



7 June 2023
583169

Assistant Director
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisation
Cnr. Steve Biko and Soutpansberg Road
473 Steve Biko, Arcadia,
Pretoria, 8000

Attention: Mohammad Essop

Dear Mohammed

Scoping Report for the Skilpad Solar Energy Facility and Associated Infrastructure, Northern Cape Province: Site Sensitivity Verification Report and Web Based Environmental Screening Tool Report

1. Introduction

South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd (Mainstream) proposes to develop the Hanover Cluster (the Cluster) of renewable energy facilities, located ~ 15 km west of the town of Hanover, in the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality (PKSDM), Northern Cape Province. The Cluster extends across 21 farms and has a total development area of ~27 918 ha (279 km²) (see Figure 1).

The Cluster is comprised of 11 renewable energy facilities comprising seven Solar Energy Facilities (SEFs), four Wind Energy Facilities (WEFs), 12 Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), and 12 substations (11 on-site substations and one Main Transmission Substation [MTS]). The components of the project are shown in Figure 2.

The associated infrastructure comprises access roads and grid connections to evacuate energy from each SEF and WEF to the national grid.

Partners R Armstrong, P Aucamp, JS Bartels, CM Bauman, N Brien, LSE Coetser, CD Dalglish, IT Doku, BM Engelsman, R Gardiner, M Hinsch, SG Jones, W Jordaan, WC Joughin, DA Kilian, F Lake, JA Lake, LM Linzer, NG Macfarlane, V Maharaj, I Mahomed, JI Mainama, HAC Meintjes, MJ Morris, DH Mossop, GP Nel, RD O'Brien, VS Reddy, PJ Shepherd, T Shepherd, MJ Sim, JS Stiff, M van Huyssteen, AT van Zyl, MD Wanless, ML Wertz

Directors R Armstrong, V Maharaj, TJ McGurk, VS Reddy, T Shepherd, JS Stiff, AT van Zyl

Associate Partners PL Burmeister, LI Boshoff, T Claassen, SA de Villiers, M du Toit, AM Robertshaw, N Rump, LC Shand, LH Spies, JM Walls

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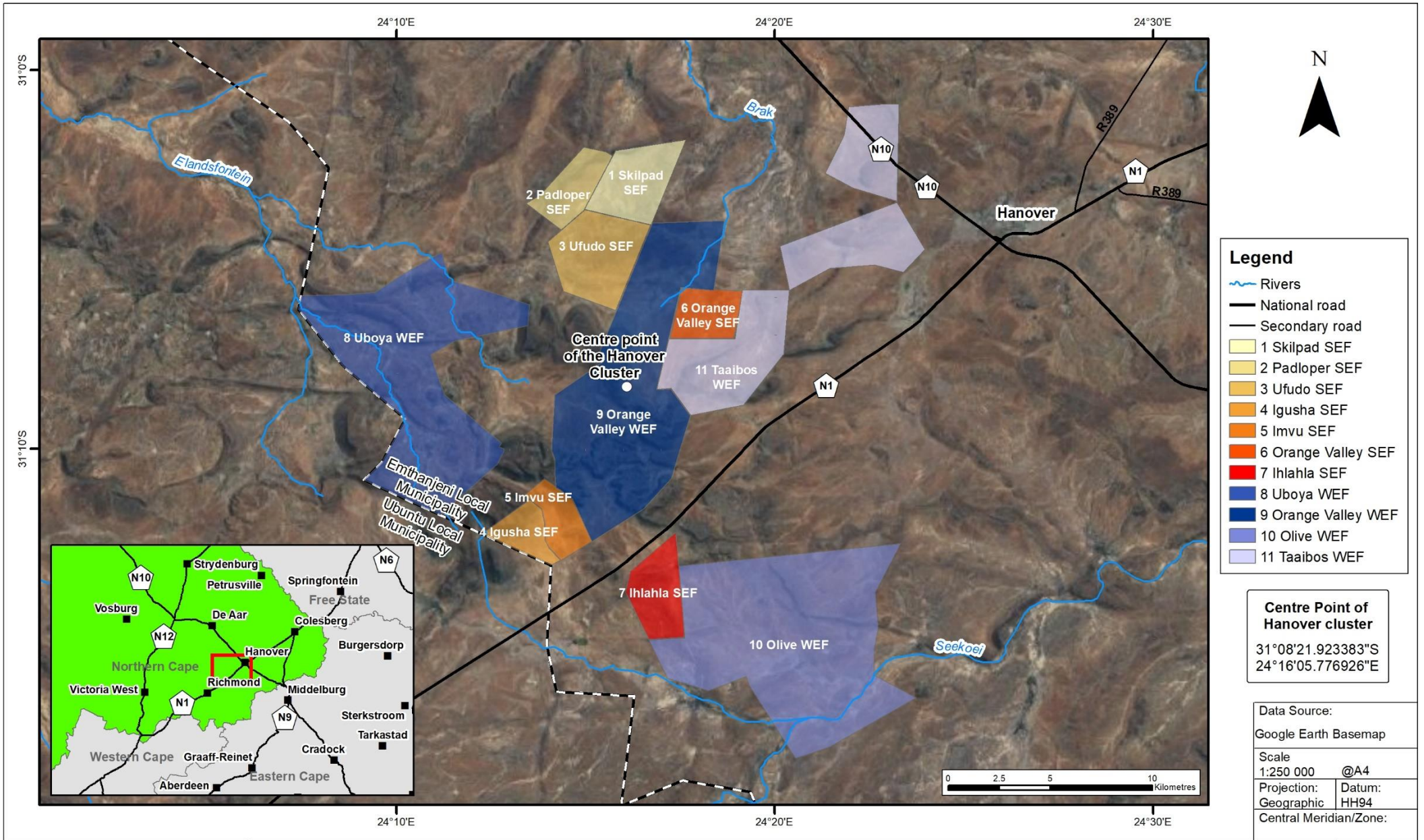
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HANOVER RENEWABLE ENERGY CLUSTER LOCALITY MAP



SRK Consulting (South Africa) Pty Ltd (SRK) has been appointed by Mainstream to undertake the Scoping and Environmental Impact Reporting (S&EIR) and Basic Assessment (BA) processes for projects in the Cluster, required in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014 published in terms of the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA), in support of the applications for Environmental Authorisation (EA).

Separate EAs are sought for the following projects in the Hanover Cluster:

- 7 x SEFs, each including 33 kV powerlines, BESS and an on-site substation;
- 4 x WEFs, each including 33 kV powerlines, BESS and an on-site substation;
- 11 x 132 kV powerlines connecting each on-site substation to the MTS; and
- 1 x MTS, BESS and two alternative 400 kV lines that will tie into existing 400 kV powerlines.

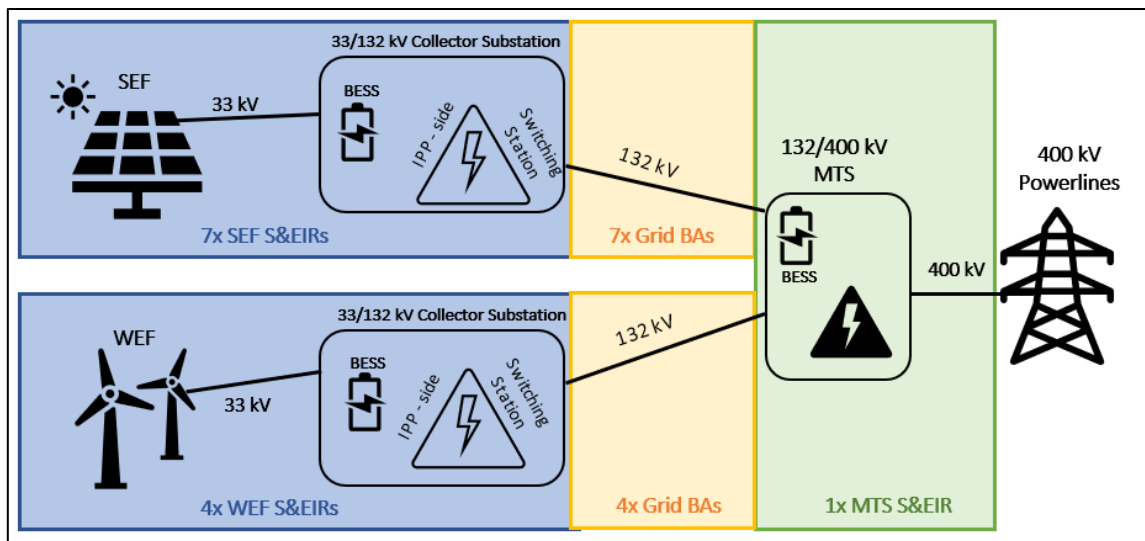


Figure 2: Hanover Cluster project components

This Site Sensitivity Verification Report, **applicable to the Skilpad SEF**, comprises:

Section 1: Introduction

Provides an introduction and background to the proposed project and outlines the purpose of this document and the assumptions and limitation applicable to the study.

