

Appendix C7:  
Minutes of Meetings

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESSES FOR THE  
100MW<sub>ac</sub> VREDE SOLAR PV FACILITY, BATTERY ENERGY  
STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
AND THE  
100MW<sub>ac</sub> RONDAVEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, BATTERY  
ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED  
INFRASTRUCTURE LOCATED NEAR KROONSTAD, FREE  
STATE PROVINCE**

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**MEETING NOTES OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING HELD WITH THE  
MOQHAKA FOR THE PEOPLE (MFP) EXECUTIVE MEMBERS  
HELD ON TUESDAY, 18 MAY 2021 AT 09H00  
VENUE: VIRTUAL MEETING USING MICROSOFT TEAMS PLATFORM**

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**Meeting notes prepared by:**

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*Please note that these notes are not verbatim, but a summary of the comments submitted at the meeting.  
Please address any comments to Savannah Environmental at the above address*

**100MWac VREDE SOLAR PV FACILITY, BESS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE 100MWac RONDAVEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, BESS AND ASSOCIATED INSTRUCTURE PROJECTS NEAR KROONSTAD, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

**MEETING ATTENDEES**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Spiro Khoury	Chairman	Moqhaka for the People
Present at Mr Khoury's Office are the following MFP Members		
Keke Ramontso	Administrative Secretary	Moqhaka for the People
Mojalefa Mohanoe	Executive Member	Moqhaka for the People
Doctor Motsapele	Executive Member	Moqhaka for the People
Daniel George	Executive Member	Moqhaka for the People
Paul Pie	Executive Member	Moqhaka for the People
Semang Simila	Executive Member	Moqhaka for the People
Braam Visagie	Secretary	Moqhaka for the People
Anton Meyer	Administrative Secretary	Moqhaka for the People
Gesie Theron	Project Manager	SA Mainstream Renewable Power
Rafeeqah Kamish	Project Assistant	
Gideon Raath	Environmental Assessment	Savannah Environmental
Mmakoena	Practitioner	
Nicolene Venter	Public Participation and Social Consultant	

The project team was informed that most of the Moqhaka for the People (MFP) are present at Mr Khoury's Office and will collectively participate. No apologies were submitted.

**INTRODUCTION**

Nicolene Venter welcomed all attendees at the online focus group meeting (FGM) for the 100MWac Vrede and Rondavel Solar PV and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and association infrastructure facility projects located approximately 6 and 11km south of Kroonstad in the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Fezile Dabi District Municipality in the Free State Province.

She informed the participants that comments can be submitted on the chat function and verbally during the meeting and advised that any additional comments after the meeting can be submitted via e-mail, WhatsApp or SMS to the public participation team.

Gideon Raath presented an overview of the projects and a summary of the key environmental findings as documented in the Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIARs) available for a 30-day review and comment period. A copy of the slides presented during the virtual meeting is attached as **Appendix A** to the meeting notes and e-mailed to the participants.

The meeting notes are not captured verbatim.

## DISCUSSION SESSION

Question / Comment	Response
<p>Braam Visser asked, as requested during the scoping phase, whether the team had addressed their request that the Moqhaka community i.e., Moqhaka Local Municipality, to benefit from the project rather than Eskom.</p>	<p>Gideon Raath responded that the project is intended to respond to the IRP procurement programmes and therefore must adhere to those rules. The developer must sell the electricity generated to Eskom, and it is not known whether Mainstream could sell the electricity to the Moqhaka Local Municipality.</p>
<p>Braam Visser informed the project team that although the projects are located within the vicinity of Kroonstad, the community would not benefit directly.</p> <p>He further informed the project team that Kroonstad has its own electricity grid network and that the electricity generated by these projects must feed into this grid as it will benefit the community as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communities can access electricity at a lower rate</li> <li>• during load shedding, electricity can be harvested from these two proposed projects; and</li> <li>• any excess electricity would be sold off to the Local Municipality which will be an additional income to the Local Municipality.</li> </ul>	<p>Gideon Raath responded that as he recalled, Eugene Marais, Head of Development Mainstream Renewable Energy, responded to this approach during the FGM held during the scoping phase of the projects in January 2021 that it is not possible for Mainstream Renewable Energy to sell electricity generated from these two proposed developments directly to Moqhaka Local Municipality or to feed it into the Kroonstad grid.</p> <p>He added that the electricity generated would be a national benefit and not only localised. However, there are local indirect benefits associated with these two proposed projects such as business development, local procurement, etc.</p> <p>Gesie Theron confirmed that currently Mainstream Renewable Energy does not have the mandate, as per current Legislation, to supply electricity directly to Municipalities. There is a consultation process underway to look at alternative off-takers but at present, the electricity generated must be sold to Eskom and fed into their national grid network.</p> <p>She informed the attendees that the REIPPP tender process include the spending of the SED fund in municipal districts in which the projects are located, and approximately 32% to 45% of the REIPP programme of the bid needs to focus on the socio-economic development of communities within the Local Municipality area.</p>
<p>Anton Meyer commented that it was noticed in the summary of the Report reference was made to the REIPP 5, but REIPP 5 has not yet</p>	<p>Gideon Raath responded for clarification purposes that the next bidding round has not yet been gazetted, and that these two</p>

