured on the project database will contain the names, organisation and contact details, as required. It must be noted that personal details will not be shared in public documentation in accordance with the requirements of the POPI Act. |
| Regulation 44 – Comments to be recorded | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written comments can be submitted via email, post or fax. • Any comments provided telephonically or via instant message will be transcribed and recorded as formal comments. • All comments received throughout the EIA processes will be acknowledged and captured in the comments and responses report (C&RR) with a relevant response. • The C&RR and all comments received will be included in the final report submitted to the CA. <p><u>Opportunity and means of consultation where applicable facilities are not available to I&APs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I&APs without the applicable electronic facilities to access the Savannah Environmental website will be provided with the opportunity to submit their comments and communicate with the public participation team via SMS, WhatsApp or by sending a Please-call-me notification. These comments will be transcribed and recorded as formal comments. • Written comments via post or fax (where email or other means are not possible). • Comment submission telephonically and instant messaging (SMS and/or WhatsApp). • Sending a Please-call-me notification to the Public Participation team so that contact can be made. |
| Regulation 4(2) – Notification of decision on application | <p><u>Notification of Environmental Authorisation (EA) using the following means:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification letter with details as outlined in EA issued will be sent via email, fax or post. • Notifications that the EA has been issued and where to download and/or obtain a copy to communities via one of the following, where available: Ward Councillor and his/her ward committee members and identified and confirmed community representatives. • SMS or WhatsApp notification. <p><u>Opportunity and means of consultation where applicable facilities are not available to I&APs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post (where email or other means are not possible) • Communication via one of the following, where available: the ward councillor, ward committee members and confirmed community representatives and local community forum members. • SMS and/or WhatsApp. |