



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 447· PRETORIA ·0001· Environment House ·473 Steve Biko Road, Arcadia· PRETORIA

DFFE Reference: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2228

Enquiries: Ms Matlodi Mogorosi

Telephone: (012) 399 9388 **E-mail:** MMogorosi@environment.gov.za

Mr Richard Gordon
Gunstfontein Wind Farm (Pty) Ltd
PO Box 23101
CLAREMONT
7735

Telephone Number: (021) 670 1423
Email Address: stephnie.kot@aced.co.za

PER MAIL / EMAIL

Dear Mr Gordon

APPLICATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION IN TERMS OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACT, ACT NO. 107 OF 1998, AS AMENDED FOR: THE GRID CONNECTION EXTENSION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE GUNSTFONTEIN WIND ENERGY FACILITY NEAR SUTHERLAND, KAROO HOOGLAND LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

With reference to the above application, please be advised that the Department has decided to grant authorisation. The Environmental Authorisation (EA) and reasons for the decision are attached herewith.

In terms of Regulation 4(2) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, as amended (the EIA Regulations), you are instructed to notify all registered interested and affected parties, in writing and within 14 (fourteen) days of the date of the decision, of the decision, as well as the provisions regarding the submission of appeals that are contained in the Regulations.

In terms of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, Act No. 3 of 2000, you are entitled to the right to fair, lawful and reasonable administrative action; and to written reasons for administrative action that affects you negatively. Further your attention is drawn to the provisions of the Protection of Personal Information Act, Act No. 4 of 2013 which stipulate that the Department should conduct itself in a responsible manner when collecting, processing, storing and sharing an individual or another entity's personal information by holding the Department accountable should the Department abuse or compromise your personal information in any way.

Your attention is drawn to Chapter 2 of National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998 National Appeal Regulations published under Government Notice R993 in Government Gazette No. 38303 dated 08 December 2014 (National Appeal Regulations, 2014), which prescribes the appeal procedure to be followed. Kindly include a copy of this document (National Appeal Regulations, 2014) with the letter of notification to interested and affected parties in this matter.

Should any person wish to lodge an appeal against this decision, he/she must submit the appeal to the appeal administrator, and a copy of the appeal to the applicant, any registered interested and affected party, and any

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organ of state with interest in the matter within 20 days from the date that the notification of the decision was sent to the registered interested and affected parties by the applicant; or the date that the notification of the decision was sent to the applicant by the Department, whichever is applicable.

Appeals must be submitted in writing in the prescribed form to:

The Director: Appeals and Legal Review of this Department at the below mentioned addresses.

By email: appeals@environment.gov.za;

By hand: Environment House
473 Steve Biko
Arcadia
Pretoria
0083; or

By post: Private Bag X447
Pretoria
0001

Please note that in terms of Section 43(7) of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, the lodging of an appeal will suspend the environmental authorisation or any provision or condition attached thereto. In the instance where an appeal is lodged, you may not commence with the activity until such time that the appeal is finalised.

To obtain the prescribed appeal form and for guidance on the submission of appeals, please visit the Department's website at https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms#legal_authorisations or request a copy of the documents at appeals@environment.gov.za.

Yours faithfully


Mr Sabelo Malaza
Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
Date: 28/05/2021

cc:	J Thomas	Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd	Email: joanne@savannahsa.com
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forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Environmental Authorisation

In terms of Regulation 25 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, as amended

The grid connection extension infrastructure for the Gunstfontein Wind Energy Facility near
Sutherland, Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality, Northern Cape Province
Namakwa District Municipality

Authorisation register number:	14/12/16/3/3/1/2228
Last amended:	First issue
Holder of authorisation:	Gunstfontein Wind Farm (Pty) Ltd
Location of activity:	RE Portion 1 of the Farm Orange Fontein No. 203; RE of the Farm Annex Orange Fontein No. 185; RE of the Farm Leeuwe Hoek No. 183; The Farm De Hoop No. 202; Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality; Namakwa District Municipality; Northern Cape Province.

