



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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CaseID: 16595

Date: Friday August 27, 2021

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Interim Comment

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

Attention: Lerato Solar Power Plant (RF) (Pty) Ltd.

The activity entails the development of a photovoltaic solar facility and associated infrastructure on Portion 4 of the Farm Houthaaldoorns 2 , Registration Division IP, North West Province situated within the Ditsobotla Local Municipality area of jurisdiction. The proposed development is located in the North West province in the northern central interior of South-Africa. The town of Lichtenburg is located approximately 15km south of the proposed development. The project entails the generation of up to 150MW electrical power through photovoltaic (PV) panels. The total footprint of the project will approximately be 300 hectares (including supporting infrastructure on site)

Environamic Environmental Consultants have been appointed by Lerato Solar Power Plant (RF) (Pty) Ltd to conduct an Environmental Authorisation (EA) application process for the proposed development of a photovoltaic solar facility and associated infrastructure on Portion 4 of the Farm Houthaaldoorns 2, Registration Division IP, Ditsobotla Local Municipality, North West Province.

In an interim comment issued on 02/07/21 (<https://sahris.sahra.org.za/node/577117>) on the case the SAHRA requested the applicant to upload all documents pertaining to the Environmental Authorisation Application Process and that as per section 24(4)b(iii) of NEMA and section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA), an assessment of heritage resources must form part of the process and the assessment must comply with section 38(3) of the NHRA. This must include a field assessment of the impact of the proposed project on palaeontological resources as the footprint is in an area of very high palaeosensitivity. Finally, that further comments will be issued upon receipt of the above. Since the issuing of the interim comment documents pertaining to the EA application including a DSR and an HIA inclusive of both an archaeological and palaeontological components have been submitted.

A draft Scoping Report (DSR) has been submitted in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, no 107 of 1998 (NEMA) and NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. The proposed development will include approximately 3000 erven with associated services, and various residential, business, and public spaces, over 170 ha.

Environamics, van Schalkwyk, J.A., and Almond, J.E., have been appointed to provide heritage specialist input



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into the EA process as per section 38(3) and 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA) as required by section 24(4)b(iii) of NEMA.

van Schalwyk, J.E. July 2021. Phase 1 Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment: The Proposed Lerato Solar Power Plant Near Lichtenburg, North West Province.

During the survey the following sites, features or object of cultural significance were identified:

- 7.3.1 An informal burial site with probably more than 30 graves. Most are only marked with stone cairns. It is recommend that the site be avoided and/or preserved in-situ and a buffer zone either temporary or permanent of 20m should be created.
- 7.3.2 An informal burial site with probably more than 50 graves. Most are only marked with stone cairns. It is recommend that the site be avoided and/or preserved in-situ and a buffer zone either temporary or permanent of 20m should be created.

It should be noted that for the alternative corridor (south-west of the farm) a new line of approximately 11 km will be constructed to the Watershed MTS. The proposed power line would have a 100m wide corridor except where existing lines are already located where it should be approximately 150m. The proposed power line corridor was surveyed only at desktop level as access to the relevant properties was not possible. It is proposed that once the power line route has been confirmed within the 100m corridor a heritage walk-through needs to be undertaken

Almond, J.E. July 2021. Palaeontological Heritage Report: Combined Desktop & Field-Based Assessment-Proposed Kutlwano Solar Power Plant on Portion 4 of the Farm Houthaaldoorns 2 Near Lichtenburg, Ditsobotla Local Municipality, North West Province.

The solar facility and grid connection project areas are underlain near-surface and at depth by shallow marine carbonate bedrocks of the Monte Christo Formation (Malmani Subgroup, Chuniespoort Group, Transvaal Supergroup) of the Precambrian age that are known to fossil stromatolites (laminated microbial

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bio-sedimentary structures) of various shapes and sizes (domes, columns etc). The stromatolites assemblages recorded within the solar power plant project area comprises of common types that are likely to be widely distributed within the extensive outcrop areas of the Monte Christo Formation.

Pending the potential discovery of fossiliferous karst breccias or ancient (Cretaceous or Neogene) fluvial gravel, it is concluded that the palaeontological sensitivity of the project area including the solar power plant, 132kV grid connection corridor and all associated infrastructure is considered to be low. Given this and the poor visibility due to the thick summer vegetation cover, it is recommended that should the project be authorised, a detailed photographic record of representative well-preserved stromatolites within the combined SPP project area be compiled by a professional palaeontologist during the dry winter season before construction. It is further recommended that the ECO should be aware of the potential for possible new finds. The ECO should monitor all site clearance and substantial excavations for fossil remains on an on-going basis during construction. A Fossil Chance Find Protocol is recommended and attached.

Interim Comment

The SAHRA APM Unit acknowledges receipt of the Draft Scoping Report, and HIA submitted in terms of section 38(3) of the NAHRA (25 of 1990) which includes both the archaeological and palaeontological components as well as the recommendations provided therein.

Further comments will be issued upon receipt of the draft EIA documents 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

Elijah Dumisani Katsetse
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/575359>