

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND  
INTEGRATED WATER USE LICENCE APPLICATION PROCESS  
FOR THE  
PROPOSED RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION PROJECT ON PORTION 10 OF THE FARM  
WILDEBEESTLAAGTE 411 KQ, THABAZIMBI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, WATERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY.**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT AND INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE  
27 NOVEMBER 2021**

## **1. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT**

The aim of this document is to:

- Provide background information to parties interested in and/or affected by the proposed development.
- Provide information of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process to be followed for the proposed establishment of a solar energy generation facility with associated infrastructure and structures on Portion 10 of the farm Wildebeestlaagte 411 KQ, located within the Thabazimbi Local Municipality, Waterberg District Municipality, Limpopo Province.
- Indicate how you, as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP), can become involved in the EIA and IWULA process.

## **2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Vulpecula Energy (Pty) Ltd (Reg. No. 2021/534272/07) is proposing the establishment of a solar energy generation facility with associated infrastructure and structures on Portion 10 of the farm Wildebeestlaagte 411 KQ, located within the Thabazimbi Local Municipality, Waterberg District Municipality, Limpopo Province, approximately 2.5 km South-West of Northam.

Exigent Engineering Consultants CC has been appointed to oversee the legislative environmental processes applicable to the proposed project. The renewable energy generation facility will use Photovoltaic (PV) technology. The name of the proposed facility will be SPITSKOP SOLAR PARK.

The PV Power Plant will have a maximum generating capacity of up to 75 MW. The proposed Spitskop Solar Park will deliver the electrical energy to the Eskom Spitskop substation

through a new 88 kV (or 132kV) power line of approximately 1.6 km in length. An 88 kV (or 132 kV) feeder bay will be commissioned and equipped at the Eskom Spitskop substation. The chosen site is suitable for the installation of a photovoltaic (PV) power plant. It is appropriate morphologically (flat terrain) and regarding the favourable radiation conditions. The available radiation allows a high rate of electric energy production, as a combination of latitude - longitude (24° 57' 14" S, 27° 14' 21" E) and climatic conditions.

## **3. PROJECT LOCATION**

The proposed development site is located on Portion 10 of the farm Wildebeestlaagte 411 KQ, measuring 316.1 ha, located in the Thabazimbi Local Municipality, Waterberg District Municipality, Limpopo Province, 2.5 km South-West of Northam.

The proposed PV Power Plant is located within the quarter degree grid cell 2427CC and has geographic coordinates at 24°57' 31.27"S and 27°14' 13.49"E and an approximate extent of 190 Ha.

## **4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) PROCESS - LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

An Environmental Authorisation application will be submitted National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) in terms of the EIA Regulations under Section 24(5), and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (Act No. 107 of 1998), as amended of the intent to carry out the Environmental Impact Assessment Process (in terms of listed activity 9, 10, 11, 12, 19, 24, and 25 of Listing Notice 1 – GN R983, as amended (GNR 327) and listed activity 1, 9, 15 and 25 of Listing Notice 2 – GN R984, as amended (GNR 325) and listed activity 4, 12 and 14 of Listing Notice 3 - GN R985, as amended (GNR 324). The listed

activities triggered under GN R983, GN R984 and GN R985, will require an EIA Process. An Integrated Water Use License Application (IWULA) will be submitted to the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) for applicable water uses listed in Section 21 of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act 36 of 1998).

### **GN R983, as amended (GNR 327)- NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment Listing Notice 1:**

**Activity 9:** *The development of infrastructure exceeding 1 000 metres in length for the bulk transportation of water or storm water— (i) with an internal diameter of 0,36 metres or more; or (ii) with a peak throughput of 120 litres per second or more; excluding where— (a) such infrastructure is for bulk transportation of water or storm water or storm water drainage inside a road reserve or railway line reserve; or (b) where such development will occur within an urban area.*