Section 2: Site Sensitivity Verification

Describes site sensitivity verification assessments already undertaken and motivates which specialist studies will or will not be undertaken.

Section 3: Proposed Specialist Studies / Input

Presents specialist studies which have been or will be conducted for the EIA.

Appendix A

Provides the formal national web based Environmental Screening Tool Report (Screening Tool Report), which (remotely) assesses site sensitivity and recommends specialist studies.

2. Site Sensitivity Verification

In terms of Regulation 16(1)(b)(v) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, an application for EA must include “the report generated by the national web based environmental screening tool” (Screening Tool). In fulfilment of this requirement, the Screening Tool Report is appended (Appendix A). The Screening Tool Report provides site sensitivity screening results (per identified theme), and a list of recommended specialist studies.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) have advised that it is the responsibility of the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) and / or a specialist to confirm whether the specialist studies identified by the Screening Tool Report must be conducted or provide a motivation as to why the specialist studies will not be conducted as part of the EA Application process. Confirmation of the sensitivity of the project site and need for specialist studies, is presented below.

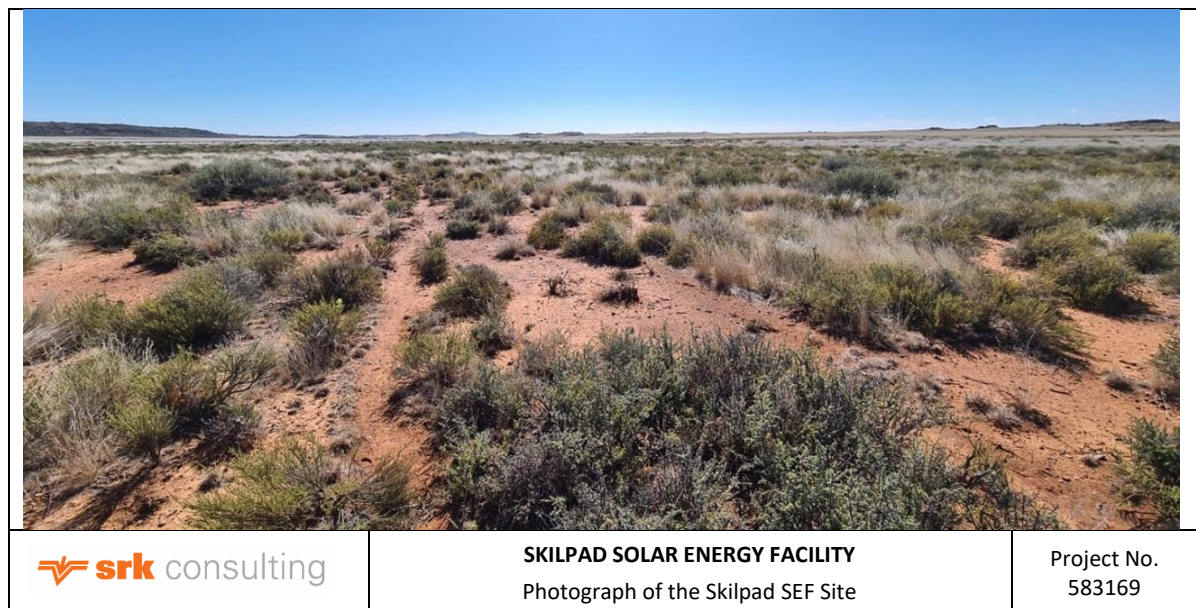
2.1 Specialist Site Sensitivity Verification Assessments

The following specialists undertook site sensitivity verification assessments, which informed the level of specialist assessment provided.

Table 1: Specialists who provided site sensitivity verification and assessments

Theme Verified	Company	Name	Assessment Undertaken
Agriculture	The Biodiversity Company	Andrew Husted Dr Matthew Mamera	Land Capability and Agricultural Potential Compliance Statement
Animal species Plant species Aquatic Biodiversity Terrestrial Biodiversity	The Biodiversity Company	Andrew Husted Dr Mahomed Desai Martinus Erasmus Michael Ryan	Terrestrial & Aquatic Biodiversity
Avian	Chris van Rooyen Consulting	Chris van Rooyen	Avifauna
Socio-Economic	SLR	Sue Reuther	Socio-Economic
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Palaeontology	Beyond Heritage	Jaco van der Walt Prof. Marion Bamford	Archaeology, Palaeontology and Heritage
Landscape (Solar) Theme	SRK	Kelly Armstrong	Visual

Based on experience and the site sensitivities contained in the Screening Tool Report, SRK has commissioned various specialist studies. However, SRK does not believe that all of the specialist studies listed in the Screening Tool Report (Appendix A) are required when the sensitivity indicated is low, and does not require legislative confirmation (e.g. Civil Aviation).




	SKILPAD SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY Photograph of the Skilpad SEF Site	Project No. 583169
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Figure 3: Photograph of the Skilpad SEF site

2.2 Motivation for Proposed Specialist Studies

A list of the specialist studies undertaken, and a motivation as to why certain specialist studies will not be undertaken, based on site sensitivity verification, is provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Site sensitivity verification and motivation for or against specialist assessment

Environmental Themes	Screening Sensitivity	Sensitivity Verification	Motivation for or Against Specialist Assessment
Agricultural Theme	Medium	Medium	The site is characterised with a “L6” land capability associated with non-arable soils. The development area is largely categorised as “Very Low” to “Low” with some areas “Medium”. A Soil and Land Capability Compliance Statement has been commissioned to inform the S&EIR.
Animal Species Theme	High	High	The site is confirmed as highly sensitive with regards to Animal Species as SCC were recorded on site <i>Redunca fulvorufula</i> (Southern Mountain Reedbuck), <i>Neotis ludwigii</i> (Ludwig’s Bustard), <i>Aquila rapax</i> (Tawny Eagle), <i>Falco biarmicus</i> (Lanner Falcon), and <i>Aquila verreauxii</i> (Verreaux’s Eagle). A Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment, including the Animal Species reporting requirements, has been commissioned to inform the S&EIR.
Aquatic Biodiversity Theme	Very High	Very High	Drainage areas on the site were confirmed by the specialists to be of very high ecological importance, with high habitat connectivity serving as functional ecological corridors. These areas have low resilience to disturbance. A Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment, including the Aquatic Biodiversity reporting requirements, has been commissioned to inform the S&EIR.
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Theme	Low	Low	The site visit suggests that the site sensitivity is considered “Low” with relatively few archaeological sites and materials, or other cultural heritage resources present in the Skilpad SEF development envelope. Nevertheless, a Heritage Impact Assessment has been commissioned to inform the S&EIR.
Avian Theme	Low	High	The site is confirmed as highly sensitive with regards to Avifauna as SCC were recorded on site <i>Neotis ludwigii</i> (Ludwig’s Bustard), <i>Aquila rapax</i> (Tawny Eagle), <i>Falco biarmicus</i> (Lanner Falcon), and <i>Aquila verreauxii</i> (Verreaux’s Eagle) and based on data available (e.g. SABAP2). An Avifaunal Impact Assessment has been commissioned to inform the S&EIR.
Civil Aviation (Solar PV) Theme	Low	Low	No major civil aviation aerodromes are located near the Skilpad SEF. No Civil Aviation Report is considered necessary to inform the S&EIR.
Defence Theme	Low	Low	No major defence installations are known to be located near the Skilpad SEF. No Defence Report is considered necessary to inform the S&EIR.
Landscape (Solar) Theme	Very High	High	A Visual Impact Assessment has been commissioned to inform the S&EIR. The landscape around the project has a limited capability to conceal the proposed project that has a low landscape integrity and is expected to be very different to the existing landscape. With the moderate visual exposure, viewer sensitivity and visibility distance, the project area is considered to have a high sensitivity.
Palaeontology Theme	Very High	High	A Palaeontological Impact Assessment has been commissioned to inform the S&EIR. The relevant geological chart and the SAHRIS palaeo-sensitivity map both indicate the presence of sediments of high palaeontological sensitivity underlying the Skilpad SEF development envelope. This is