<p>been published or gazetted and enquired on what basis were these preliminary developments being proposed.</p> <p>References were also made to the Ministerial Directives, press releases, etc dated August / September 2020 regarding the emergency mitigation programme and that those projects would be included in BID 5, but the REIPPP for BID 5 has not yet been published or finalised.</p> <p>He informed the project team that the MFP understands what is being said regarding local community benefits, but the present model, as is, is a great concern to the MFP as it is a trickled down economy and not benefiting the local communities.</p>	<p>proposed developments would be bid in the bidding programmes as they open up and become available. He reiterated that local economic benefits are a requirement in the REIPP programme and would be applicable to these projects.</p>
<p>Anton Meyer informed the project team that for clarification purposes the proposed projects would be bid as per the Gazetted Window 4 of 2013/14, which has not been updated as addressed by the President and the Department of Trade &amp; Industry aligning South African industry to work again.</p> <p>It is his understanding that Mainstream Renewable Energy has done preparatory work and would caution Mainstream Renewable Energy in proceeding with this approach until Round 5 has been Gazetted.</p> <p>He informed the project team that the MFP supports the EIA that is being conducted but that the MFP cannot be tied to this conversation regarding Mainstream Renewable Energy's present model as it is not worthy of support for the greater Moqhaka community.</p>	<p>Gesie Theron responded that the viewpoints raised by Anton Meyer would be a separate discussion as it does not relate to the EIA process being conducted for these two proposed projects.</p> <p>She added that bilateral discussions are on the table and currently in terms of the REIPPP programme, IPPs could investigate supplying energy to Municipalities should they have clean audits and currently only the Western Cape is compliant, however, the situation might change in the near future.</p>
<p>Anton Meyer informed the project team and the members of MFP present that Sections 33 and 34 which were used as the basis for the Emergency Procurement Programme (EPP), it has been looked at and discussed to raise the 10MW to whatever any MW. There are several mining houses that already applied and link to the EPP, including the 60MW that has been applied for by Sasol added a further</p>	<p>Gideon Raath acknowledged the information shared.</p>

<p>complication that is outside the present rules and regulations.</p> <p>He mentioned that there is currently nothing in writing regarding the matter of solvent municipalities and/or the so-called good standing of municipalities in terms of private monetary contributions by Public Private Partners (PPP) which seems to discount that statement. He stated that this matter will be discussed with Mainstream Renewable Energy and other renewable energy development companies.</p> <p>The reason for raising this at the meeting is for Savannahs environmental and the MFP members present to understand the complications around the matter. However, it needs to be noted that the DMRE are the rotten apple in the barrel as the renewable local economic empowerment is in there. It is not the responsibility of Savannah Environmental to address this matter but that of the MFP, as a civic organisation and that of the renewable energy suppliers.</p>	
<p>Gideon Raath asked whether there are any specific comments on the environmental studies, findings and mitigation measures presented that the MFP would like to comment on.</p>	<p>Braam Visser responded that the MFP does not have any concerns regarding the EIA processes undertaken and, in that respect, supports the project.</p>
<p>Spiro Khoury informed the project team, which was reiterated by Braam Visser, that Eskom needs to know that the Moqhaka Local Municipality has an IPP and PPA licenses allowing them to produce its own electricity and they demand the first right of refusal to electricity being produced in their municipal area. The benefit to the community of Moqhaka is that electricity can be provided to the community at a cheaper rate.</p> <p>MFP has been looking at similar solar parks with the same capacity as these two proposed projects within the Moqhaka Local Municipality.</p>	<p>Gideon Raath referred to the earlier response provided by himself and Gesie Theron from Mainstream Renewable Energy that at currently Mainstream Renewable Energy is legally obliged to supply electricity to Eskom. However, Gesie Theron also responded that there are other avenues and/or options that are being pursued, such as the reference made by Anton Meyer regarding the mining industry, but that direct sales to the municipality are not currently considered for the projects.</p> <p>Gesie Theron confirm that the response provided by Gideon Raath was accurate.</p>

