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department of
economic, small business development,
tourism and environmental affairs
FREE STATE PROVINCE

Environmental Authorisation

Authorisation register number: EMB/11(i),24(ii),28,4(b)(i)(ee),12(b)(ii),18(b)(i)(ee)/23/30

Last amended: Second issue

Holder of authorisation: Damlaagte PV Facility Pty (Ltd)

Project activity description: Proposed activity 11(i),24(ii),28 of (Listing Notice 1; GNR 327) and activity 4(b)(i)(ee),12(b)(i)(ii),18(b)(i)(ee) of (Listing Notice 3; GNR 324)

The proposed development of grid connection infrastructure for the authorised Damlaagte Solar Power Facility.

Location of activity: On Portion 3 of the Farm Willow Grange No. 246, Farm Damlaagte No. 229, Farm Scafell No 448 and Portion 5 of the Proceedeerfontein No. 100 in Ngwathe Local Municipality.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
Department of Economic,
Small Business Development,
Tourism and Environmental Affairs

01 MAR 2024

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Decision

The Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA- 'the Department') is satisfied, on the basis of information available to it and subject to compliance with the conditions of this Environmental Authorisation (EA), that the applicant should be authorised to undertake the activity 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 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2014, as amended.

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

Activity authorised

By virtue of the powers conferred on it by the National Environmental Management Act ('NEMA'), Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended and GNR 326 of the 2014 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations as amended, the Department hereby authorises –

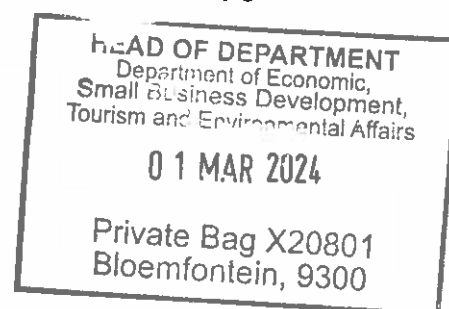
Damlaagte PV Facility Pty (Ltd) with the following contact details-

4th Floor Mariendahl House, Newlands on Main, Cnr Main Road and Campground, Claremont, Cape Town,
7735

Contact person: Gesie Theron

Contact Number: 021 657 4052/060 567 3616

Email Address: Gesie.Theron@mainstreamrp.com



to undertake the following activities (hereafter referred to as "the activity") indicated in Listing Notice 1 (GNR 327):

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Activity 11(i):

“the development of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity – outside urban areas or industrial complexes with a capacity of more than 33 but less than 275kV”;

Activity 24(ii):

“the development of a road with a reserve wider than 13.5 meters, or where, no reserve exists where the road is wider than 8 metres”;

Activity 28:

“the clearance of an area of 1 hectare or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation”;

Listing Notice 3 (GNR 324)

Activity 4(b)(i)(ee):

“the development of a road wider than 4 metres with a reserve less than 13.5 metres. Free State. Outside urban areas: Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans”.

Activity 12(b)(i)(ii):

“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 plan. Free State. Within any critically endangered or endangered ecosystem listed in terms of section 52 of the NEMBA or prior to the publication of such a list, within an area that has been identified as critically endangered in the National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment 2004. Within critical biodiversity areas identified in bioregional plans”;

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Activity 18(b)(i)(ee):

"the widening of a road by more than 4 metres, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre. Free State. Outside urban areas. Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans".

Site coordinates:

		Latitude (S)	Longitude (E)
Proposed 132 kV OHL to be rebuilt in the Eskom servitude.	Start:	26° 48' 8.734" S	27° 37' 37.859" E
	Middle:	26° 48' 21.842" S	27° 38' 0.126" E
	End point:	26° 48' 41.731" S	27° 38' 15.467" E
Proposed 132 KV from Damlaagte SEF to Eskom servitude.	Start:	26° 48' 2.093" S	27° 37' 40.469" E
	Middle:	26° 48' 5.705" S	27° 37' 39.997" E
	End point:	26° 48' 8.734" S	27° 37' 37.859" E

Activity description

- Damlaagte PV Facility (Pty) Ltd (Damlaagte PV Facility) is proposing the construction of a 1.73 km 132 kV Overhead Powerline (OHL), to connect the approved Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Facilities i.e. the Ilikwa Solar PV Facility (14/12/16/3/3/2/2077) and the Damlaagte Solar PV Facility (14/12/16/3/3/2/2078) to the existing Eskom Scafell Main Transmission Substation (MTS).
- The proposed development is located 19 km west of Sasolburg and 22 km north-east of Parys, within the Ngwathe Local Municipality of the Fezile Dabi District Municipality in the Free State Province.
- The proposed development will include a 1.7 km 132 kV OHL and associated access roads within the existing Eskom servitude that runs through the project area.

