

Proposed Development of the Notsi PV 3 project as part of the Notsi Solar Projects near Dealesville, Free State Province

Our Ref:



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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CaseID: 21775

Date: Thursday August 31, 2023
Page No: 1

Final Comment

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

Attention: Environamics

PO Box 6484
Baillie Park
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Notsi PV (Pty) Ltd are interested in developing a cluster of 100 MW solar PV facilities and associated infrastructure of an area located on Farm 1623 Ebenhaezer, located approximately 13 km southwest of the centre of Dealesville in the Free State Province. Each project will include a solar PV facility with standard infrastructure of a PV facility including PV arrays; cabling; inverters; on-site substation and grid connection; battery storage; auxiliary buildings; access and internal roads; temporary laydown areas; and fencing. This assessment is for the proposed Notsi PV 3 facility.

Notsi PV (Pty) Ltd appointed Solis-Environmental to undertake the Environmental Authorisation (EA) Application for the construction of the 100MW Notsi PV 3 Photovoltaic Solar Facility and associated infrastructure on the Farm Welgeluk No. 1622, Registration Division Boshof, within the Tokologo Local Municipality, Free State Province.

The Draft Basic Assessment Report has been submitted in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998) and the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended). The total development footprint of the project will approximately be 370 hectares (including supporting infrastructure on site excluding the main grid connection infrastructure to connect to the national electricity grid) as assessed as part of the Basic Assessment process. The development area is located within a Renewable Energy Development Zone (REDZ).

CTS Heritage was 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. Heritage Screener: Desktop Heritage Screening And Sensitivity Assessment For The Dealesville Solar Projects

Florisbad, a Provincial Heritage Site is located about 35 km to the east of the present study area in which



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mid-Pleistocene fauna and Middle Stone Age stone artefacts have been recovered along with an early human cranium. Erfkroon is another important fossil site that lies along the Modder River about 5 km southwest of the southern end of the present study area. The fossils occur over a large area and are revealed in erosion gullies. Stone artefacts from the earlier part of the Middle Stone Age (MSA) and from the Later Stone Age (LSA) have also been found associated with the bones in places.

There are fossil and archaeological sites in the greater region and thus the chance of finding material of significance does exist and it is recommended that a Heritage Impact Assessment that satisfies section 38(3) of the NHRA is completed.

Lavin, J. 2023. Heritage Impact Assessment In Terms Of Section 38(8) Of The NHRA For The Proposed Development of the Notsi PV 3 project as part of the Notsi Solar Projects near Dealesville, Free State Province

A field assessment of the development footprint of the proposed Notsi Solar Projects documented a MSA occupation of the Pleistocene pan margin (site DV2), which is in a close to primary context, must be avoided with a 100m buffer. Stone artefact scatters in secondary contexts (Sites DV4, DV8 and DV1) have been identified in the development footprint. These sites must be avoided with a 20m buffer.

Sites DV3 and DV5 are Historical graves of several adults and the sites must be avoided with a 100m buffer. Sites DV6 and DV7 are structural ruins with no evidence of associated burials. These must be avoided with a 20m buffer zone. **None of the identified sites are located within the development area.**

No visible evidence of fossiliferous outcrops were found in the development footprint and thus an overall LOW palaeontological significance is allocated to the development footprint.

Lavin, J. 2022. Archaeological Specialist Study In Terms Of Section 38(8) Of The NHRA For A Proposed Development of the Dealesville Solar Projects

Eight heritage resources were identified with the development footprint (sites DV1 - DV8). Several stone artefact scatters in secondary contexts and site DV2 (MSA occupation of the Pleistocene pan margin), which is in a close to primary context. Stone artefacts at sites DV4, DV1 and DV8 are ex-situ and occur in a disturbed deflated context. Sites DV3 and DV5 are Historical graves of several adults. Sites DV6 and DV7 are structural ruins with no evidence of associated burials.

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Recommendations

- A no development buffer area of 100m must be implemented around sites DV2, DV3 and DV5
- A no development buffer area of 20m must be implemented around sites DV1, DV4, DV6, DV7 and DV8
- A Heritage Agreement and Conservation Management Plan be developed for the ongoing management of these resources.
- Should any buried archaeological resources or human remains or burials be uncovered during the course of development activities, work must cease in the vicinity of these finds. The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) must be contacted immediately in order to determine an appropriate way forward.

Butler, E. 2022. Desktop Study: Palaeontological Impact Assessment Dealesville PV Solar Facility Free State Province

The study area is underlain by Quaternary deposits, unfossiliferous Jurassic dolerite, as well as the Tierberg Formation of the Ecca Group (Karoo Supergroup). Quaternary deposits reveal palaeoclimatic changes in the different geological formations. Pleistocene vertebrate fossils and plant microfossils are associated with spring and pan deposits and reworked Stone Age artifacts (Plio-Pleistocene). The Tierberg formation is known for its rare trace fossils assemblages.

No fossiliferous exposures were observed during this field survey and the proposed development is mantled by thick grassy vegetation. An overall LOW palaeontological significance is allocated to the development footprint. It is therefore considered that the proposed development will not lead to detrimental impacts on the palaeontological reserves. If Palaeontological Heritage is uncovered during surface clearing and excavations the Chance find Protocol attached should be implemented immediately.

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 BAR and EMP:

- 38(4)a – The SAHRA Development Application Unit (DAU) has no objections to the proposed development;

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- 38(4)b – The recommendations of the specialists are supported and must be adhered to. Further conditions are recommended for the development:
- The Heritage Management Plan Report for the identified heritage sites must be submitted to SAHRA for comments prior to the commencement of 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 DAU (Sityhilelo Ngcatsha/Natasha Higgitt 021 202 8660) 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 DAU (Sityhilelo Ngcatsha/Natasha Higgitt 021 202 8660) , 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:
- 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;
- The Final BAR and 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

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Sityhilelo Ngcatsha
Archaeology, Palaeontology, Meteorite Assistant
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/619800>

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.