<p>He stated that the MFP is a public participation vehicle and mandated to represent the community of Moqhaka and the inputs provided at this meeting must be recorded as submitted by the majority community members.</p> <p>He reiterated that the MFP support these two applications fully, however the benefits must be for the communities.</p>	
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## CLOSURE

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Spiro Khoury thanked Savannah Environmental for the conceptual way the studies and process were put together and conducted.

Nicolene Venter presented the way forward and thanked the participants for their valuable inputs into the EIA processes. The meeting was closed at 10h00.

## ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS

DMRE	Department of Mineral Resources and Energy	IPP	Independent Power Producer
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	PPA	Power Purchase Agreement
EIARs	Environmental Impact Assessment Reports	PPP	Public Private Partnership
EPP	Emergency Procurement Programme	REIPPP	Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme
MFP	Moqhaka for the People	SED	Socio-Economic Development

# **APPENDIX A: Presentation**



# 100MW Vrede Solar PV facility, Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure, Kroonstad, Free State Province &

# 100MW Rondavel Solar PV facility, Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure, Kroonstad, Free State Province

Public Participation Presentation  
May 2021



## AGENDA

- Welcome and Introduction
- Meeting Conduct
- Project Overview
- Environmental Process, Studies & Findings
- Discussion
- Way Forward



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## CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

- Please stay on mute during the presentation
- Register attendance on Chat function (name, surname & affiliation)
- Please raise your hand to indicate comment / question to raise
- Questions submitted in Chat function will be responded to after the presentation
- Equal opportunity
- Recording of meeting
- Attendees welcome to switch video on



## PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

- Provide stakeholder & IAPs with an overview of the two respective Vrede & Rondavel Solar PV Facilities (separate projects)
- Summary of the **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) & Public Participation** being undertaken for both projects
- Present summary of the key environmental findings as documented in the **EIA Reports** of both projects
- Provide stakeholders the opportunity to seek clarity regarding the projects and their respective environmental studies
- Obtain and record comments for inclusion in the **Final EIA Reports** to be submitted to the DFFE



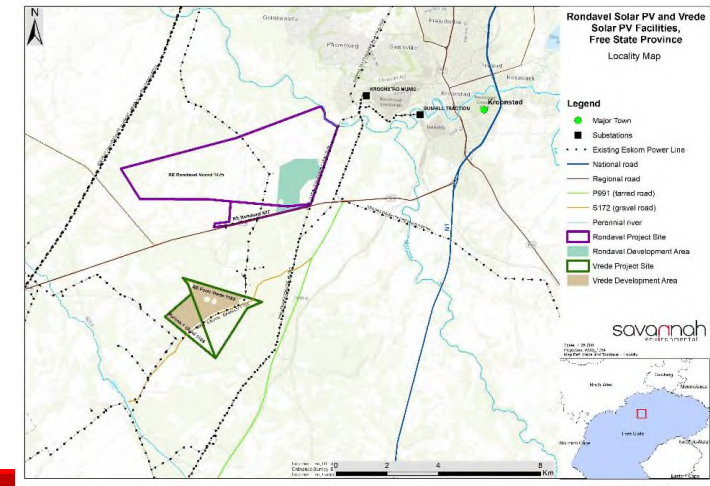
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## PROJECTS OVERVIEW

- **Applicant –**
  - Vrede Solar PV Facility: South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd
  - Rondavel Solar PV Facility: South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd
- **Location –**
  - Vrede Solar PV Facility: Farm Vrede No. 1152 and the Farm Uitval No. 1104;
  - Rondavel Solar PV Facility: Remaining Extent of the farm Rondavel Noord No. 1475 and Remaining Extent of the farm Rondavel No. 627.
- **Project proposal –**
  - Proposed construction and operation of two separate 100MW Photovoltaic Solar Energy Facilities including Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure near Kroonstad in the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Fezile Dabi District in the Free State Province.
  - Projects respectively called Vrede Solar PV Facility and Rondavel Solar PV Facility.