**Activity 10:** *The development and related operation of infrastructure exceeding 1 000 metres in length for the bulk transportation of sewage, effluent, process water, waste water, return water, industrial discharge or slimes – (i) with an internal diameter of 0,36 metres or more; or (ii) with a peak throughput of 120 litres per second or more; excluding where— (a) such infrastructure is for the bulk transportation of sewage, effluent, process water, waste water, return water, industrial discharge or slimes inside a road reserve or railway line reserve; or (b) where such development will occur within an urban area.*

**Activity 11:** *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; or (ii) inside urban areas or industrial complexes with a capacity of 275 kilovolts or more; excluding the development of bypass infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity where such bypass infrastructure is — (a) temporarily required to allow for maintenance of existing infrastructure; (b) 2 kilometres or shorter in length; (c) within an existing transmission line servitude; and (d) will be removed within 18 months of the commencement of development*

**Activity 12:** *The development of – (ii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 100sq.m. or more (c) within 32m of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse.*

**Activity 19:** *The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 10 cubic metres into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock of more than 10 cubic metres from [(i)] a watercourse; [(ii)] the seashore; or [(iii)] the littoral active zone, an estuary or a distance of 100 metres inland of the high-water mark of the sea or estuary, whichever distance is the greater—]*

**Activity 24:** *The development of a road— (ii) with a reserve wider than 13,5 metres, or where no reserve exists where the road is wider than 8 metres; but excluding a road— (a) which is identified and included in activity 27 in Listing Notice 2 of 2014; (b) where the entire road falls within an urban area; or (c) which is 1 kilometre or shorter.*

**Activity 25:** *The development and related operation of facilities or infrastructure for the treatment of effluent, wastewater or sewage with a daily throughput capacity of more than 2 000 cubic metres but less than 15 000 cubic metres.*

### **GN R984, as amended (GNR 325)- NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment Listing Notice 2:**

**Activity 1:** *The development of facilities or infrastructure for the generation of electricity from a renewable resource where the electricity output is 20 megawatts or more,*

**Activity 9:** *Development of facilities or infrastructure for transmission and distribution of electricity with a capacity of 275 kV or more, outside urban areas or industrial complex. excluding the development of bypass infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity where such bypass infrastructure is — (c) within an existing transmission line servitude; and*

**Activity 15:** *The clearance of an area of 20 hectares or more of indigenous vegetation.*

**Activity 25:** *The development and related operation of facilities or infrastructure for the treatment of effluent, wastewater or sewage with a daily throughput capacity of 15 000 cubic metres or more.*

### **GN R985, as amended (GN R324)- NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment Listing Notice 3:**

**Activity 4:** *The development of a road wider than 4 metres with a reserve less than 13,5 metres. e. Limpopo*

*i. Outside urban areas: (aa) A protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA, excluding disturbed areas; (ee) Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans; (gg) Areas within 10 kilometres from national parks or world heritage sites or 5 kilometres from any other protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA or from the core areas of a biosphere reserve, excluding disturbed areas; or*

**Activity 12:** *The clearance of an area of 300 square metres or more of indigenous vegetation except where such clearance of Indigenous vegetation is required for maintenance Purposes undertaken in accordance with a Maintenance management plan.*

**e. Limpopo** *ii. Within critical biodiversity areas identified in bioregional plans; or iii. On land, where, at the time of the coming into effect of this Notice or thereafter such land was zoned open space, conservation or had an equivalent zoning.*

**Activity 14:** *The development of— (ii) infrastructure*

or structures with a physical footprint of 10 square metres or more; where such development occurs—(a) within a watercourse;

**e. Limpopo i.** Outside urban areas: (aa) A protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA, excluding conservancies; (ff) Critical biodiversity areas or ecosystem service areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans; (hh) Areas within 10 kilometres from national parks or world heritage sites or 5 kilometres from any other protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA or from the core area of a biosphere reserve;

## **5. ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

It is anticipated that the following environmental aspects will be significant and will hence be addressed by the project team during the assessment process:

- Impacts on avifauna;
- Impacts on vegetation and fauna;
- Impacts on the agricultural potential of the soils;
- Geological, soil and erosion impacts;
- Impacts on heritage resources;
- Visual impact;
- Social and economic impacts.

Management guidelines will be developed for the above-mentioned issues and incorporated in an Environmental Management Programme (EMPr).