Environmental Themes	Screening Sensitivity	Sensitivity Verification	Motivation for or Against Specialist Assessment
			supported by the results of the palaeontological site visit and confirms that the site has a high palaeontological sensitivity.
Plant Species Theme	Medium	High	Two SCCs were recorded during the Ecologist's site survey; <i>Hereroa concava</i> and <i>Gethyllis longistyla</i> confirming a high site sensitivity. A Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment, including the Plant Species reporting requirements, has been commissioned to inform the S&EIR.
RFI Theme	Medium	Low	No RFI-sensitive installations are located near the Skilpad SEF, and therefore no RFI Report is considered necessary to inform the S&EIR.
Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme	Very High	Very High	A Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment has been commissioned to inform the S&EIR. Of the four terrestrial habitat types identified in the site, two: Mountains and Ridges (represented on site by mesas and inselbergs) and Rocky Slopes were both rates as having very high ecological important and very low resilience to disturbance.

3. Proposed Specialist Studies / Input

To summarise, the following specialist studies have been conducted to inform this project:

- Land Capability and Agricultural Potential Compliance Statement;
- Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment (including aquatic biodiversity);
- Avifauna Impact Assessment;
- Socio-Economic Impact Assessment;
- Heritage Impact Assessment, including a Paleontological Impact Assessment;
- Visual Impact Assessment; and
- Traffic Impact Assessment.

Yours faithfully,

SRK Consulting (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd

Prepared by

Reviewed by

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Kelly Armstrong
 Environmental Consultant

Sharon Jones
 Principal Environmental Consultant

Statement of SRK Independence

Neither SRK nor any of the authors of this Report have any material present or contingent interest in the outcome of this Report, nor do they have any pecuniary or other interest that could be reasonably regarded as being capable of affecting their independence or that of SRK.

SRK has no beneficial interest in the outcome of the assessment which is capable of affecting its independence.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this report have been based on the information supplied to SRK by Bosch Projects (Pty) Ltd. (SRK has exercised all due care in reviewing the supplied information, but conclusions from the review are reliant on the accuracy and completeness of the supplied data. SRK does not accept responsibility for any errors or omissions in the supplied information and does not accept any consequential liability arising from commercial decisions or actions resulting from them. Opinions presented in this report apply to the site conditions and features as they existed at the time of SRK's investigations, and those reasonably foreseeable. These opinions do not necessarily apply to conditions and features that may arise after the date of this Report, about which SRK had no prior knowledge nor had the opportunity to evaluate.

All data used as source material plus the text, tables, figures, and attachments of this document have been reviewed and prepared in accordance with generally accepted professional hydrogeological and environmental practices.

**Appendix A:
National Web Based Environmental Screening Tool Report**

**SCREENING REPORT FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORIZATION AS
REQUIRED BY THE 2014 EIA REGULATIONS – PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
FOOTPRINT ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY**

EIA Reference number:

Project name: Skilpad SEF and Associated Infrastructure

Project title: Proposed Construction of 150 MW Skilpad SEF and Associated Infrastructure, near Hanover, Northern Cape Province

Date screening report generated: 24/11/2022 15:34:53

Applicant: South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd

Compiler: SRK Consulting (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd

Compiler signature:

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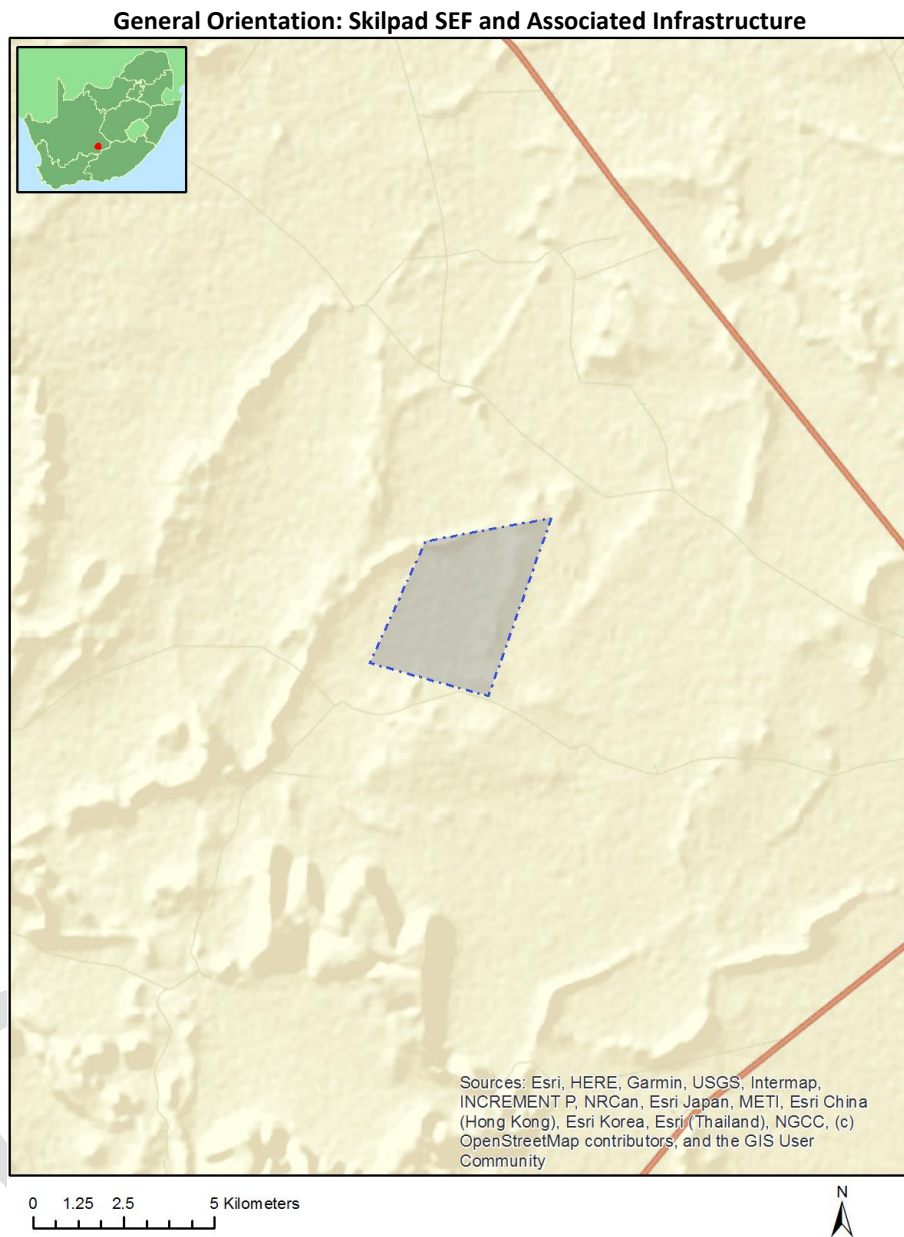
Application Category: Utilities Infrastructure | Electricity | Generation | Renewable | Solar | PV