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

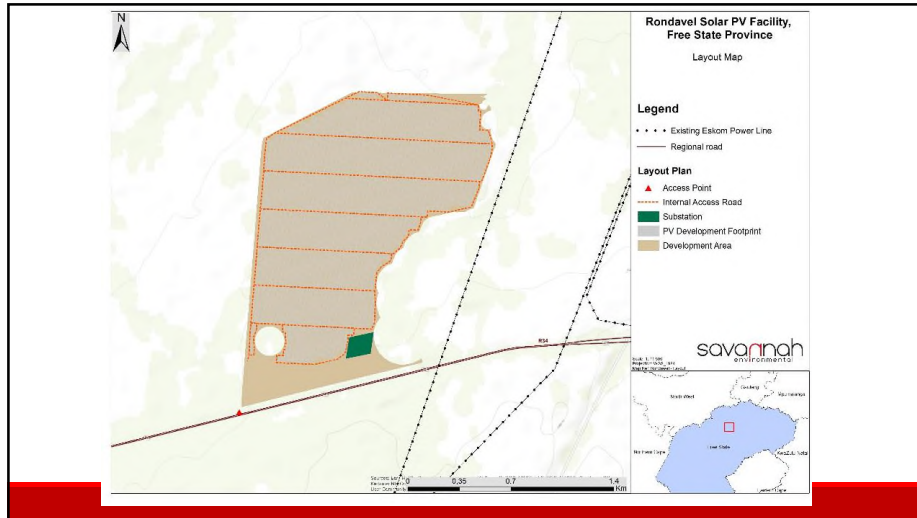
- **Infrastructure associated with both solar PV facilities will include:**
  - Solar PV array comprising PV modules, mounting structures, underground cabling between the project components, inverters and transformers, and underground cabling between the project components.
  - On-site facility substation to facilitate the connection between the solar PV facility and the Eskom electricity grid.
  - Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).
  - Site offices and maintenance buildings, including workshop areas for maintenance and storage, operational control center, maintenance area, warehouse, ablutions,
  - Laydown areas and temporary man camp area.
  - Access roads, internal distribution roads and fencing around the development area.
  - Electrical infrastructure including 33/132kV Independent Power Producer (IPP) onsite substation including associated equipment and infrastructure, underground cabling and overhead power lines (up to 33kV)
  - Associated Infrastructure including access roads and internal gravel roads, fencing and lighting, lightning protection, permanent laydown area, temporary construction camp and laydown area, telecommunication infrastructure, batching plant (if required), stormwater channels and water pipelines.

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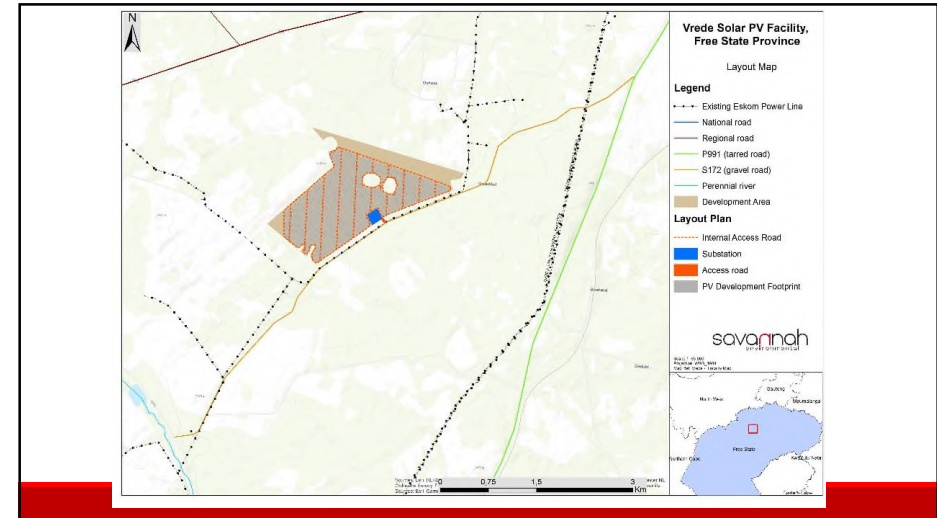
## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- **Activities associated with both solar PV facilities may include:**
  - Surveys and studies during planning, including obtaining all permits and required approvals
  - Procurement of contractor teams
  - Establishment of access roads
  - Site preparation, including vegetation clearing and soil preparation
  - Component and equipment transport to site
  - Establishment of laydown areas
  - Erection of PV panels and installation of structural and electrical infrastructure (cabling, substations, inverters etc.)
  - Establishment of support infrastructure
  - Site rehabilitation
  - Operation and maintenance
  - Site decommissioning