This authorisation does not negate the holder of the authorisation's responsibility to comply with any other statutory requirements that may be applicable to the undertaking of the activity.

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Decision

The Department is satisfied, on the basis of information available to it and subject to compliance with the conditions of this Environmental Authorisation, that the applicant should be authorised to undertake the activities specified below.

Non-compliance with a condition of this Environmental Authorisation may result in criminal prosecution or other actions provided for in the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended and the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

Details regarding the basis on which the Department reached this decision are set out in Annexure 1.

Activities authorised

By virtue of the powers conferred on it by the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, as amended, the Department hereby authorises –

GUNSTFONTEIN WIND FARM (PTY) LTD

(hereafter referred to as the **holder of the authorisation**)

with the following contact details –

Mr Richard Gordon

Gunstfontein Wind Farm (Pty) Ltd

PO Box 23101

CLAREMONT

7735

Tel: (021) 670 1423

Cell: (083) 318 3982

E-mail: stephnie.kot@aced.co.za

to undertake the following activities (hereafter referred to as "the activity") indicated in Listing Notice 1 and Listing Notice 3 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended:

Activity number	Activity description
<p><u>Listing Notice 1, Item 11(i):</u></p> <p><i>"The development of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity—</i></p> <p><i>(i) outside urban areas or industrial complexes with a capacity of more than 33 but less than 275 kilovolts."</i></p>	<p>One Single or Double Circuit 132kV Overhead Powerline (OHL) on a single set of pylon structures. The OHL will act as an extension of the authorised Gunstfontein 132kV OHL and will connect to the authorised Gunstfontein 132kV OHL near the endpoint of the currently authorised line and will then extend southwards and connect to the Hidden Valley Substation, located on Karusa Wind Farm.</p>
<p><u>Listing Notice 1, Item 12(ii)(a)(c) :</u></p> <p><i>"The development of—</i></p> <p><i>(ii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 100 square metres or more;</i></p> <p><i>where such development occurs—</i></p> <p><i>(a) within a watercourse;</i></p> <p><i>(c) if no development setback exists, within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse;"</i></p>	<p>The construction of access roads/tracks required for the construction and maintenance activities of the powerline will have a physical footprint of up to 100m² or more within a watercourse or within 32m of a watercourse, as some road crossings in/near drainage lines may be required.</p>
<p><u>Listing Notice 1, Item 19:</u></p> <p><i>"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 a watercourse;"</i></p>	<p>The construction of access roads/tracks required for the construction and maintenance activities of the powerline will require the infilling or depositing of material more than 10 cubic metres into a watercourse.</p>
<p><u>Listing Notice 1, Item 28(ii):</u></p> <p><i>"Residential, mixed, retail, commercial, industrial or institutional developments where such land was used for agriculture, game farming, equestrian purposes or afforestation on or after 01 April 1998</i></p>	<p>The total area of land to be developed for the power line is larger than 1 hectare. The land is currently used for agricultural (i.e. grazing) purposes. The power line will be ~7.5km in length and will be</p>