The granting of this EA is subject to the conditions set out below.

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Conditions of the Environmental Authorisation

Scope of Authorisation

- 1.1 Authorisation of the activity is subject to the conditions contained in this document. These conditions form part of the EA and are binding on the holder of the EA.
- 1.2 The holder of the EA shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with the conditions by any person acting on his or her behalf, including but not limited to, an agent, sub-contractor, employee or person rendering a service to the holder of the EA.
- 1.3 The authorised activity may only be carried out on Portion 3 of the Farm Willow Grange No. 246, Farm Damlaagte No. 229, Farm Scafell No 448 and Portion 5 of the Procceederfontein No. 100 in Ngwathe Local Municipality, as indicated above at the exact site co-ordinates.
- 1.4 Any changes to, or deviations from, the project description set out in this Authorisation must be approved, in writing, by the Department before such changes or deviations may be affected.
- 1.5 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 which may result in the holder of the EA to apply for further Authorisation in terms of NEMA (Act 107 of 1998) and the 2014 EIA Regulations as amended.
- 1.6 The holder of the EA must apply for an amendment of the EA with the Competent Authority for any alienation, transfer or change of ownership rights in the property on which the activity is to take place.
- 1.7 Commencement with one activity listed in terms of this EA constitutes commencement of all authorised activities.
- 1.8 This EA is valid for a period of 10 (ten) years from the date of issue. If commencement of the activity does not occur within that period, the EA lapses and a new application for an EA must be made.
- 1.9 This EA 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 this particular activity.

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Appeal of Authorisation

- 1.10 The holder of the EA must notify every registered interested and affected parties, in writing and within 14 (fourteen) calendar days of the date of this EA, of its decision to authorise the activity.
- 1.11 The notification referred must –
- 1.11.1 specify the date on which the EA was issued;
 - 1.11.2 inform the registered interested and affected parties of the appeal procedure provided for in National Appeal Regulations published in Government Gazette No. 38559 of 12 March 2015;
 - 1.11.3 advise the registered interested and affected parties that a copy of the Authorisation will be furnished on request; and
 - 1.11.4 give the reasons for the decision.
- 1.12 A person affected by the decision who wishes to appeal against the decision must lodge an appeal with the MEC of the Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs within 20 calendar days after being notified of the decision. The appeal should be directed to:

Attention: Mr. E. Ntjabane

MEC (DESTEA)

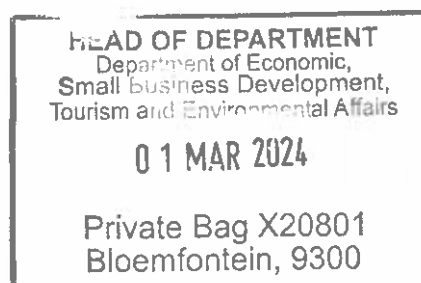
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- An appeal not submitted to the above mentioned address will not be regarded as valid.
- The applicant shall not commence with the proposed activity once an appeal has been lodged with the office of the MEC.

Management of the activity

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- 1.13 The Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) submitted as part of application for an EA is hereby approved.
- 1.14 The provisions of the EMPr included in the Final Basic Assessment Report (BAR) are an extension to the conditions of Authorisation, and non-compliance with the conditions of the EMPr would accordingly constitute non-compliance with the conditions of this EA.
- 1.15 Should there be a change of ownership and/or project developer, the Department must be notified within 30 (thirty) days prior to the change itself. Conditions imposed in this EA must be made known to the new owner and/or developer.
- 1.16 The recommendations and mitigation measures recorded in the Final Basic Assessment Report dated 12 September 2023 must be adhered to and incorporated as part of the EMPr where applicable.
- 1.17 Any updates or amendments to the EMPr must be submitted to the Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs and must be decided upon within a period of 30 days of the submission.