You are welcome to comment on the above list and provide additional anticipated issues and possible impacts that should be assessed.

## **6. SPECIALISTS**

The project team has identified potentially significant issues and will further assess these impacts in terms of their significance in accordance with the guidelines for EIA published by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA).

The specialist studies that will be conducted include:

- Terrestrial Biodiversity and Wetland Assessment
- Agricultural Theme Assessment
- Visual Impact Assessment
- Palaeontology Assessment
- Aquatic Biodiversity Assessment
- Landscape (Solar) Assessment

- Archaeological Assessment

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) or other stakeholders may request additional specialists' studies if necessary.

## **7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

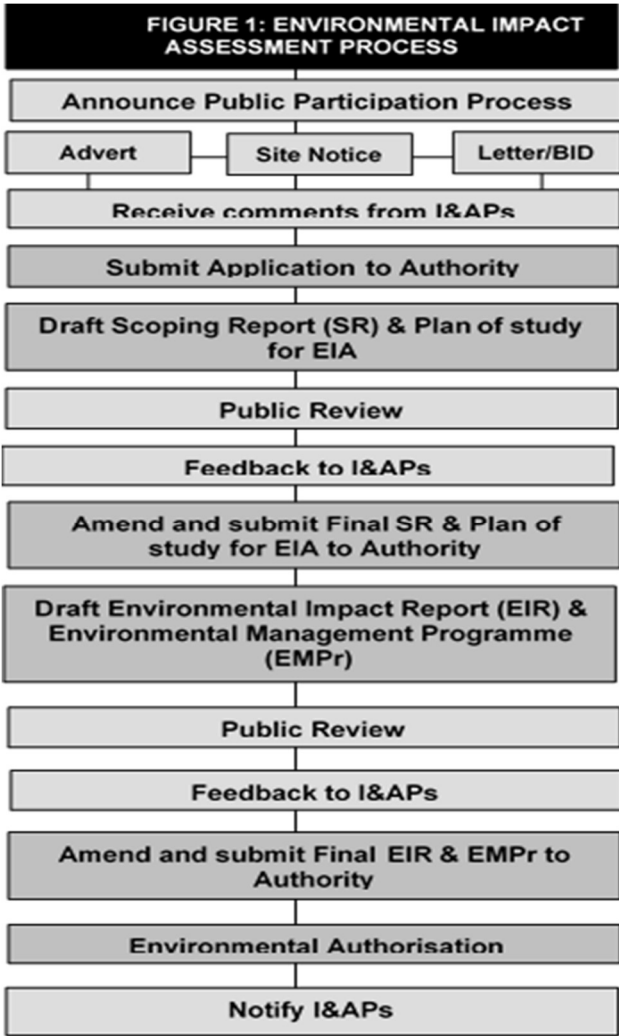
Public Participation is any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision-making and forms an integral part of the EIA. The Public Participation Process (PPP) provides people who may be affected by the proposed development, with an opportunity to provide comments and to raise issues of concern, or to make suggestions that may result in enhanced benefits for the project.

Comments and issues raised during the PPP will be captured, evaluated, and included in a Comments and Response Report, which will be incorporated into the draft Environmental Impact Assessment report (EIA) and the IWULA. The draft EIA, WULA and EMP will be made available for public review prior to submission to the relevant environmental authorities.

## **8. APPROVING AUTHORITY**

The National DFFE is the relevant authority that will review the Scoping and EIR. The DEDTEA must reach a decision as to whether, and under what conditions, the project may proceed, based on environmental considerations.

The process to be followed is depicted in Figure 1 as per the amended 2014 NEMA regulations.



The DWS is the relevant authority that will review the IWULA. A decision on the application will be made by DWS based on the content that will be provided in the IWULA and the supporting documents.

**9. INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE**

Exigent Engineering Consultants have been appointed by Vulpecula Energy (Pty) Ltd (Reg. No. 2021/534272/07) to manage and facilitate the environmental process and PPP required for the project.

We would like to encourage you to participate in this EIA process. Should you wish to get involved, please provide written comments on or before **17 January 2022**.

