

12 May 2023

Ms Natasha Higgitt
Manager: Development Applications Unit
South African Heritage Resources Agency
111 Harrington Street
Cape Town
8000

Dear Ms Higgitt

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESMENT FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE UMMBILA EMOYENI
RENEWABLE SOLAR PV FACILITY, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
(DFFE Reference No.: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2161)**

Emoyeni Renewable Energy Farm (Pty) Ltd is proposing the development of a commercial Solar Energy Facility with a contracted capacity of up to 150MW and associated infrastructure on a site located ~6km south-east of Bethal and 1km east of Morgenzon, within the Mpumalanga Province. The project site is located across the Govan Mbeki, Lekwa, and Msukaligwa Local Municipalities within the Gert Sibande District. The project is planned as part of a larger cluster of renewable energy projects (to be known as the Ummbila Emoyeni Renewable Energy Farm), which include one 900MW wind energy facility, to be developed in several phases, one 150MW solar energy facility, and associated grid connection infrastructure. Each project was subject to a separate EIA process in support of an application for Environmental Authorisation.

After updating the Ummbila Emoyeni Renewable Solar Energy Facility Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report with written comments received on the draft EIA Report from commenting Stakeholders, Key Stakeholder and Interested and Affected Parties, it was noted, at that time, that no written comments on the Ummbila Emoyeni Renewable Solar Energy Facility EIA Report were received from SAHRA. It was believed that the final written comments submitted by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) (CaseID 18576) on the Ummbila Emoyeni Renewable Wind Facility (DFFE Ref. No.: 4/12/16/3/3/2/2160) dated 18 November 2022 (refer to Appendix A attached) are applicable to the Ummbila Emoyeni Renewable Solar Energy Facility (CaseID 18577). This is due to the fact that the Ummbila Emoyeni Renewable Solar Facility and associated infrastructure (DFFE Ref. No.: 4/12/16/3/3/2/2161) is located on properties also assessed for the proposed Ummbila Emoyeni Renewable Wind Facility development areas.

Savannah Environmental submitted the final EIA Report to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) on 22 October 2022 without final written comments from SAHRA, and the DFFE granted Environmental Authorisation for the project in March 2023.

When the EA was uploaded onto SAHRIS (Case 18577) it was noted that the Final Scoping Report and the draft EIA Report were not uploaded onto SAHRIS, although it had been assumed that our team had uploaded the relevant Reports as is our standard procedure to do so.

Savannah Environmental would like to take this opportunity to confirm that the following Reports will be uploaded onto SAHRIS to provide SAHRA with an opportunity to review these:

- Final Scoping Report;
- Draft EIA Report; and
- Final EIA Report

SAHRA's final written comments on the Ummbila Emoyeni Renewable Solar Facility will be appreciated, and responses to the written comments will be provided. The comments received and responses thereto (in the form of an addendum to the Comments and Responses Report included in the Final EIA Report), will be submitted to the DFFE for their consideration together with an explanation as to the reason for the late submission. In addition, a copy of this letter is being submitted to the DFFE Case Officer, Dr Danie Smit, for his information.

We hope that SAHRA will accept our sincere apology for this oversight in our process.

Confirmation of receipt of this letter will be appreciated.

Kind regards,



Nicolene Venter
Public Participation and Social Consultant

CC: Dr Danie Smit, Case Officer: DFFE – Dsmit@dffe.gov.za

Document attached: Appendix A: Ummbila Emoyeni Renewable Wind Facility (DFFE Ref. No.: 4/12/16/3/3/2/2160), CaseID 18576 18 November 2022



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

T: +27 21 462 4502 | F: +27 21 462 4509 | E: info@sahra.org.za
South African Heritage Resources Agency | 111 Harrington Street | Cape Town
P.O. Box 4637 | Cape Town | 8001
www.sahra.org.za

Enquiries: Natasha Higgitt
Tel: 021 462 4502
Email: nhiggitt@sahra.org.za
CaseID: 18576

