



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: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2077

Enquiries: Thabile Sangweni

Telephone: (012) 399 9409 E-mail: TSangweni@dfre.gov.za

Mr Eugene Marais
South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd.
PO Box 45063
CAPE TOWN
7800

Telephone Number: (021) 657 4045
Email Address: eugene.marais@mainstreamrp.com

PER EMAIL

Dear Mr Marais

APPLICATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION IN TERMS OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACT, ACT NO. 107 OF 1998, AS AMENDED: FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ILIKWA SOLAR PV FACILITY, FREE STATE 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 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 stipulates 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 abuses or compromises 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 prescribe 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 organ of state with interest in the matter within 20 (twenty) 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@dfre.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



Ms Millicent Solomons
Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
Date: 14/03/2022.

cc:	Stuart Heather-Clark	SLR Consulting Africa (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd	Email: schlark@slrconsulting.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 development of the Ilikwa Solar PV Facility, Free State Province

Fezile Dabi District Municipality

Authorisation register number:	<i>14/12/16/3/3/2/2077</i>
Last amended:	<i>First issue</i>
Holder of authorisation:	<i>South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd.</i>
Location of activity:	<i>Proceederfontein 100 Portion 5 Ngwathe Local Municipality Fezile Dabi District Municipality Free State Province</i>

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.

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 –

SOUTH AFRICA MAINSTREAM RENEWABLE POWER DEVELOPMENTS (PTY) LTD

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

with the following contact details –

Mr Eugene Marais

South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd.

PO Box 45063

CAPE TOWN

7800

Telephone Number: (021) 657 4045

Cell Number: 073 871 5781

Email Address: eugene.marais@mainstreamrp.com

to undertake the following activities (hereafter referred to as "the activity") indicated in Listing Notice 1, Listing Notice 2 and Listing Notice 3 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended:

Activity number	Activity description
<u>Listing Notice 1, Item 11:</u> <i>"The development of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity (i) outside urban areas or industrial complexes with a capacity of more than 33 but less than 275 kilovolts."</i>	The solar PV facility will require the construction and operation of internal distribution electrical infrastructure which is required to connect the Ilikwa Solar PV Facility components internally and to the IPP portion of the onsite substation. The IPP portion of the onsite substation will be rated as 33/132kV and the internal cabling will be up to 132kV.
<u>Listing Notice 1, Item 12:</u> <i>"The development of infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 100 square metres or more where such development occurs within a watercourse or within 32 m of a watercourse."</i>	The physical footprint of internal access roads and electrical cabling required to connect the various PV facility infrastructure and components will be confirmed once final designs have been provided. However, these will be located within 32m of delineated watercourses on site. It is possible that access roads or other associated infrastructure would need to cross watercourses/drainage lines located within the vicinity of the project site to gain access to the development area.
<u>Listing Notice 1, Item 14:</u> <i>"The development and related operation of facilities or infrastructure, for the storage, or for the storage and handling, of a dangerous good, where such good occurs in containers with a combined storage capacity of 80 cubic metres or more but not exceeding 500 cubic metres."</i>	The proposed project would require the storage and handling of dangerous goods, which could include fuels (i.e., diesel or petrol for the operation of machinery and equipment etc.), lubricants and materials for the BESS. The storage capacity for the dangerous goods associated with the proposed project is not anticipated to exceed 500 cubic metres.

<u>Listing Notice 1, Item 19:</u> <i>"The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 90 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; but excluding where such infilling, depositing, dredging, excavation, removal or moving –</i> <i>a) will occur behind a development setback;</i> <i>b) is for maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan;</i> <i>c) falls within the ambit of activity 21 in this Notice, in which case that activity applies;</i> <i>d) occurs within existing ports or harbours that will not increase the development footprint of the port or harbour; or</i> <i>where such development is related to the development of a port or harbour, in which case activity 26 in Listing Notice 2 of 2014 applies."</i>	It is possible that access roads or other associated infrastructure being proposed would need to cross watercourses/drainage lines located within the vicinity of the project site, to provide access to the development footprint.
<u>Listing Notice 1, Item 24:</u> <i>"The development of a road where the road is wider than 8 metres."</i>	It is possible that access roads or other associated infrastructure being proposed would need to cross watercourses/drainage lines located within the vicinity of the project site, in order to provide access to the development footprint.
<u>Listing Notice 1, Item 28:</u> <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 and where such development:</i> <i>(ii) will occur outside an urban area, where the total land to be developed is bigger than 1 hectare."</i>	The proposed project would be established on land previously used for agriculture on or after 01 April 1998 and the total area required for the proposed development is in excess of 1ha.