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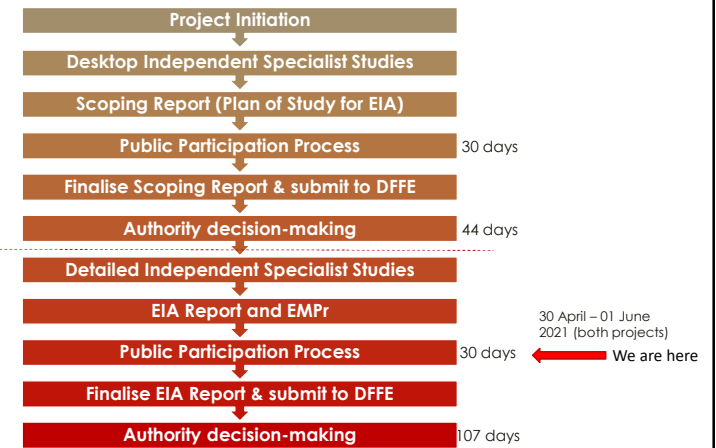
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## EIA PROCESS

- The proposed projects both requires Environmental Authorisation (EA) in terms of NEMA & the EIA Regulations (2014), as amended
- An EIA towards environmental authorisation is being undertaken for both, based on Listing Notice 2 activities being triggered
- An EIA Report has been prepared for each project respectively and is available for a 30-day review period (30 April – 01 June 2021)
- Following the conclusion of the 30-day review period the Final EIA Reports will be prepared & submitted to DFFE

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## EIA PROCESS



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## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS/SENSITIVITIES IDENTIFIED

- Understanding the nature of the proposed developments and the impacts associated with the projects (as identified in the EIA phase), the following has been considered and assessed within the EIA phase:
  - Impacts on ecology (including flora and fauna)
  - Impacts on freshwater resources
  - Impacts on avifauna
  - Impacts on soils, geology, agricultural potential and land-use
  - Impacts on heritage (archaeology and palaeontology)
  - Visual impacts
  - Social impacts
  - Evaluation of potential cumulative impacts associated with the project



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## SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Ecology (including flora and fauna)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, no significant terrestrial ecological fatal flaws were identified during the EIA phase assessment.</li> <li>• All wetland features were deemed very high ecological sensitivity and a 30m no-go buffer around them is recommended.</li> <li>• Natural grassland features that are representative of Vaal-Vet Sandy Grassland (Endangered) and which are located within CBA1 regions were also considered very high sensitivity features, although these were not considered no-go areas. High and medium sensitivity areas, within which development was considered acceptable was also determined.</li> <li>• Layout avoids all high sensitivity features including buffer zones</li> <li>• All impacts were rated low following implementation of mitigation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, no significant terrestrial ecological fatal flaws were identified during the EIA phase assessment.</li> <li>• All wetland features were deemed very high ecological sensitivity and a 30m no-go buffer around them is recommended.</li> <li>• Dolerite outcrops and Acacia karoo – Asparagus laricinus Shrub-Grassland were considered to be of medium sensitivity.</li> <li>• Layout avoids all high sensitivity features including buffer zones</li> <li>• All impacts were rated low following implementation of mitigation</li> </ul>



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## SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS



Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Freshwater resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The specialist identified a few wetlands within the development area, which were at risk of impact.</li> <li>• These were defined as no-go areas together with their defined 30m buffer zones.</li> <li>• These features have been avoided by the proposed layout.</li> <li>• With the implementation of mitigation measures, impacts will be localised, short-term and of low intensity and is expected to have a moderate-low to low overall significance in terms of its impact on the identified aquatic ecosystems in the area.</li> <li>• Based on the findings of the Freshwater Resources Impact Assessment there is no objection to the authorisation of the proposed activities provided that the recommended mitigation measures are implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The specialist identified two wetland areas close to the development area, which were at risk of impact.</li> <li>• These were defined as no-go areas together with their defined 30m buffer zones.</li> <li>• These features have been avoided by the proposed layout.</li> <li>• With the implementation of mitigation measures, impacts will be localised, short-term and of low intensity and is expected to have a moderate-low to low overall significance in terms of its impact on the identified aquatic ecosystems in the area.</li> <li>• Based on the findings of the Freshwater Resources Impact Assessment there is no objection to the authorisation of the proposed activities provided that the recommended mitigation measures are implemented.</li> </ul>

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## SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS



Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Impacts on avifauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 100m solar panel free buffer zone must be implemented around the pans on site (-27.736377° 27.134694°, -27.740910° 27.141575°, -27.741723° 27.144815°) to provide avifauna with unhindered access to the water.</li> <li>• In addition, a 100m solar panel free buffer zone must be implemented on both sides of the drainage line on the development area, to maintain a corridor of woodland.</li> <li>• The layout considers the above sensitivities by exclusion of these areas from the development footprint and facility layout.</li> <li>• A <b>medium negative</b> impact on priority avifauna, which can be reduced to <b>low</b> with appropriate mitigation was found.</li> <li>• The development is supported provided the mitigation measures listed in this report are strictly implemented. No fatal flaws were discovered in the course of the investigations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 100m solar panel free buffer zone must be implemented around the dam at -27.704605° 27.178359° to provide avifauna with unhindered access to the water.</li> <li>• In addition, a 100m solar panel free buffer zone must be implemented on both sides of the drainage line on the development area, to maintain a corridor of woodland.</li> <li>• The layout considers the above sensitivities by exclusion of these areas from the development footprint and facility layout.</li> <li>• A <b>medium negative</b> impact on priority avifauna, which can be reduced to <b>low</b> with appropriate mitigation was found.</li> <li>• The development is supported provided the mitigation measures listed in this report are strictly implemented. No fatal flaws were discovered in the course of the investigations.</li> </ul>

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### SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Soils and agricultural potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The specialist determined that even though the development footprint includes areas with High agricultural sensitivity, this application may be considered favourably.</li> <li>The area has not been used for crop production since 2005 and the landowner further indicated that crop farming is not a viable option and that he will not return the fields to crop fields again. The farm is currently used for commercial cattle production of 35 head of cattle and can at most provide employment for two farmworkers.</li> <li>In contrast to that, the project will contribute a significant amount of expenditure to the area and employ more than 230 workers during the construction phase and more than 17 workers during the operational phase.</li> <li>In the light of the high number of employment opportunities that will be created per hectare of land, the proposed Vrede solar PV facility is considered an acceptable land use change.</li> <li>The specialist concluded that this application be considered favourably, on the condition that the mitigation measures are followed to prevent soil erosion and soil pollution and to minimise impacts on the veld quality of the farm portions that will be affected.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The land capability of the site is mainly Low-Moderate (Class 06) and the grazing capacity (according to DAFF, 2018), is around 5ha/LSU. Site observations found that a realistic grazing capacity is considered to be 6ha/LSU.</li> <li>Soil and agricultural impacts were determined to range from <b>medium to low</b> which with mitigation can be reduced to low.</li> <li>The area that will be fenced off is approximately 186.1ha and this will alienate grazing veld for about 50 head of cattle.</li> <li>The specialist concluded that this application be considered favourably, on the condition that the mitigation measures are followed to prevent soil erosion and soil pollution and to minimise impacts on the veld quality of the farm portions that will be affected.</li> </ul>