<p>and where such development:</p> <p>(ii) will occur outside an urban area, where the total land to be developed is bigger than 1 hectare;"</p>	<p>developed within a servitude of up to 40m wide.</p>
<p><u>Listing Notice 3, Item 4(g)(ii)(ee):</u></p> <p>"The development of a road wider than 4m with a reserve less than 13,5m</p> <p>g. <u>Northern Cape</u></p> <p>ii. Outside urban areas:</p> <p>(ee) Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans."</p>	<p>The project will require the development of a road wider than 4 metres with a reserve less than 13.5 metres in an area that falls within a critical biodiversity area (CBA 1 and CBA 2) identified in the Northern Cape CBA Map.</p>
<p><u>Listing Notice 3, Item 12(g)(ii):</u></p> <p>"The clearance of an area of 300 square metres or more of indigenous vegetation.</p> <p>g. <u>Northern Cape:</u></p> <p>ii. Within critical biodiversity areas identified in bioregional plans."</p>	<p>More than 300 square metres of indigenous vegetation will be cleared during the construction of this project. Approximately 100m² will be cleared per tower/ pylon foundation. The project falls within the critical biodiversity areas (CBA 1 and 2) which are located along the route within which towers will be placed.</p>
<p><u>Listing Notice 3, Item 14(ii)(a)(c)(g)(ii)(ff):</u></p> <p>"The development of—</p> <p>(ii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 10 square metres or more;</p> <p>where such development occurs—</p> <p>(a) within a watercourse;</p> <p>(c) if no development setback has been adopted, within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse;</p> <p>g. <u>Northern Cape:</u></p> <p>ii. Outside urban areas:</p> <p>(ff) Critical biodiversity areas or ecosystem service areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans."</p>	<p>The access roads that will be established will cross over drainage lines and/or extend within 32m of a watercourse.</p> <p>The infrastructure required for the project will exceed 10 square metres in size and falls within a critical biodiversity area (CBA 1 and CBA 2) and may extend within 32m of a watercourse.</p> <p>The project specifications include: A 4m wide, access/service road, which will cross several drainage lines and their buffer zones (32m).</p>

<p><u>Listing Notice 3, Item 18(g)(ii)(ee):</u></p> <p><i>"The widening of a road by more than 4 metres, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre.</i></p> <p><i>g. Northern Cape:</i></p> <p><i>ii. Outside urban areas:</i></p> <p><i>(ee) Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans;"</i></p>	<p>Where possible, existing roads will be utilised as access roads. The authorised service track/ access road for the approved Gunstfontein OHL may be lengthened by 1km or more within CBA or ESA areas.</p>
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as described in the Basic Assessment Report (BAR) dated February 2021 at:

Farm name and number	SG 21 Code
RE Portion 1 of the Farm Orange Fontein No. 203	C07200000000020300001
RE of the Farm Annex Orange Fontein No. 185	C07200000000018500000
RE of the Farm Leeuwe Hoek No. 183	C07200000000018300000
The Farm De Hoop No. 202	C07200000000020200000

Grid connection extension coordinates (Preferred route alignment) (each node a bend point along the preferred powerline route within the 300m corridor)	Latitude	Longitude
	32°44'45.67"S	20°38'52.98"E
	32°44'47.97"S	20°38'49.93"E
	32°45'0.13"S	20°38'40.93"E
	32°46'41.76"S	20°38'28.30"E
	32°47'50.16"S	20°38'7.26"E
	32°48'28.90"S	20°37'36.22"E
	32°48'34.16"S	20°37'27.18"E
	32°48'35.40"S	20°37'26.89"E

- for the grid connection extension infrastructure for the Gunstfontein Wind Energy Facility near Sutherland within the Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality in the Northern Cape Province, hereafter referred to as "the property".

The facility will comprise the following:

- A single- or double-circuit 132kV overhead power line on a single set of pylon structures (up to 32m in height); and
- Associated infrastructure:
 - Laydown areas (temporary).
 - Access and service tracks.
 - A single 132kV incoming line bay at the Hidden Valley Substation of up to 0.1ha, located within the HV yard of the substation (the substation itself is separately authorised under the existing Environmental Authorisation for the Hidden Valley Substation).

A corridor 300m wide and approximately 7.5km long as well as a 200m wide assessment zone around each of the two substations was assessed, to allow for the optimisation of the grid extension and associated infrastructure and to accommodate environmental sensitivities. The grid extension infrastructure (including the powerline and associated infrastructure) will be developed along the exact route alignment (located within the assessed 300m corridor), as depicted in the final layout map. The powerline will be located parallel and approximately 15m away from an existing power line (currently under construction by Soetwater Wind Farm) that connects the Heuwels and Hidden Valley Substations.