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<u>Listing Notice 1, Item 56:</u> <i>"The widening of a road by more than 6 m, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 km –</i> <i>(ii) where no reserve exists, where the existing road is wider than 8 m."</i>	The proposed project would require the widening of existing roads (for which there is no road reserve) up to 12m. The access roads would be constructed during the construction phase of the proposed project.
<u>Listing Notice 2, Item 1:</u> <i>"The development of facilities or infrastructure for the generation of electricity where the electricity output is 20 megawatts or more."</i>	The proposed project will have a generating capacity of up to 100MWac.
<u>Listing Notice 2, Item 15:</u> <i>"The clearance of an area of 20 hectares or more of indigenous vegetation."</i>	The construction of the proposed project will require the clearance of 180ha.
<u>Listing Notice 3, Item 4:</u> <i>"The development of a road wider than 4 metres within a reserve of less than 13.5 metres within</i> <i>(b) the Free State Province,</i> <i>(i) outside urban areas, and</i> <i>(ee) within critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans."</i>	The proposed project will require the construction of a main access road with a width of up to 12m and internal access roads with a width of up to 5m, outside an urban area in the Free State Province. The main access road may be required to traverse a CBA 2 area, identified in terms of the Free State Biodiversity Plan (2015), in order to provide access to the project site of the proposed development.
<u>Listing Notice 3, Item 10:</u> <i>"The development and related operation of facilities or infrastructure for the storage, or storage and handling of a dangerous good, where such storage occurs in containers with a combined capacity of 30 but not exceeding 80 cubic metres in</i> <i>(b) the Free State Province,</i> <i>(i) outside an urban area</i> <i>(hh) within 100 metres from the edge of a watercourse or wetland."</i>	The proposed project will require the development of storage and operation facilities for dangerous substances with a capacity exceeding 80 cubic metres, outside of an urban area in the Free State Province. It is possible that the dangerous goods and storage facility will be located within 100m from the edge of a wetland located adjacent to the project site of the proposed project.

<u>Listing Notice 3, Item 12:</u> <i>"The clearance of area of 300 square metres or more of indigenous vegetation in</i> <i>(b) the Free State Province, within</i> <i>(iv) within 100 metres from the edge of a watercourse or wetland."</i>	The proposed project will require the clearance of up 162ha of indigenous vegetation within the project site in the Free State Province, and within 100m from the edge of a wetland located outside of the boundaries of the project site.
<u>Listing Notice 3, Item 14:</u> <i>"The development of,</i> <i>(ii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 10 square metres or more where such development</i> <i>(c) occurs within 32 m from edge of a watercourse, (b) in the Free State Province,</i> <i>(i) outside of an urban area,</i> <i>(ff) within critical biodiversity areas as identified by systematic biodiversity plans."</i>	The proposed project will require the development of infrastructure with a footprint in excess of 10m² which is located within 32m from the edge of a watercourse in the Free State Province, outside of an urban area.

as described in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) dated October 2021 at:

SG 21 Code

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Centre coordinates of the site	Latitude	Longitude
	26°48'52.65"S	27°37'38.70"E

- for the development of the Ilikwa Solar PV Facility in the Free State Province, hereafter referred to as "the property".

The Ilikwa Photovoltaic Solar Energy Facility will comprise the following:

Solar Arrays

- Monofacial/Bifacial and Fixed Tilt or Tracking Solar PV Panel Modules;
- Single Axis Tracking, Dual Axis Tracking or Fixed Axis Mounting System Technology;
- Underground Direct Current (DC) and Alternating Current (AC) cables of up to 33kV; and
- Centralised or String Inverter Stations and Power Transformers.

Building Infrastructure

- Operational Control Centre;
- Operation and Maintenance Area/Warehouse/Workshop/Control Centre and Office;
- Ablution Facilities;
- A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (i.e., solid state or redox flow batteries); and
- Substation Building.

Electrical Infrastructure

- A 33/132kV on-site IPP Substation (including associated equipment and infrastructure); and
- Underground cabling and overhead power lines (up to 33kV).

Associated Infrastructure

- A main access road to provide access to the project site with a width of up to 12m;
- Internal access roads with a width of up to 5m to provide access to the PV Panel Array;
- Fencing and Lighting;
- Lightning Protection Infrastructure;
- Permanent Laydown Area;
- Temporary Construction Camp and Laydown Area;
- Telecommunication Infrastructure; and
- A 400m³ reservoir, water pipeline and stormwater channels.

Conditions of this Environmental Authorisation

Scope of authorisation

1. The development of the Ilkwa Solar PV Facility in the Free State 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.
9. Commencement with one activity listed in terms of this Environmental Authorisation constitutes commencement of all authorised activities.

