

APPENDIX C1
APPROVED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN



**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 FOUR SOLAR PV FACILITIES AND ASSOCIATED GRID CONNECTION
INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE PIXLEY PARK RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT NEAR DE AAR, NORTHERN
CAPE PROVINCE**

Applications yet to 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 EIA or Basic Assessment processes. Considering these limitations, the following consultation process has been designed and will be implemented, on approval by the DFFE, to cater for the conducting of the public participation process which includes 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 (all):

The proposed development of four photovoltaic (PV) solar energy facilities and associated infrastructure

A cluster of renewable energy facilities known as Pixley Park, which includes four 100MW Solar PV Facilities (400MW combined), is proposed by various Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) on the following farms: Portion 3 of Farm Carolus Poort No.3, Portion 4 of Farm Rietfontein No.6, Portion 1 of Farm Riet Fountain No.6, Farm Wag 'n Bietjie Annex C 137 and Farm Wag 'n Bietjie No. 5, located approximately 10km east of De Aar within the Emthanjeni Local Municipality in the Northern Cape Province. The projects will be known as Carolus Solar PV1, Fountain Solar PV1, Wagt Solar PV1 and Rietfontein Solar PV1 respectively, and grid connection infrastructure. The projects will all connect to the new Vetlaagte Main Transmission Substation (MTS) or the Wag 'n Bietjie MTS.

Infrastructure associated with each solar PV facility will include the following:

- » Solar PV array comprising bifacial PV modules and mounting structures, using single axis tracking technology
- » Inverters and transformers
- » Cabling between the panels
- » Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)
- » Laydown areas, construction camps, site offices,
- » 12m wide Access Road and entrance gate to the project site and switching station
- » 6m wide internal distribution roads
- » Operations and Maintenance Building, Site Offices, Ablutions with conservancy tanks, Storage Warehouse, workshop, Guard House

- » Onsite 132kV IPP Substation including the HV Step up transformer, MV Interconnection building
- » 132kV Overhead Power Line (OHPL) – 30m height from the switching station to the Main Transmission Substation (MTS) located on farms Vetlaagte and Wagt, which is to be handed back to Eskom (a separate EA is being applied for in this regard)
- » Extension of the 132kV Busbar at the MTS
- » 132kV Feeder Bay at the MTS
- » Extension of the 400kV Busbar at the MTS
- » Installation of a new 400/132kV Transformer and bay at the MTS

A development footprint of approximately 2100ha has been identified within the broader project site (approximately 8 200ha in extent), for the development of the Pixley Park facilities, which is proposed in response to the identified objectives of the national and provincial government and local and district municipalities to develop renewable energy facilities for power generation purposes.

It is the developer's intention to bid the proposed projects under the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy's (DMRE's) Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement (REIPPP) Programme (or similar programme), with the aim of evacuating the generated power into the national grid. This will aid in the diversification and stabilisation of the country's electricity supply, in line with the objectives of the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), with Pixley Park set to inject up to 400MW into the national grid.

As the projects are located close to one another in the same area, a consolidated public consultation process will be undertaken considering all projects detailed above.

Public Participation Plan:

The public participation (PP) process will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Regulations 39 to 44 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (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 Environmental Impact 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. 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 interested 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. This online stakeholder engagement platform allows the 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.

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 allows for project information to be shared and made available. 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 which are 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.
- Provides a resilient solution to a public consultation process.

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">• Advertisements, site notices and 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">• Virtual presentation (in English) available via the online platform.• 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 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 to be included in the reporting.• Comments received prior to report release for review to be included in draft reports.• Comments received during full process to be included within the final BA reports for decision-making.

The PP plan, as set out in the table below, has been drafted for the above-mentioned project/s 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 Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, (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 Scoping and EIA 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 in one local newspaper, 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 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 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 also be submitted via email, post, or fax.

Regulation	Approach & Methodology to meet requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any comments provided telephonically or via instant message will be transcribed and recorded as formal comments. <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 notices. » 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 ensure that I&APs are afforded sufficient opportunity to participate in the project and raise comments on the project to any person with interest in the EIA processes for the projects. This online stakeholder engagement platform which 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) ○ Presentation providing a summary of the project details and the findings of the Scoping and EIA reports ○ Posters providing a summary of the findings of the Scoping and EIA ○ A means of submitting written comment or queries.

Regulation	Approach & Methodology to meet requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual focus group meeting only using an appropriate platform agreeable to all parties (such as Zoom, Skype or Teams). The meeting 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 occupiers, 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> <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 to be placed in a local newspaper.
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.

Regulation	Approach & Methodology to meet requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 using the Savannah Environmental website, or in writing and disclosed their interest in the project. ○ all Organs of State which hold authority in respect of the activity to which the application relates; and ○ 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.
<p>Regulation 44 – Comments to be recorded</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written comments can be submitted to the EIA team via email, post, or fax. • Any comments provided telephonically or via instant message will be transcribed and recorded as formal comments. • 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. • 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"> » 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	Approach & Methodology to meet requirements
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.

Nicolene Venter

From: Thulisile Nyalunga <TNYALUNGA@dffe.gov.za>
Sent: Thursday, 03 March 2022 12:38
To: Ansoné Esterhuizen
Cc: Sindiswa Dlomo; Fiona Grimett
Subject: RE: 2022-02-0034

Dear Ansoné

Your application for four projects has been noted. The proposed project will include four 100MW Solar PV Facilities (400MW combined), and grid connection infrastructure. If all the project components, environment, and impacts are the same, you can request permission from the Department to submit a single application for all the projects. As soon as the Department approved the single application. You can submit your application to the Department.

In addition to combining BAR and specialist studies, separate layouts, EMPs must be created for the four adjoining PVs.

Regards
Thulisile

From: EIA Applications <EIAApplications@dffe.gov.za>
Sent: Tuesday, 01 March 2022 10:05
To: Thulisile Nyalunga <TNYALUNGA@dffe.gov.za>
Cc: Sindiswa Dlomo <SDLOMO@dffe.gov.za>; Fiona Grimett <FGRIMETT@dffe.gov.za>; Ansoné@savannahsa.com
Subject: 2022-02-0034

Dear Thulisile.

Please note that you have been allocated an application:

Type of Application: Pre-Application Meeting Request;
Reference Number: 2022-02-0034;
Date Received: 25/02/2022;
Action Required: Decide on meeting request.

Kindly let Ephron know which date the meeting is to be held, if it will be set.

EIA Applications
Integrated Environmental Authorisations
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

Please note that this email is for the receipt and processing of online applications only, and is not monitored for responses. All queries must be directed to EIAAdmin@dffe.gov.za.

You are advised that this mailbox has a 48 hour response time.

Please note that this mailbox has a 5mb mail limit. No zip files are to be attached in any email.

From: Ansoné Esterhuizen <Anson@savannahsa.com>

Sent: Friday, 25 February 2022 09:37

To: EIA Applications <EIAApplications@dffe.gov.za>

Subject: Pre Application request and approval of PP plan for the Pixley Park cluster

Good Morning

Please receive an application for a pre-application request for the following proposed developments:

1. a new Application for four (x4) Environmental Authorisations (EA) for a proposed Cluster of Solar PV Facilities within De Aar in the Northern Cape – to present to the Department the proposed public participation plan for approval, before the submission of the application for environmental authorisation.

We do not require a pre-application meeting, however would love to request the approval of our PP plan.

Your feedback on the above will be most appreciated. Let me know if you have any queries, I will be glad to assist

Kind regards,



Ansoné Esterhuizen
Environmental Consultant

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