This grid connection extension infrastructure will operate together with the authorised power line from the Gunstfontein Wind Farm (DFFE reference: 14/12/16/3/3/1/1619), in order to enable the Gunstfontein Wind Farm to connect to the national Eskom grid (i.e. by-passing Heuwels substation (no longer feasible) and extending the authorised grid connection to connect to the Hidden Valley substation, located on Karusa Wind Farm, approximately 7.5km south of the Heuwels substation).

Technical details of the grid connection extension infrastructure:

Component	Description/ Dimensions
Corridor width (for assessment purposes)	A 300m wide grid connection corridor and a 200m wide assessment zone around each of the existing substations was assessed within which the grid connection extension infrastructure will be constructed and operated. The corridor represents 150m on either side of the power line corridor centre line, increased to 200m around the Heuwels and Hidden Valley Substations. The exact alignment of the grid connection extension infrastructure is indicated in the

	final layout plan.
Powerline capacity	132kV (single- or double-circuit)
Tower height	Up to 32m
Powerline servitude width	Up to 40m
Pylon spacing along line	~250m apart
Approximate pylon foundation footprint	Accounting for crane disturbance during erection and stringing, the total disturbance footprint of each pylon will be ~25m x 25m (625m ²).
Length of the powerline	Approximately 7.5km

Conditions of this Environmental Authorisation

Scope of authorisation

1. The 132kV (single or double circuit) grid connection extension overhead powerline for the Gunstfontein Wind Energy Facility near Sutherland within Ward 3 of the Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality in the Northern Cape Province is approved, as per the geographic coordinates cited in the table above.
2. Authorisation of the activity is subject to the conditions contained in this Environmental Authorisation, which form part of the Environmental Authorisation and are binding on the holder of the authorisation.
3. The holder of the authorisation is responsible for ensuring compliance with the conditions contained in this Environmental Authorisation. This includes any person acting on the holder's behalf, including but not limited to, an agent, servant, contractor, sub-contractor, employee, consultant or person rendering a service to the holder of the authorisation.
4. The activities authorised may only be carried out at the property as described above.
5. Any changes to, or deviations from, the project description set out in this Environmental Authorisation must be approved, in writing, by the Department before such changes or deviations may be effected. In assessing whether to grant such approval or not, the Department may request such information as it deems necessary to evaluate the significance and impacts of such changes or deviations and it may be necessary for the holder of the authorisation to apply for further Environmental Authorisation in terms of the regulations.
6. The holder of an Environmental Authorisation must apply for an amendment of the Environmental Authorisation with the Competent Authority for any alienation, transfer or change of ownership rights in the property on which the activity is to take place.
7. This activity must commence within a period of ten (10) years from the date of issue of this Environmental Authorisation. If commencement of the activity does not occur within that period, the authorisation lapses and a new application for Environmental Authorisation must be made in order for the activity to be undertaken.
8. Construction must be completed within five (05) years of the commencement of the activity on site.

Notification of authorisation and right to appeal

9. The holder of the authorisation must notify every registered interested and affected party, in writing and within 14 (fourteen) calendar days of the date of this Environmental Authorisation, of the decision to authorise the activity.

10. The notification referred to must –
 - 10.1. specify the date on which the authorisation was issued;
 - 10.2. inform the interested and affected party of the appeal procedure provided for in the National Appeal Regulations, 2014;
 - 10.3. advise the interested and affected party that a copy of the authorisation will be furnished on request; and
 - 10.4. give the reasons of the Competent Authority for the decision.

Commencement of the activity

11. The authorised activity shall not commence until the period for the submission of appeals has lapsed as per the National Appeal Regulations, 2014, and no appeal has been lodged against the decision. In terms of Section 43(7), an appeal under Section 43 of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended will suspend the Environmental Authorisation or any provision or condition attached thereto. In the instance where an appeal is lodged you may not commence with the activity until such time that the appeal has been finalised.