Table of Contents

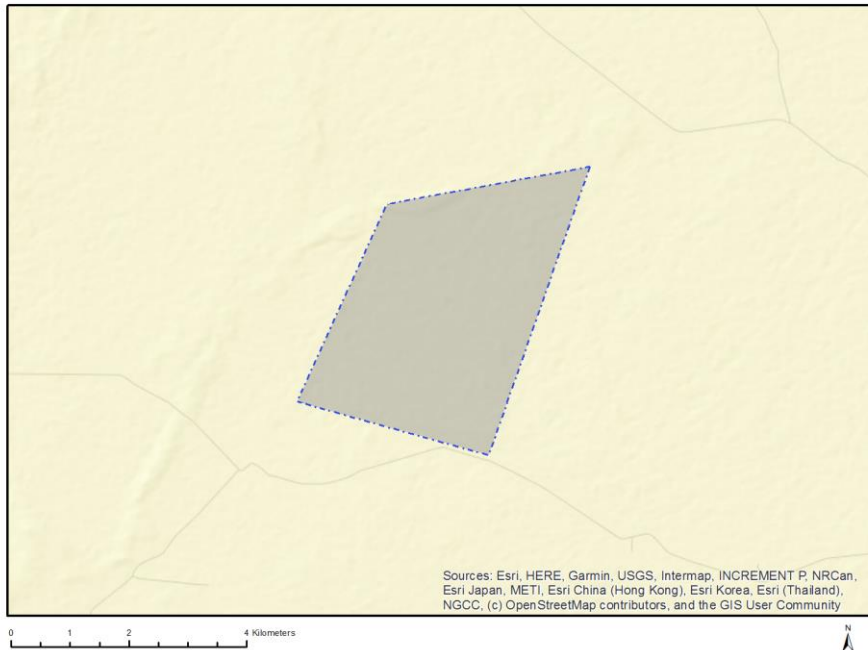
Proposed Project Location	3
Orientation map 1: General location	3
Map of proposed site and relevant area(s)	4
Cadastral details of the proposed site	4
Wind and Solar developments with an approved Environmental Authorisation or applications under consideration within 30 km of the proposed area	4
Environmental Management Frameworks relevant to the application	5
Environmental screening results and assessment outcomes	5
Relevant development incentives, restrictions, exclusions or prohibitions	5
Map indicating proposed development footprint within applicable development incentive, restriction, exclusion or prohibition zones	6
Proposed Development Area Environmental Sensitivity	6
Specialist assessments identified	7
Results of the environmental sensitivity of the proposed area	9
MAP OF RELATIVE AGRICULTURE THEME SENSITIVITY	9
MAP OF RELATIVE ANIMAL SPECIES THEME SENSITIVITY	10
MAP OF RELATIVE AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY THEME SENSITIVITY	11
MAP OF RELATIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE THEME SENSITIVITY	12
MAP OF RELATIVE AVIAN THEME SENSITIVITY	13
MAP OF RELATIVE CIVIL AVIATION (SOLAR PV) THEME SENSITIVITY	14
MAP OF RELATIVE DEFENCE THEME SENSITIVITY	15
MAP OF RELATIVE LANDSCAPE (SOLAR) THEME SENSITIVITY	16
MAP OF RELATIVE PALEONTOLOGY THEME SENSITIVITY	17
MAP OF RELATIVE PLANT SPECIES THEME SENSITIVITY	18
MAP OF RELATIVE RFI THEME SENSITIVITY	19
MAP OF RELATIVE TERRESTRIAL BIODIVERSITY THEME SENSITIVITY	20

Proposed Project Location

Orientation map 1: General location



Map of proposed site and relevant area(s)



Cadastral details of the proposed site

Property details:

No	Farm Name	Farm/ Erf No	Portion	Latitude	Longitude	Property Type
1	VOGELFONTEIN	71	0	31°4'57.44S	24°16'58.08E	Farm
2	VOGELFONTEIN	71	1	31°3'19.33S	24°15'59.22E	Farm Portion

Development footprint¹ vertices:

Footprint	Latitude	Longitude
1	31°3'40.38S	24°14'58.5E
1	31°2'7.32S	24°15'47.84E
1	31°1'49.63S	24°17'39.37E
1	31°4'5.63S	24°16'43.66E
1	31°3'40.38S	24°14'58.5E

Wind and Solar developments with an approved Environmental Authorisation or applications under consideration within 30 km of the proposed area

No	EIA Reference	Classification	Status of	Distance from proposed
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¹ "development footprint", means the area within the site on which the development will take place and includes all ancillary developments for example roads, power lines, boundary walls, paving etc. which require vegetation clearance or which will be disturbed and for which the application has been submitted.

	No		application	area (km)
1	12/12/20/2258/4	Solar PV	Approved	16.6

Environmental Management Frameworks relevant to the application

No intersections with EMF areas found.

Environmental screening results and assessment outcomes

The following sections contain a summary of any development incentives, restrictions, exclusions or prohibitions that apply to the proposed development footprint as well as the most environmental sensitive features on the footprint based on the footprint sensitivity screening results for the application classification that was selected. The application classification selected for this report is:

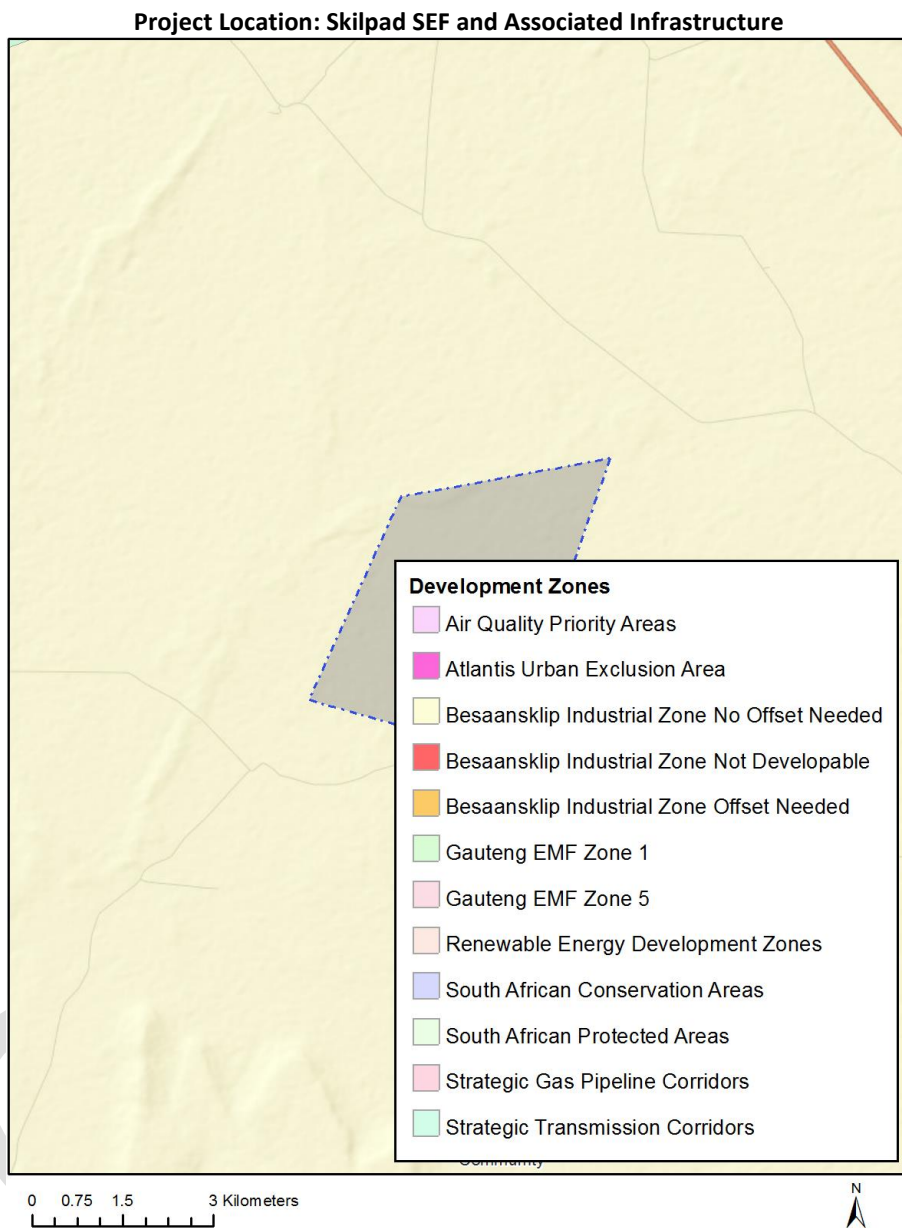
Utilities Infrastructure | Electricity | Generation | Renewable | Solar | PV.