**EXIGENT ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS**

Exigent Engineering Consultants

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Public Participation Dropbox link:

<https://www.exigent.co.za/environmental/public-review-documents>

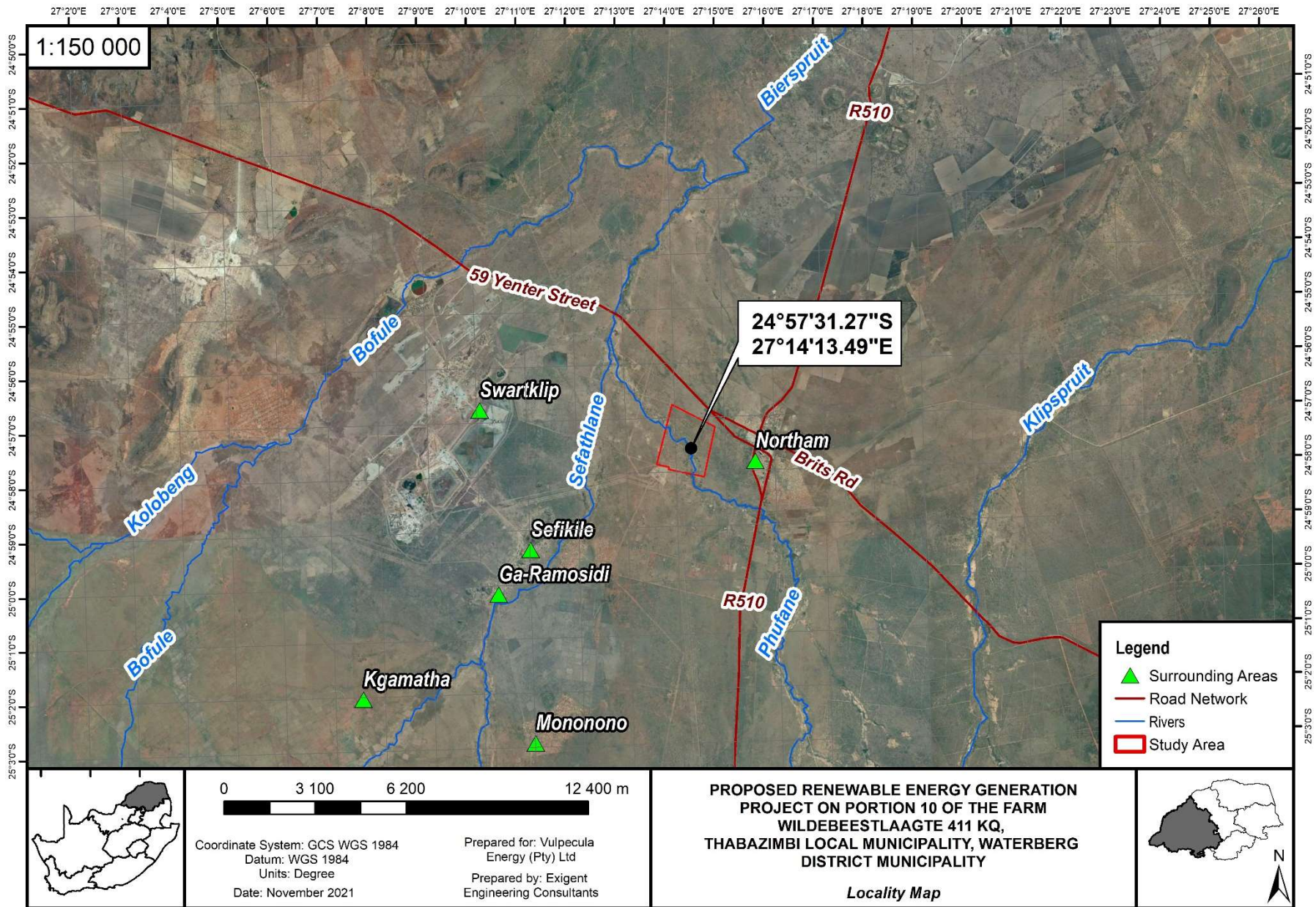


Figure 2. Locality Map