Management of the activity

12. The final site layout/map titled: *Combined Layout and Sensitivity Map for the Grid Connection Extension Infrastructure for the Gunstfontein Wind Farm, Northern Cape* attached as Figure 8.1 of the BAR dated February 2021, and as Annexure 3 of this authorisation, and depicting the exact alignment of OHL and OHL access roads running along the length of the OHL, is approved.
13. The Generic Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) for the OHL submitted as part of the BAR dated February 2021 is approved and must be implemented and adhered to.
14. The EMPr must be implemented and strictly enforced during all phases of the project. It shall be seen as a dynamic document and shall be included in all contract documentation for all phases of the development when approved.
15. Changes to the approved EMPr must be submitted in accordance with the EIA Regulations applicable at the time.
16. The Department reserves the right to amend the approved EMPr should any impacts that were not anticipated or covered in the BAR be discovered.

Frequency and process of updating the EMPr

17. The EMPr must be updated where the findings of the environmental audit reports, contemplated in Condition 24 below, indicate insufficient mitigation of environmental impacts associated with the undertaking of the activity, or insufficient levels of compliance with the environmental authorisation or EMPr.
18. The updated EMPr must contain recommendations to rectify the shortcomings identified in the environmental audit report.
19. The updated EMPr must be submitted to the Department for approval together with the environmental audit report, as per Regulation 34 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended. The updated EMPr must have been subjected to a public participation process, which process has been agreed to by the Department, prior to submission of the updated EMPr to the Department for approval.
20. In assessing whether to grant approval of an EMPr which has been updated as a result of an audit, the Department will consider the processes prescribed in Regulation 35 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended. Prior to approving an amended EMPr, the Department may request such amendments to the EMPr as it deems appropriate to ensure that the EMPr sufficiently provides for avoidance, management and mitigation of environmental impacts associated with the undertaking of the activity.
21. The holder of the authorisation must apply for an amendment of an EMPr, if such amendment is required before an audit is required. The amendment process is prescribed in Regulation 37 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended. The holder of the authorisation must request comments on the proposed amendments to the impact management outcomes of the EMPr or amendments to the closure objectives of the closure plan from potentially interested and affected parties, including the competent authority, by using any of the methods provided for in the Act for a period of at least 30 days.

Monitoring

22. The holder of the authorisation must appoint an experienced Environmental Control Officer (ECO) for the construction phase of the development that will have the responsibility to ensure that the mitigation/rehabilitation measures and recommendations referred to in this environmental authorisation are implemented and to ensure compliance with the provisions of the approved EMPr.
 - 22.1. The ECO must be appointed before commencement of any authorised activities.
 - 22.2. Once appointed, the name and contact details of the ECO must be submitted to the *Director: Compliance Monitoring* of the Department.

- 22.3. The ECO must keep record of all activities on site, problems identified, transgressions noted and a task schedule of tasks undertaken by the ECO.
- 22.4. The ECO must remain employed until all rehabilitation measures, as required for implementation due to construction damage, are completed and the site is ready for operation.

Recording and reporting to the Department

- 23. All documentation e.g. audit/monitoring/compliance reports and notifications, required to be submitted to the Department in terms of this environmental authorisation, must be submitted to the *Director: Compliance Monitoring* of the Department.
- 24. The holder of the environmental authorisation must, for the period during which the environmental authorisation and EMPr remain valid, ensure that project compliance with the conditions of the environmental authorisation and the EMPr are audited, and that the audit reports are submitted to the Director: Compliance Monitoring of the Department.
- 25. The frequency of auditing must be as per the frequency indicated in the EMPr, and the of submission of the environmental audit reports must be monthly, taking into account the processes for such auditing as prescribed in Regulation 34 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended.
- 26. The holder of the authorisation must, in addition, submit an environmental audit report to the Department within 30 days of completion of the construction phase (i.e. within 30 days of site handover) and a final environmental audit report within 30 days of completion of rehabilitation activities.
- 27. The environmental audit reports must be compiled in accordance with Appendix 7 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended and must indicate the date of the audit, the name of the auditor and the outcome of the audit in terms of compliance with the environmental authorisation conditions as well as the requirements of the approved EMPr.
- 28. Records relating to monitoring and auditing must be kept on site and made available for inspection to any relevant and competent authority in respect of this development.