Relevant development incentives, restrictions, exclusions or prohibitions

The following development incentives, restrictions, exclusions or prohibitions and their implications that apply to this footprint are indicated below.

No intersection with any development zones found.

Map indicating proposed development footprint within applicable development incentive, restriction, exclusion or prohibition zones



Proposed Development Area Environmental Sensitivity

The following summary of the development footprint environmental sensitivities is identified. Only the highest environmental sensitivity is indicated. The footprint environmental sensitivities for the proposed development footprint as identified, are indicative only and must be verified on site by a suitably qualified person before the specialist assessments identified below can be confirmed.

Theme	Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
Agriculture Theme			X	
Animal Species Theme		X		

Aquatic Biodiversity Theme	X			
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Theme				X
Avian Theme				X
Civil Aviation (Solar PV) Theme				X
Defence Theme				X
Landscape (Solar) Theme	X			
Paleontology Theme	X			
Plant Species Theme			X	
RFI Theme			X	
Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme	X			

Specialist assessments identified

Based on the selected classification, and the environmental sensitivities of the proposed development footprint, the following list of specialist assessments have been identified for inclusion in the assessment report. It is the responsibility of the EAP to confirm this list and to motivate in the assessment report, the reason for not including any of the identified specialist study including the provision of photographic evidence of the footprint situation.

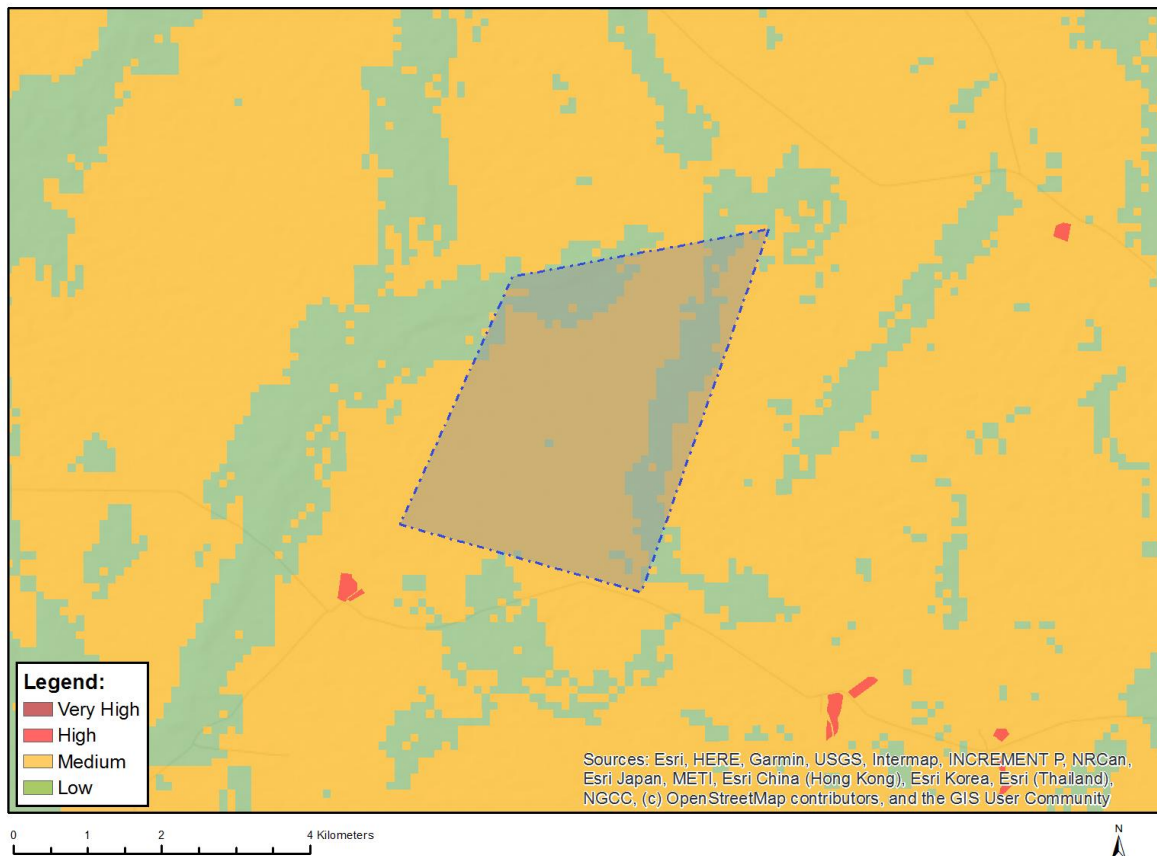
N o	Specialist assessment	Assessment Protocol
1	Agricultural Impact Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_WindAndSolar_Agriculture_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
2	Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_General_Requirement_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
3	Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_General_Requirement_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
4	Palaeontology Impact Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_General_Requirement_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
5	Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_Terrestrial_Biodiversity_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
6	Aquatic Biodiversity	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_Aquatic_Biodiversity_Assessment_Protocols.pdf

	Impact Assessment	
7	Civil Aviation Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_Civil_Aviation_Installations_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
8	Defense Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_Defence_Installations_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
9	RFI Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_General_Requirement_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
10	Geotechnical Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_General_Requirement_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
11	Socio-Economic Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_General_Requirement_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
12	Plant Species Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_Plant_Species_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
13	Animal Species Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_Animal_Species_Assessment_Protocols.pdf

Results of the environmental sensitivity of the proposed area.

The following section represents the results of the screening for environmental sensitivity of the proposed footprint for relevant environmental themes associated with the project classification. It is the duty of the EAP to ensure that the environmental themes provided by the screening tool are comprehensive and complete for the project. Refer to the disclaimer.

