

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: 18364

Date: Tuesday April 26, 2022
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Interim Comment

In terms of Section 38(3), 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

Attention: Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd

PO Box 148
Sunninghill
2157

Riet Fountain Solar PV1 (Pty) Ltd is proposing the development of a Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Energy Facility and associated infrastructure on Portion 4 of the Farm Riet Fountain No.6, located approximately 10km east of De Aar within the Emthanjeni Local Municipality in the Northern Cape Province. The facility will have a contracted capacity of up to 100MW and will be known as Rietfontein Solar PV1. The project is planned as part of a cluster of renewable energy facilities known as Pixley Park, which includes three (3) additional 100MW Solar PV Facilities (Wagt Solar PV1, Carolus PV1, and Fontain Solar PV1), and grid connection infrastructure connecting the facilities to the existing Hydra Substation. The projects will all connect to the new Vetlaagte Main Transmission Substation (MTS) via the Wag 'n Bietjie MTS. Infrastructure associated with the 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, and 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 781ha has been identified within the broader project site (approximately 8 200ha in extent), by the developer for the development of the Rietfontein Solar PV1 Facility, 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 project under the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy's (DMRE's) Renewable Energy Independent

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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 Rietfontein Solar PV1 set to inject up to 100MW into the national grid.

Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd has been appointed by Riet Fountain Solar PV 1 (Pty) Ltd to conduct an Environmental Authorisation (EA) Application for the proposed Riet Fountain Solar PV 1 Facility on Portion 4 of the Farm Riet Fountain No.6, near De Aar, Northern Cape 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 development will include the construction of a solar array, inverters and transformers, cabling between panel, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), laydown area, construction camps and site offices, access road and entrance gate, internal distribution roads, operations and maintenance building, ablutions, storage warehouse, workshop and guard house, and on-site IPP substation. It is noted that the proposed powerline will be assessed as part of a separate application.

CTS Heritage have 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 proposed Development of the Riet Fountain Solar PV1 Facility and associated Grid Connection Infrastructure near De Aar, Northern Cape Province.

The heritage screener found that the project area has not been previously surveyed and that heritage resources such as Stone Age lithics, rock engravings, historical structures and graves have been identified in the surrounding areas. The proposed development footprint is located in an area of very high palaeontological sensitivity. The report recommends that a full Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) be undertaken for the proposed development.

Interim Comment

The SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit notes the pending HIA and requests that the HIA comply with section 38(3) of the NHRA as required by section 38(8) of the NHRA. The results of the Visual Impact Assessment must also be taken into account as part of the HIA.

The archaeological component of the HIA must be conducted by a qualified archaeologist and must comply

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with the SAHRA 2007 Minimum Standards: Archaeological and Palaeontological Components of Impact Assessment Reports (see www.asapa.co.za or www.aphp.org.za for a list of qualified archaeologists).

The proposed development footprint is located in an area of very high sensitivity as per the SAHRIS PalaeoSensitivity Map. Therefore, a field-based Palaeontological Impact Assessment must be undertaken by a qualified palaeontologist. (See <https://www.palaeosa.org/heritage-practitioners.html> for a list of qualified palaeontologists). The report must comply with the 2012 Minimum Standards: Palaeontological Components of Heritage Impact Assessments.

Any other heritage resources as defined in section 3 of the NHRA that may be impacted, such as built structures over 60 years old, sites of cultural significance associated with oral histories, burial grounds and graves, graves of victims of conflict, and cultural landscapes or viewsapes must also be assessed.

Further comments will be issued upon receipt of the above requested reports and the Draft EIA inclusive of appendices.

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

Yours faithfully

Natasha Higgitt
Heritage Officer
South African Heritage Resources Agency

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

ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/node/595511>