Monitoring

- 1.18 The applicant must appoint a suitably experienced Environmental Control Officer (ECO) for the construction and operation phase of the development that will have the responsibility to ensure that the mitigation / rehabilitation measures and recommendations referred to in this EA are implemented and to ensure compliance with the provisions of the EMPr.
- 1.19 The ECO shall be appointed before commencement of any construction activity.
- 1.20 The ECO shall keep record of all activities on site, problems identified, transgressions noted and a task schedule of tasks undertaken by the ECO.
- 1.21 The ECO shall remain employed until all rehabilitation measures, as required for implementations due to construction damage are completed and the site is ready for operation.
- 1.22 The ECO shall keep the records relating to monitoring and auditing on site and make them available for inspection to any relevant and Competent Authority in respect of this development.

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- 1.23 Construction and operation of the development may be temporarily or permanently stopped for reasons of non-compliance with the conditions of this particular EA as set out in this document or any other subsequent document emanating from the conditions of this EA.

Recording and reporting to the Department

- 1.24 The holder of the Authorisation must submit an environmental audit report to the Department within thirty (30) days upon completion of the construction and rehabilitation activities. The environmental audit report must –
- 1.24.1 Be compiled in accordance with Appendix 7 of the 2014 EIA Regulations 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 EA conditions as well as the requirements of the approved EMPr.
- 1.24.2 Be kept on site and be made available for inspection by any relevant and competent authority in respect of this development.

Commencement of the activity

- 1.25 The authorised activity shall not commence within twenty (20) days after the EA has been issued by the Department to allow the appeal process to proceed accordingly.
- 1.26 Should you be notified by the MEC of a suspension of the EA pending appeal procedures, you shall not commence with the activity unless authorised by the MEC in writing.

Notification to authorities

- 1.27 Fourteen (14) days prior written notice must be given to the Department that the activities will commence. Commencement for the purposes of this condition includes site preparation. The notice must include a date on which the construction of the activities will commence, as well as a reference number.

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Operation of the activity

- 1.28 Fourteen (14) days prior written notice must be given to the Department that the activities will commence with the operation.

Site closure and decommissioning

- 1.29 Should the activities ever cease or become redundant, the applicant shall 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.
- 1.30 Before decommissioning of the development becomes evident a rehabilitation plan must be compiled and should be approved by this Department.

Specific conditions

- 1.31 An integrated waste management approach that is based on waste minimisation must be implemented and must incorporate reduction, recycling, re-use and disposal where appropriate. Any solid waste shall 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) as amended.
- 1.32 Prior commencement of the proposed development, the applicant must ensure to obtain a Water Use License/General Authorisation from the Department of Water and Sanitation, for development occurring within 500m from wetland/waterbodies.
- 1.33 The applicant must ensure that solid general waste from construction phase is disposed of at a Licensed Waste Disposal Site.
- 1.34 The hazardous waste produced during the construction phase must be appropriately stored in bunded areas for removal by an appropriate contractor and subsequent disposal at a Licensed Hazardous Waste Disposal Facility.
- 1.35 The applicant must ensure to adhere to the conditions stipulated on the letter from Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) dated 04 September 2023.

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- 1.36 The design of the proposed grid connection must be of a type or similar structure as endorsed by the Eskom-EWT Strategic Partnership on Birds and Energy, considering the mitigation guidelines recommended by Birdlife South Africa.
- 1.37 The applicant must ensure that prior commencement of the proposed development, a search and rescue and removal permit is obtained for Species of Conservational Concern, which found on development footprint.
- 1.38 The applicant must ensure that the proposed development implement a comprehensive monitoring and eradication programme to ensure that invasive plant species are removed from the area and prevented from re-establishing.
- 1.39 The applicant must ensure that dust suppression measures are undertaken during construction phase.
- 1.40 The applicant must ensure that no movement of construction personnel or equipment are allowed to occur, within 32m buffer from edges of valley bottom wetlands found in the investigation area of the proposed development.
- 1.41 If any evidence of archaeological sites or artefacts, paleontological fossils, graves or other heritage resources is found during construction, South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) and archaeologist and / palaeontologist, must be informed immediately depending on the nature of the findings.
- 1.42 The applicant must ensure to adhere to the recommendations of all specialist studies conducted for the proposed development.