MAP OF RELATIVE AGRICULTURE THEME SENSITIVITY

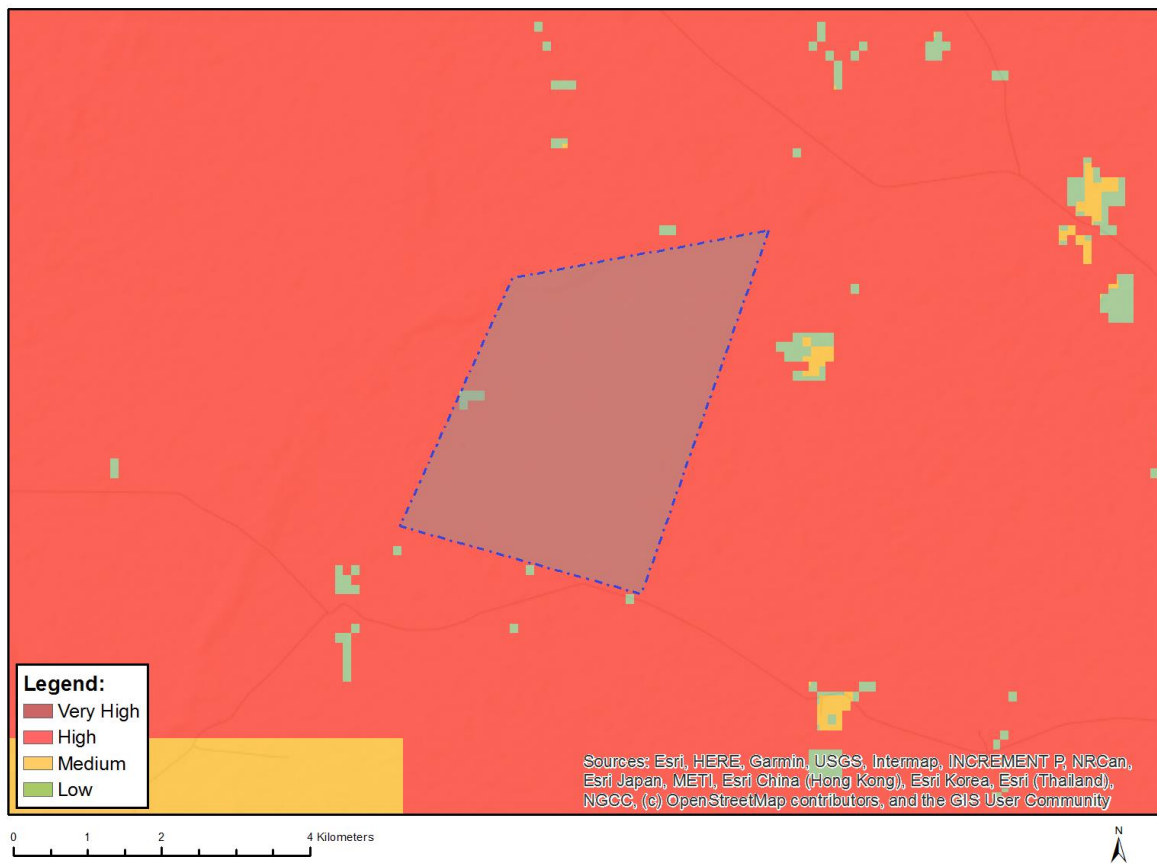


Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
		X	

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Low	Land capability;01. Very low/02. Very low/03. Low-Very low/04. Low-Very low/05. Low
Medium	Land capability;06. Low-Moderate/07. Low-Moderate/08. Moderate

MAP OF RELATIVE ANIMAL SPECIES THEME SENSITIVITY



Where only a sensitive plant unique number or sensitive animal unique number is provided in the screening report and an assessment is required, the environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) or specialist is required to email SANBI at eiadatarequests@sanbi.org.za listing all sensitive species with their unique identifiers for which information is required. The name has been withheld as the species may be prone to illegal harvesting and must be protected. SANBI will release the actual species name after the details of the EAP or specialist have been documented.

Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
	X		

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
High	Aves-Neotis ludwigii
High	Aves-Aquila verreauxii
Low	Subject to confirmation

MAP OF RELATIVE AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY THEME SENSITIVITY

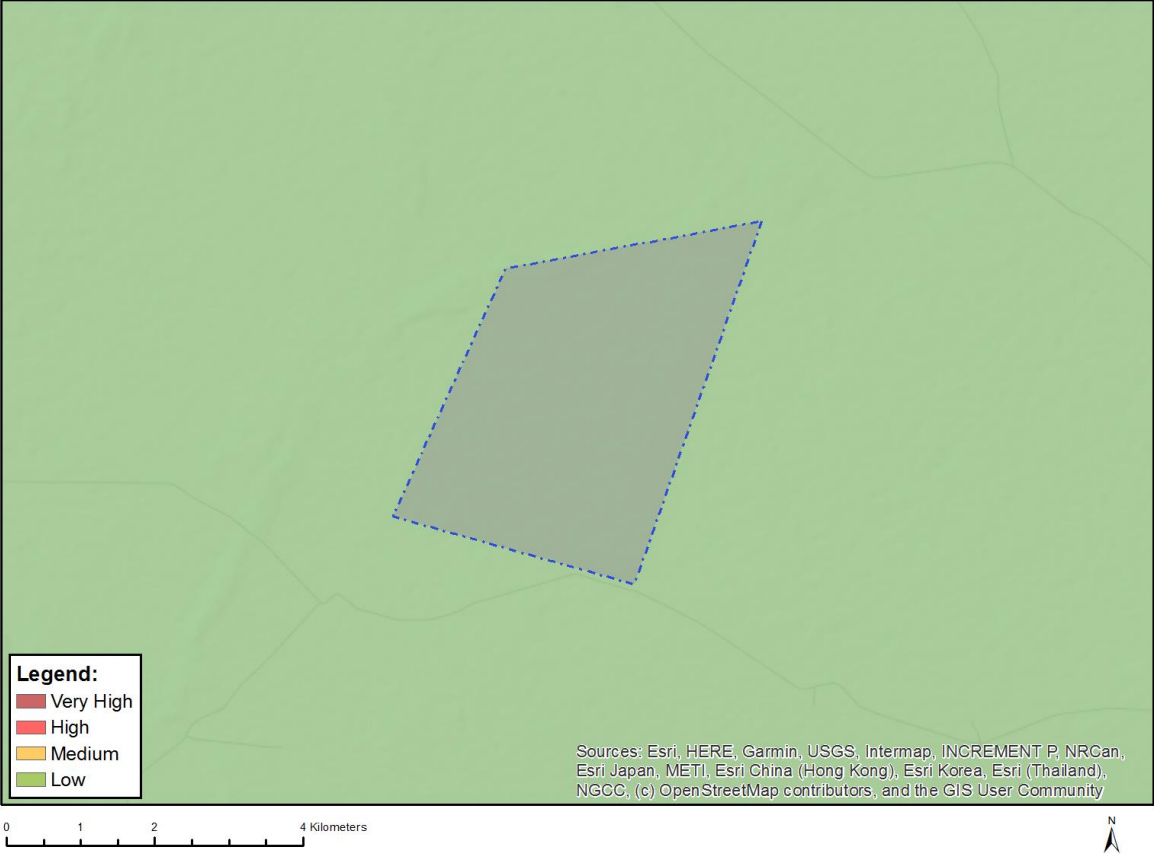


Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
X			

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Very High	Strategic water source area
Very High	Wetlands and Estuaries
Very High	Freshwater ecosystem priority area quinary catchments

MAP OF RELATIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE THEME SENSITIVITY



Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
			X

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Low	Low sensitivity

MAP OF RELATIVE AVIAN THEME SENSITIVITY



Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
			X

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Low	Low Sensitivity

MAP OF RELATIVE CIVIL AVIATION (SOLAR PV) THEME SENSITIVITY

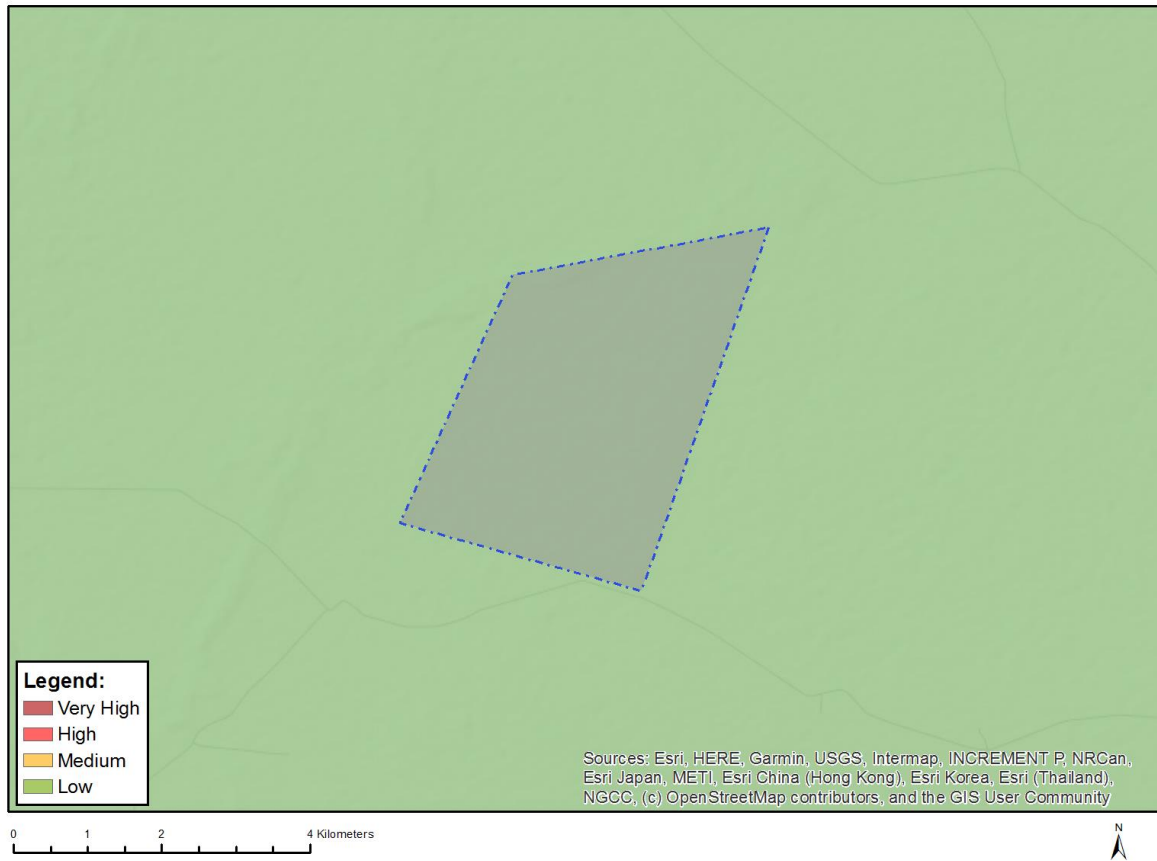


Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
			X

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Low	No major or other types of civil aviation aerodromes

MAP OF RELATIVE DEFENCE THEME SENSITIVITY

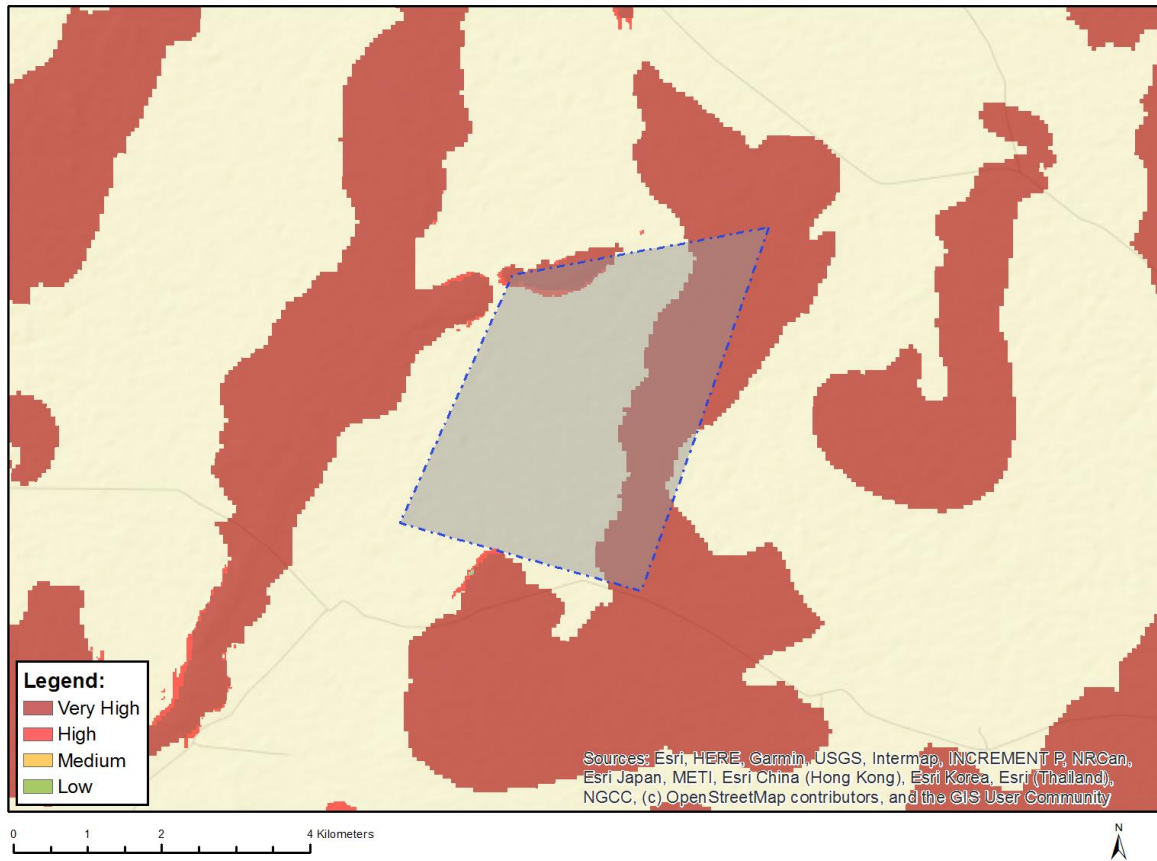


Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
			X

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Low	Low sensitivity

MAP OF RELATIVE LANDSCAPE (SOLAR) THEME SENSITIVITY

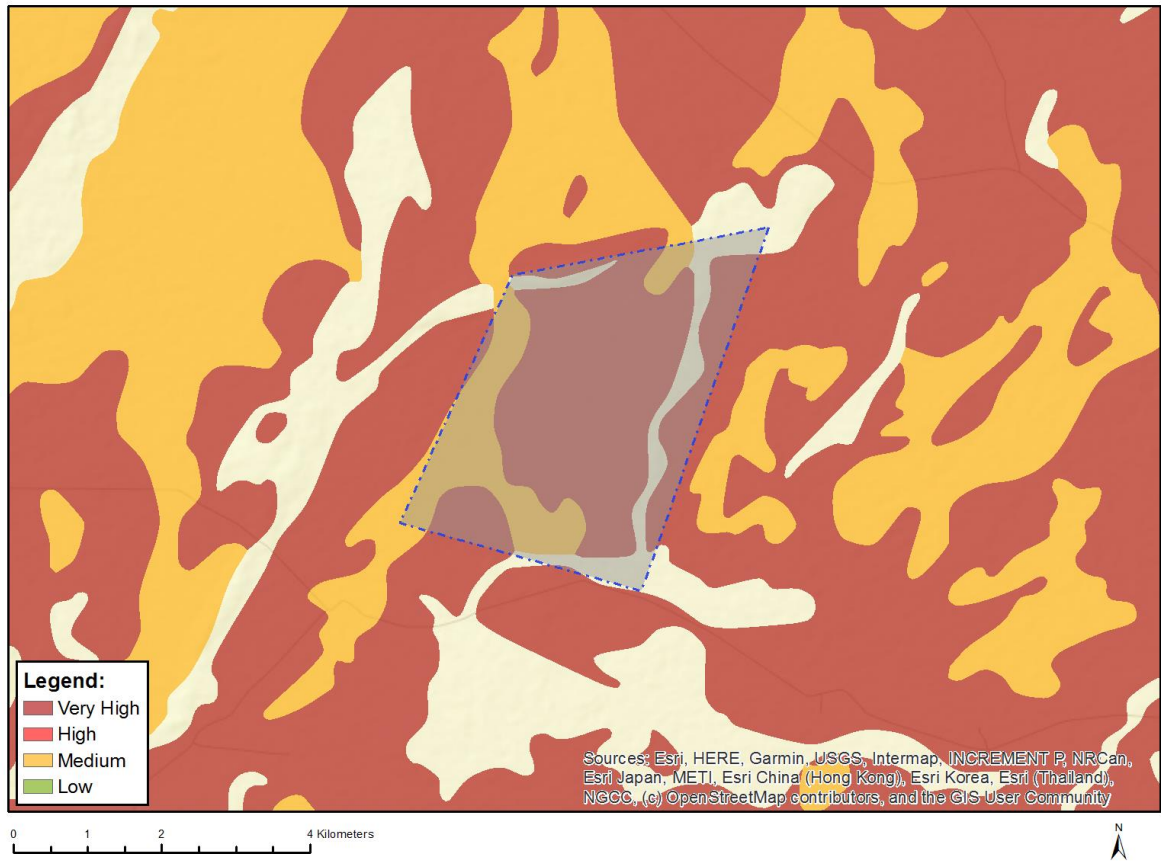


Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
X			

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
High	Slope between 1:4 and 1:10
Low	Slope less than 1:10
Very High	Mountain tops and high ridges
Very High	Slope more than 1:4