Notification to authorities

- 29. A written notification of commencement must be given to the Department no later than fourteen (14) days prior to the commencement of the activity. The notice must include a date on which it is anticipated that the activity will commence, as well as a reference number.

Operation of the activity

30. A written notification of operation must be given to the Department no later than fourteen (14) days prior to the commencement of the activity operational phase.

Site closure and decommissioning

31. Should the activity ever cease or become redundant, the holder of the authorisation must undertake the required actions as prescribed by legislation at the time and comply with all relevant legal requirements administered by any relevant and Competent Authority at that time.

Specific conditions


32. No activities, which require water use authorisation, must be allowed to encroach into a water resource without a water use authorisation being in place.
33. No pylons may be placed within the 32m buffer areas surrounding drainage lines and within 50m buffer areas surrounding confirmed and delineated valley bottom and seepage wetlands.
34. A pre-construction walk-through must be undertaken by a qualified ecologist or botanist to identify and locate species of conservation concern that can be trans-located. Permits must be obtained from all relevant Conservation Agencies and Departments, should the removal of protected species, medicinal plants and "data deficient" plant species be required.
35. A chance finds procedure must be developed and implemented in the event that archaeological or palaeontological resources are found during construction.
36. 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), unmarked human burials, fossils or other categories of heritage resources are found during the proposed development, the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) must be alerted immediately, and a professional archaeologist or palaeontologist, depending on the nature of the findings, must be contacted as soon as possible to inspect the findings.
37. The power line must be marked with bird diverters along all high-risk sections in order to make the lines as visible as possible to collision-susceptible species. Recommended bird diverters such as brightly coloured 'aviation' balls, thickened wire spirals, or flapping devices that increase the visibility of the lines should be fitted where considered necessary (collision hot-spots). These must be identified during a pre-construction walk-through by the avifauna specialist.

38. Vegetation clearing must be kept to an absolute minimum. Mitigation measures as specified in the EMPr dated February 2021 must be implemented to reduce the risk of erosion and the invasion of alien species.
39. No exotic plants may be used for rehabilitation purposes. Only indigenous plants of the area may be utilised.
40. Construction must include design measures that allow surface and subsurface movement of water along drainage lines so as not to impede natural surface and subsurface flows. Drainage measures must promote the dissipation of storm water run-off.
41. An integrated waste management approach must be implemented that is based on waste minimisation and must incorporate reduction, recycling, re-use and disposal where appropriate. Any solid waste must be disposed of at a landfill licensed in terms of Section 20 (b) of the National Environment Management Waste Act, 2008 (Act No.59 of 2008).

General

42. A copy of this Environmental Authorisation, the audit and compliance monitoring reports, and the approved EMPr, must be made available for inspection and copying-
 - 42.1. at the site of the authorised activity;
 - 42.2. to anyone on request; and
 - 42.3. where the holder of the Environmental Authorisation has a website, on such publicly accessible website.
43. National government, provincial government, local authorities or committees appointed in terms of the conditions of this authorisation or any other public authority shall not be held responsible for any damages or losses suffered by the holder of the authorisation or his/her successor in title in any instance where construction or operation subsequent to construction be temporarily or permanently stopped for reasons of non-compliance by the holder of the authorisation with the conditions of authorisation as set out in this document or any other subsequent document emanating from these conditions of authorisation.