General Conditions

- 1.43 A copy of the EA must be kept at the property where the activities will be carried on. The EA must be produced to any authorised official of the Department who requests to see it and must be made available for inspection by any employee or agent of the holder of the EA who works or undertakes work at the property.
- 1.44 Where any of the applicant's contact details change, including the name of the responsible person, the physical or postal address and/or telephonic details, the applicant must notify the Department as soon as the new details become known to the applicant.

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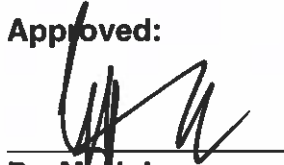
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- 1.45 The applicant is responsible for compliance with the provisions for Duty-of-Care and remediation of damage contained in Section 28 and Emergency Incidents contained in Section 30 of the National Environmental Management Act, (Act no 107 of 1998).
- 1.46 The holder of the EA must notify the Department, in writing within 48 (forty-eight) hours, if any condition of this EA cannot be or is not adhered to. Any notification in terms of this condition must be accompanied by reasons for the non-compliance.
- 1.47 Non-compliance with a condition of the EA may result in criminal prosecution or other actions provided for in the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 and the 2014 EIA Regulations as amended.
- 1.48 The Department shall not be held responsible for any damages or losses suffered by the applicant or his successor.

Approved:



Dr. M. Nokwequ

HOD: Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (PESTEA)

Date of the EA: 1/3/2024



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Annexure 1: Reasons for Decision

1. Background

The applicant, **Damlaagte PV Facility Pty (Ltd)**, applied for an Authorisation to commence with activity 11(i),24(ii),28 of (Listing Notice 1; GNR 327) and activity 4(b)(i)(ee),12(b)(ii),18(b)(i)(ee) of (Listing Notice 3; GNR 324) of the 2014 EIA Regulations as amended, described in the Final Basic Assessment Report (BAR) dated 12 September 2023, as the proposed development of grid connection infrastructure for the Damlaagte Solar PV facility near Parys in Ngwathe Local Municipality.

The applicant appointed SLR Consulting to undertake Environmental Impact Assessment process for the activities as required by Regulation 21 of the 2014 EIA Regulations as amended.

2. Information considered in making the decision

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

- a) The listed activity as applied for in the application form received on 04 August 2023.
- b) The information contained in the Final Basic Assessment Report (BAR) dated 12 September 2023 completed by **SLR Consulting**.
- c) Comments received from the interested and affected parties as included in the Final BAR dated 12 September 2023.
- d) Mitigation measures as proposed in the Final Basic Assessment Report (BAR) dated 12 September 2023 and the EMPr.
- e) The objectives and requirements of relevant legislation, policies and guidelines and Section 2 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998).
- f) The findings of the site inspection were undertaken by Ms. D. Mokoena from the Department on the 09 October 2023.



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3. 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) Details provided of the qualifications of the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) indicated the EAP is competent to carry out the Environmental Impact Assessment procedures.
- b) The findings of all the specialist studies conducted and their recommended mitigation measures.
- c) The need for the proposed development is to provide additional infrastructure to the Damlaagte Solar PV Facility.
- d) The Final BAR dated 12 September 2023 identified all legislation and guidelines that have been considered in the preparation of the BAR.
- e) The methodology used in assessing the potential impacts identified in the Final BAR dated 12 September 2023 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 2014 EIA Regulations as amended for public involvement.
- g) Recommendations made by the EAP in the Final BAR, feasible and reasonable alternative options including the no-go were investigated as part of the assessment process.

4. Findings

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

- (a) The need for the development has been identified.
- (b) The identification and assessment of impacts are detailed in the Final BAR dated 12 September 2023 and sufficient assessment of the key identified issues and impacts have been completed.

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- (c) The procedure followed for impact assessment is adequate for the decision-making process.
- (d) The proposed mitigation of impacts identified and assessed adequately curtails the identified impacts.
- (e) EMPr measures for the pre-construction, construction, operation and rehabilitation phases of the development were proposed and included in the Final BAR and will be implemented to manage the identified environmental impacts throughout the life span of the project.
- (f) Adequate process in line with law and legislation for public participation process was undertaken and the EAP has met the minimum requirements as prescribed in the 2014 EIA Regulations as amended.

In view of the above, the Department is satisfied that, subject to compliance with the conditions contained in the Environmental Authorisation, the proposed activities will not conflict with the general objectives of integrated environmental management laid down in Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and that any potential detrimental environmental impacts resulting from the proposed activities can be mitigated to acceptable levels, therefore the application is accordingly granted.



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