Date: Friday November 18, 2022
Page No: 1

Final Comment

In terms of Section 38(4), 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

Attention: Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd

PO Box 148
Sunninghill
2157

Emoyeni Renewable Energy Farm (Pty) Ltd is proposing the development of renewable energy facilities, collectively known as the Umbila Emoyeni Renewable Energy Facility, consisting of a commercial wind farm, solar PV facility, and associated grid infrastructure, including a battery energy storage system, located approximately 6km southeast of Bethal in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. A preferred project focus area with an extent of 27 819ha been identified by Emoyeni Renewable Energy Farm (Pty) Ltd as a technically suitable area for the development of the Umbilla Emoyeni Renewable Energy Farm with a contracted capacity of up to 666MW of wind energy and 150MW of solar energy. This layout, and project capacity, will reduce as the EIA and scoping process identifies environmental constraints that exclude areas for development. The wind farm is proposed to accommodate the following infrastructure: Up to 111 wind turbines with a maximum hub height of up to 200m. The tip height of the turbines will be up to 300m. 33kV / 132kV onsite collector substations Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Cabling between turbines, to be laid underground where practical Laydown and O&M hub (approximately 300m x 300m): Batching plant of 4ha to 7ha Construction compound (temporary) of 6 Ha approximately Operation and Maintenance office of 1.5Ha approximately , Laydown and crane hardstand areas (approximately 75m x 120m) Access roads of 12-13m wide, with 12m at turning circles. It is anticipated that the power generated by the project will be bid into the REIPPPP tender process (DMRE) and/or into private off take opportunities. The LILO corridor will intersect with either the Camden-Zeus 1 400kV, Camden-Zeus 2 400kV or Camden-Tutuka 400kV power line.

Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd has been appointed by Emoyeni Renewable Energy Farm (Pty) Ltd to conduct an Environmental Authorisation (EA) Application for the proposed Umbila Emoyeni Wind Energy Facility, near Bethal, Mpumalanga Province.

A draft Scoping Report (DSR) has been submitted in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA) and the 2017 NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. The proposed



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

T: +27 21 462 4502 | F: +27 21 462 4509 | E: info@sahra.org.za
South African Heritage Resources Agency | 111 Harrington Street | Cape Town
P.O. Box 4637 | Cape Town | 8001
www.sahra.org.za

development will include the construction of 111 turbines over an area of 27 819 ha with associated infrastructure such as underground cabling, on-site collector substation, 3 x 132kV powerlines from the substation, site office, batching plant, 3 x operation and maintenance office, 3 x laydown areas, laydown and crane hardstands and access roads.

CTS Heritage has been appointed to provide heritage specialist input as required by section 24(4)b(iii) of NEMA and section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA).

Lavin, J. 2022. Desktop Heritage Screening Assessment for the Ummbila Emoyeni Renewable Energy Wind and Solar PV Facilities, Mpumalanga Province.

The desktop study noted that heritage resources such as Stone Age resources, Late Iron Age sites, burial grounds and graves, historical werfs and Anglo-Boer war remains. The proposed development footprint is located in areas of moderate and very high palaeontological sensitivity, underlain by the Vryheid formation. The report recommends that further field assessment of the impact to heritage including palaeontological resources must be undertaken.

In an Interim Comment issued on the 10/06/2022, SAHRA requested that the pending assessment of the impact to heritage resources must comply with section 38(3) of the NHRA as required by section 38(8) of the NHRA. The HIA must include a field-based archaeological and field-based palaeontological component.

Lavin, J. 2022. Heritage Impact Assessment in terms of section 38(3) of the NHRA for the proposed development of the Ummbilia Emoyeni Wind Energy Facility, Mpumalanga

The HIA has included the results of the following heritage specialist studies:

Lavin, J and Fivaz, H. 2022. Archaeologist Specialist Study in terms of section 38(8) of the NHRA for a Ummbila Emoyeni Renewable Energy Wind and Solar PV Facilities, Mpumalanga Province

Groenewald, G. 2022. Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) for the proposed Ummbila Emoyeni Renewable Energy Wind and Solar PV Facilities, Govan Mbeki, Lekwa and Msukaligwa Local Municipalities, Gert Sibande District Municipality, Mpumalanga Province

The proposed development area is underlain by the Vryheid formation. Two trace fossils and one instance of

Our Ref:



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

T: +27 21 462 4502 | F: +27 21 462 4509 | E: info@sahra.org.za
South African Heritage Resources Agency | 111 Harrington Street | Cape Town
P.O. Box 4637 | Cape Town | 8001
www.sahra.org.za

Enquiries: Natasha Higgitt
Tel: 021 462 4502
Email: nhiggitt@sahra.org.za
CaseID: 18576

Date: Friday November 18, 2022
Page No: 3

course-grained feldspathic sandstone of the Vryheid Formation of low heritage significance were identified within the proposed development area. A total of 15 heritage resources were identified in the proposed development area, which includes six burial grounds of high heritage significance, historical stone structures and historical farm werfs of low or negligible heritage significance.