MAP OF RELATIVE PALEONTOLOGY THEME SENSITIVITY

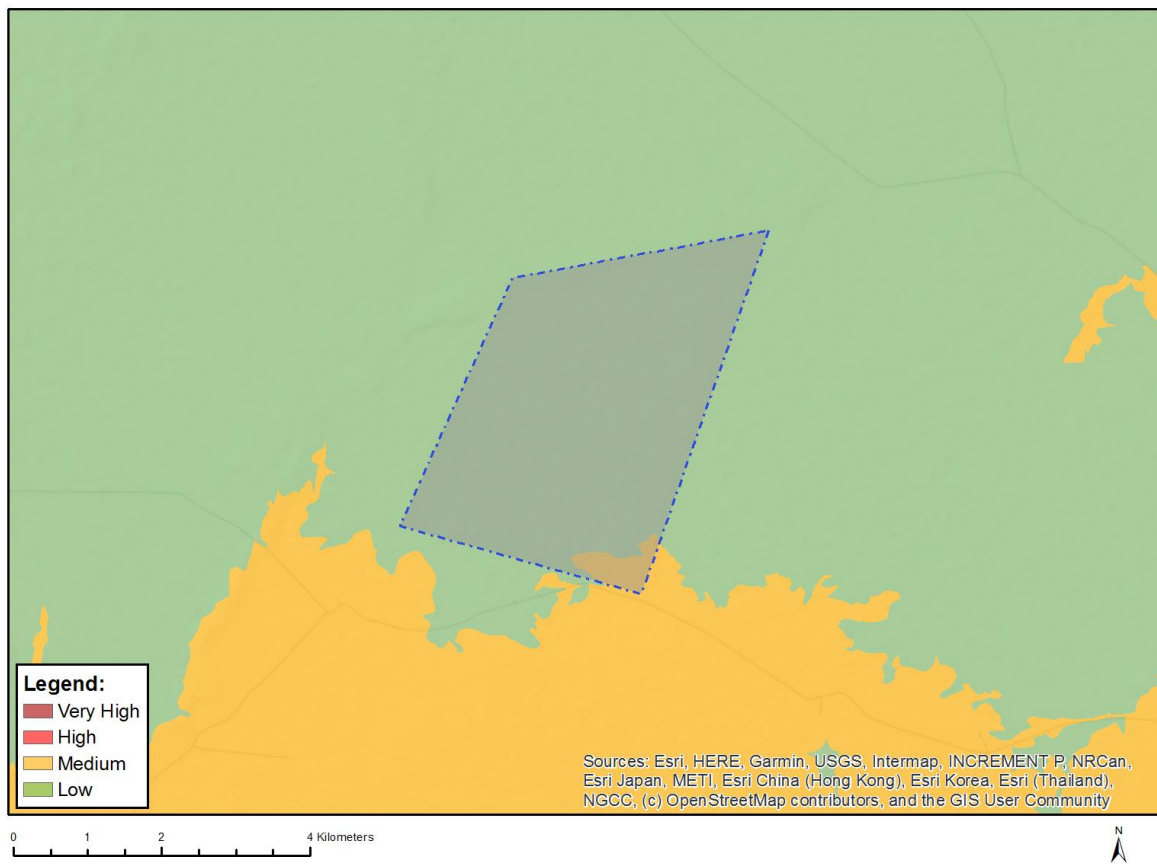


Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
X			

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Medium	Features with a Medium paleontological sensitivity
Very High	Features with a Very High paleontological sensitivity

MAP OF RELATIVE PLANT SPECIES THEME SENSITIVITY



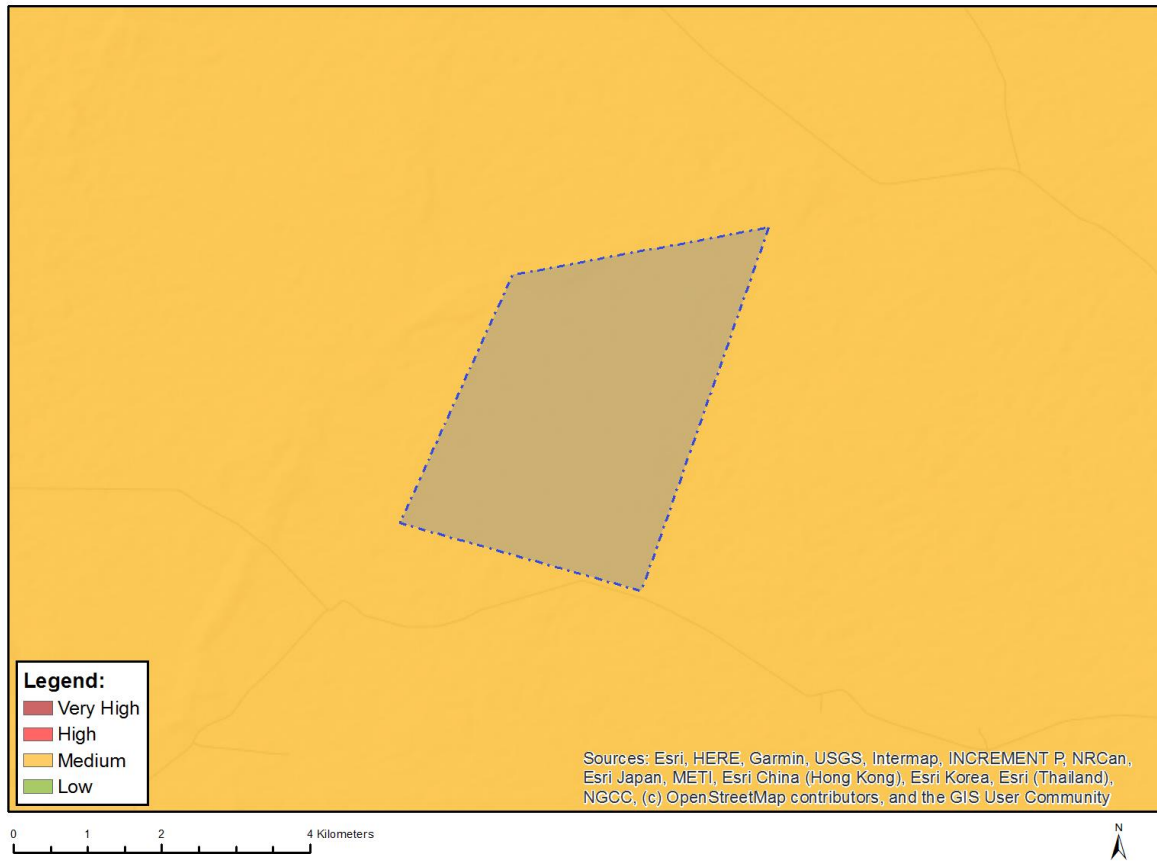
Where only a sensitive plant unique number or sensitive animal unique number is provided in the screening report and an assessment is required, the environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) or specialist is required to email SANBI at eiadatarequests@sanbi.org.za listing all sensitive species with their unique identifiers for which information is required. The name has been withheld as the species may be prone to illegal harvesting and must be protected. SANBI will release the actual species name after the details of the EAP or specialist have been documented.

Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
		X	

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Low	Low Sensitivity
Medium	Hereroa concava

MAP OF RELATIVE RFI THEME SENSITIVITY



Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
		X	

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Medium	Between 30 and 60 km from a Weather Radar installation and within the radar's line of sight

MAP OF RELATIVE TERRESTRIAL BIODIVERSITY THEME SENSITIVITY



Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
X			

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Very High	Critical biodiversity area 1
Very High	Critical biodiversity area 2
Very High	Ecological support area
Very High	FEPA Subcatchments
Very High	Protected Areas Expansion Strategy