Date of Environmental Authorisation: 28/05/2021



Mr Sabelo Malaza

Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

Annexure 1: Reasons for Decision

1. Information considered in making the decision

In reaching its decision, the Department took, *inter alia*, the following into consideration -

- a) The listed activities as applied for in the application form received on 04 September 2020.
- b) The information contained in the BAR dated February 2021.
- c) The comments received from Eskom, the South African Heritage Resources Agency, the Breede-Gouritz Catchment Management Agency, South African Radio Astronomy Observatory and interested and affected parties as included in the BAR dated February 2021.
- d) Mitigation measures as proposed in the BAR and the EMP.
- e) The information contained in the specialist studies contained within the appendices of the BAR dated February 2021 and as appears below:

Title	Prepared by	Date
Ecological Impact Assessment	3Foxes Biodiversity Solutions	August 2020 & layout confirmation dated December 2020
Avifaunal Impact Assessment	3Foxes Biodiversity Solutions	August 2020 & layout confirmation dated December 2020
Heritage Impact Assessment	CTS Heritage	April 2020 & layout confirmation dated December 2020

2. Key factors considered in making the decision

All information presented to the Department was taken into account in the Department's consideration of the application. A summary of the issues which, in the Department's view, were of the most significance is set out below.

- a) The findings of all the specialist studies conducted and their recommended mitigation measures.
- b) The need for the proposed project was adequately addressed. The 200MW Gunstfontein Wind Farm received an Environmental Authorisation in 2016, from the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) (DEFF ref.: 14/12/16/3/3/2/826). A second Environmental Authorisation for the Gunstfontein Grid Connection (14/12/16/3/3/1/1619), including switching station, 132kV overhead power line and ancillary infrastructure, was granted on 17 February 2017. The authorised grid connection infrastructure currently terminates at the Heuwels Substation (located on Soetwater Wind Farm),

however upon further investigation it was identified that the Heuwels substation will not have sufficient capacity to export the power from the Gunstfontein Wind Farm to the national grid. It was therefore necessary to by-pass Heuwels substation and extend the authorised grid connection to connect to the Hidden Valley substation (located on Karusa Wind Farm) located ~7.5km south of the Heuwels substation. This connection will operate together with the authorised power line from the Gunstfontein Wind Farm in order to enable the Gunstfontein Wind Farm to connect to the national Eskom grid. The need and desirability for the proposed project is therefore directly linked to the need for the Gunstfontein Wind Farm which was authorised in 2016, as the main purpose of the grid infrastructure is to connect this facility to the national grid at a feasible connection point (i.e. the Hidden Valley Substation). Given the relationship between, and the necessity of, the OHL for the authorised Gunstfontein Wind Farm, similar need and desirability considerations are applicable. From an overall environmental sensitivity and planning perspective, the grid connection extension supports the broader strategic context of the municipality as it is linked to a renewable energy facility which is considered a driver for economic growth in the region as per the Namaqua District Municipality's Integrated Development Plan. It is also in line with broader societal needs and the public interest as it is linked to a renewable energy facility, for which there is national policy and support.

- c) The BAR dated February 2021 identified all legislation and guidelines that have been considered in the preparation of the BAR.
- d) The location of the grid connection extension infrastructure.
- e) The methodology used in assessing the potential impacts identified in the BAR dated February 2021 and the specialist studies have been adequately indicated.
- f) A sufficient public participation process was undertaken and the applicant has satisfied the minimum requirements as prescribed in the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended for public involvement.

3. Findings

After consideration of the information and factors listed above, the Department made the following findings -

- a) The identification and assessment of impacts are detailed in the BAR dated February 2021 and sufficient assessment of the key identified issues and impacts have been completed.
- b) The procedure followed for impact assessment is adequate for the decision-making process.
- c) The information contained in the BAR dated February 2021 is deemed to be accurate and credible.
- d) The proposed mitigation of impacts identified and assessed adequately curtails the identified impacts. Mitigation measures recommended in the BAR and specialist studies was incorporated in the EMPr.

- e) EMPr measures for the pre-construction, construction and rehabilitation phases of the development were proposed and included in the BAR and will be implemented to manage the identified environmental impacts during the construction phase.

In view of the above, the Department is satisfied that, subject to compliance with the conditions contained in the environmental authorisation, the authorised activities will not conflict with the general objectives of integrated environmental management laid down in Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 and that any potentially detrimental environmental impacts resulting from the authorised activities can be mitigated to acceptable levels. The environmental authorisation is accordingly granted.

Annexure 3: Combined Layout Plan & Sensitivity Map