The recommendations provided in the HIA include the following:

- The rationalised layout as indicated in Figure 6 is preferred;
- A 500m no development buffer should be implemented on either side of the N17, R35 and R39;
- A 200m no development buffer should be implemented on either side of the secondary routes that run through the development area;
- A 500m no development buffer must be implemented around the identified farm werfs;
- A 50m no-go development buffer is implemented around all burial ground sites including Observations 001, 005, 006, 008, 012 and 013;
- A Management Plan for the ongoing conservation of these burials is developed prior to construction, along with a Guide on how to identify marked and unmarked burials and how to proceed should previously unidentified burials be uncovered during the construction process;
- The historic farm werf cluster mapped in Figure 5.5 is not impacted by the development;
- Turbine 101 must be relocated 300m east along the road alignment to ensure that no human remains are impacted by the development;
- The road to Turbine 60 must be relocated to ensure that a no-development buffer of at least 50m is implemented around the burial site 013 so that no impact takes place;
- The Chance Fossil Finds Procedure (Appendix 3) must be strictly adhered to for excavations exceeding 1.5m located within the Vryheid Formation as mapped in Figure 4.7 and 4.8;
- A Chance Finds Procedure must be implemented.

It is noted that the layout of the development has been amended to avoid impact to heritage resources

Final Comment

The following comments are made as a requirement in terms of section 3(4) of the NEMA Regulations and section 38(8) of the NHRA in the format provided in section 38(4) of the NHRA and must be included in the Final EMP:

- 38(4)a – The SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit and Burial Grounds and

Our Ref:



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

T: +27 21 462 4502 | F: +27 21 462 4509 | E: info@sahra.org.za
South African Heritage Resources Agency | 111 Harrington Street | Cape Town
P.O. Box 4637 | Cape Town | 8001
www.sahra.org.za

Enquiries: Natasha Higgitt
Tel: 021 462 4502
Email: nhiggitt@sahra.org.za
CaseID: 18576

Date: Friday November 18, 2022
Page No: 4

Graves (BGG) Unit has no objections to the proposed development;

- 38(4)b – The recommendations of the specialists are supported and must be adhered to. No further additional specific conditions are provided for the development;
- 38(4)c(i) – If any evidence of archaeological sites or remains (e.g. remnants of stone-made structures, indigenous ceramics, bones, stone artefacts, ostrich eggshell fragments, charcoal and ash concentrations), fossils or other categories of heritage resources are found during the proposed development, SAHRA APM Unit (Natasha Higgitt/Phillip Hine 021 462 5402) must be alerted as per section 35(3) of the NHRA. Non-compliance with section of the NHRA is an offense in terms of section 51(1)e of the NHRA and item 5 of the Schedule;
- 38(4)c(ii) – If unmarked human burials are uncovered, the SAHRA Burial Grounds and Graves (BGG) Unit (Thingahangwi Tshivhase/Ngqabutho Madida 012 320 8490), must be alerted immediately as per section 36(6) of the NHRA. Non-compliance with section of the NHRA is an offense in terms of section 51(1)e of the NHRA and item 5 of the Schedule;
- 38(4)d – See section 51 of the NHRA regarding offences;
- 38(4)e – The following conditions apply with regards to the appointment of specialists:
- With reference to the mitigation work noted above, a qualified archaeologist must be appointed to undertake the work in terms of the permit applied for as noted above;
- If heritage resources are uncovered during the course of the development, a professional archaeologist or palaeontologist, depending on the nature of the finds, must be contracted as soon as possible to inspect the heritage resource. If the newly discovered heritage resources prove to be of archaeological or palaeontological significance, a Phase 2 rescue operation may be required subject to permits issued by SAHRA;
- As the Final EIA has been finalised without including SAHRA comments, this comment must be forwarded directly to the competent authority for their consideration as per section 38(8) of the NHRA. Proof of the delivery and receipt thereof must be provided to SAHRA;
- The Final EMPr must be submitted to SAHRA for record purposes;
- The decision regarding the EA Application must be communicated to SAHRA and uploaded to the SAHRIS Case application.

Should you have any further queries, please contact the designated official using the case number quoted above in the case header.

Yours faithfully

Our Ref:



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

T: +27 21 462 4502 | F: +27 21 462 4509 | E: info@sahra.org.za
South African Heritage Resources Agency | 111 Harrington Street | Cape Town
P.O. Box 4637 | Cape Town | 8001
www.sahra.org.za

Enquiries: Natasha Higgitt
Tel: 021 462 4502
Email: nhiggitt@sahra.org.za
CaseID: 18576

Date: Friday November 18, 2022
Page No: 5

Natasha Higgitt
Heritage Officer
South African Heritage Resources Agency

Phillip Hine
Manager: Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit
South African Heritage Resources Agency

ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/node/597541>

Terms & Conditions:

1. This approval does not exonerate the applicant from obtaining local authority approval or any other necessary approval for proposed work.
2. If any heritage resources, including graves or human remains, are encountered they must be reported to SAHRA immediately.
3. SAHRA reserves the right to request additional information as required.