Notification of authorisation and right to appeal

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

Commencement of the activity

12. 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

13. The layout plan titled "Indicative Layout Map for the Ilikwa Solar PV Facility" prepared by SLR Consulting (Africa) (Pty) Ltd and dated 10/09/2021 is hereby approved.
14. The Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) titled "CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME FOR THE ILIKWA SOLAR PV FACILITY, FREE STATE PROVINCE" submitted as part of the EIAr dated October 2021 is approved and must be implemented and adhered to.
15. The Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) titled "Generic EMPr for the Ilikwa Solar PV Facility Switching Substation" submitted as part of the EIAr dated October 2021 is approved and must be implemented and adhered to.
16. Changes to the approved EMPr must be submitted in accordance with the EIA Regulations applicable at the time.
17. The Department reserves the right to amend the approved EMPr should any impacts that were not anticipated or covered in the EIAr be discovered.

Frequency and process of updating the EMPr

18. The EMPr must be updated where the findings of the environmental audit reports, contemplated in Condition 25 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.
19. The updated EMPr must contain recommendations to rectify the shortcomings identified in the environmental audit report.
20. 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.

21. 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.
22. 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

23. 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.
 - 23.1. The ECO must be appointed before commencement of any authorised activities.
 - 23.2. Once appointed, the name and contact details of the ECO must be submitted to the *Director: Compliance Monitoring* of the Department.
 - 23.3. The ECO must keep record of all activities on site, problems identified, transgressions noted and a task schedule of tasks undertaken by the ECO.
 - 23.4. 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

24. 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.

25. 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.
26. The frequency of auditing and of submission of the environmental audit reports must be as per the frequency indicated in the EMPr, taking into account the processes for such auditing as prescribed in Regulation 34 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended.
27. The holder of the authorisation must, in addition, submit environmental audit reports 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.
28. 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.
29. 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

30. A written notification of commencement must be given to the Department no later than fourteen (14) days prior to the commencement of the activity. Commencement for the purposes of this condition includes site preparation. 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

31. 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

32. 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.
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Specific conditions

33. A 50m buffer zone must be maintained around the wetlands.
34. Any construction work located near an identified wetland must be undertaken during the dry, winter months when surface flow is very low within the freshwater ecosystem to avoid runoff of sediment to downgradient freshwater ecosystems.
35. The assessed unchanneled valley bottom wetland and associated 32m NEMA Zone of Regulation (ZoR) must be clearly demarcated with a danger tape by the Environmental Control Officer (ECO) and marked as a 'No-go' area where no construction activities are planned.
36. All stockpiles must not be higher than 2m and must remain outside the delineated extent of the wetland including its associated 32m NEMA ZoR. Stockpiling of removed materials must only be temporary (must only be stockpiled during the period of construction) and must be disposed of at a registered waste disposal facility.
37. No activities will be allowed to encroach into a water resource without a Water Use License being in place from the Department of Water and Sanitation.
38. A 30m buffer must be implemented around the recorded cemetery. An access gate for family members must be included.
39. A permit must be obtained from the relevant nature conservation agency for the removal or destruction of indigenous, protected or endangered plant or animal species and a copy of such permit/s must be submitted to the Department for record keeping. Copies of the permit/s must be included in the final EMPr to be submitted to this Department for approval before commencement of construction activities.
40. No exotic plants may be used for rehabilitation purposes. Only indigenous plants of the area may be utilised.
41. Vegetation clearing must be kept to an absolute minimum. Mitigation measures as specified in the EIAr dated October 2021 must be implemented to reduce the risk of erosion and the invasion of alien species.
42. 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.
43. 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

44. A copy of this Environmental Authorisation, the audit and compliance monitoring reports, and the approved EMP, must be made available for inspection and copying-
- 44.1. at the site of the authorised activity;
 - 44.2. to anyone on request; and
 - 44.3. where the holder of the Environmental Authorisation has a website, on such publicly accessible website.
45. 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: 14/03/2022.



Ms Millicent Solomons

Acting 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 23 June 2021.
- b) The information contained in the EIAr dated October 2021.
- c) The comments received from the Free State Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, the Ngwathe Local Municipality, BirdLife South Africa, Telkom, the Department of Water and Sanitation, the South African Civil Aviation Authority, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, SAHRA and interested and affected parties as included in the EIAr dated October 2021.
- d) Mitigation measures as proposed in the EIAr and the EMPr.
- e) The information contained in the specialist studies contained within the appendices of the EIAr dated October 2021.

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 stems from the provision of electricity to the national grid.
- c) The EIAr dated October 2021 identified all legislation and guidelines that have been considered in the preparation of the EIAr.
- d) The methodology used in assessing the potential impacts identified in the EIAr dated October 2021 and the specialist studies have been adequately indicated.
- e) 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.

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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 EIAr dated October 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 EIAr dated October 2021 is deemed to be accurate and credible.
- d) The proposed mitigation of impacts identified and assessed adequately curtails the identified impacts.
- e) EMPr measures for the pre-construction, construction and rehabilitation phases of the development were proposed and included in the EIAr 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.