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### SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Heritage (archaeology and Palaeontology)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was noted that the area proposed for development has been historically disturbed through agricultural activities.</li> <li>No archaeological resources were determined within the development footprint</li> <li>The overall palaeontological sensitivity was high to very high.</li> <li>It was recommended that all excavations into bedrock are monitored by a suitably qualified palaeontologist and a report and a report submitted to SAHRA post-construction</li> <li>Chance find procedure implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four observations of varied cultural significance were recorded, the most significant being RDW002, a possible grave marked with a pile of stones.</li> <li>A no development buffer of 100m is implemented around the heritage features identified</li> <li>The development will not negatively impact on any archaeological heritage resources on condition that the recommendations and buffer zones are adhered to.</li> <li>A layout responding to these sensitivities was developed</li> <li>The overall palaeontological sensitivity was high to very high.</li> <li>It was recommended that all excavations into bedrock are monitored by a suitably qualified palaeontologist and a report and a report submitted to SAHRA post-construction</li> <li>Chance find procedure implemented</li> </ul>



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### SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The visual impact will differ amongst places, depending on the distance from the facility.</li> <li>The intensity of visual impact to exposed receptors, especially those located within a 3km radius, is expected to be greater than it would be for a single solar energy facility. It is however still more preferable that these renewable energy developments are concentrated within this area rather than being spread further apart.</li> <li>Significance of visual impacts determined to range from <b>moderate to low</b> as a result of the generally undeveloped character of the landscape and the remote location of the project infrastructure.</li> <li>A number of mitigation measures have been proposed.</li> <li>If mitigation is undertaken as recommended, it is concluded that the significance of most of the anticipated visual impacts will remain at or be managed to acceptable levels, and the facility considered acceptable from a visual perspective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The visual impact will differ amongst places, depending on the distance from the facility.</li> <li>The intensity of visual impact to exposed receptors, especially those located within a 3km radius, is expected to be greater than it would be for a single solar energy facility. It is however still more preferable that these renewable energy developments are concentrated within this area rather than being spread further apart.</li> <li>Significance of visual impacts determined to range from <b>moderate to low</b> as a result of the generally undeveloped character of the landscape and the remote location of the project infrastructure.</li> <li>A number of mitigation measures have been proposed.</li> <li>If mitigation is undertaken as recommended, it is concluded that the significance of most of the anticipated visual impacts will remain at or be managed to acceptable levels, and the facility considered acceptable from a visual perspective.</li> </ul>

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### SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Social Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The findings of the SIA indicated that the development of the proposed 100 MWac Vrede SEF will create employment and business opportunities for locals during both the construction and operational phase of the project.</li> <li>The enhancement measures listed should be implemented</li> <li>The proposed development represents an investment in clean, renewable energy infrastructure, which represents a significant positive social benefit for society as a whole.</li> <li>The findings also indicated that the REIPPPP has resulted in significant socio-economic benefits, both at a national level and at a local, community level. These benefits are linked to foreign Direct Investment, local employment and procurement and investment in local community initiatives.</li> <li>The facility establishment was supported by the findings of the SIA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The findings of the SIA indicated that the development of the proposed 100 MWac Rondavel SEF will create employment and business opportunities for locals during both the construction and operational phase of the project.</li> <li>The enhancement measures listed should be implemented</li> <li>The proposed development represents an investment in clean, renewable energy infrastructure, which represents a significant positive social benefit for society as a whole.</li> <li>The findings also indicated that the REIPPPP has resulted in significant socio-economic benefits, both at a national level and at a local, community level. These benefits are linked to foreign Direct Investment, local employment and procurement and investment in local community initiatives.</li> <li>The facility establishment was supported by the findings of the SIA.</li> </ul>

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## SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Specialist	Assessment of Issues – Vrede SEF	Assessment of Issues – Rondavel SEF
Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The loss of unprotected vegetation types on a cumulative basis from the broader area impacts the country's ability to meet its conservation targets</li> <li>Impacts on Critical Biodiversity Areas and Broad-Scale Ecological Processes</li> <li>Cumulative impacts due to nearby renewable energy developments</li> <li>All impacts <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The loss of unprotected vegetation types on a cumulative basis from the broader area impacts the country's ability to meet its conservation targets</li> <li>Impacts on Broad-Scale Ecological Processes</li> <li>Cumulative impacts due to nearby renewable energy developments</li> <li>All impacts <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>
Avifaunal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mortality and displacement of priority avifauna due to the construction of the PV facility and associated infrastructure</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mortality and displacement of priority avifauna due to the construction of the PV facility and associated infrastructure</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>

## SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Specialist	Assessment of Issues – Vrede SEF	Assessment of Issues – Rondavel SEF
Freshwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compromise of ecological processes as well as ecological functioning of important freshwater resource habitats</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compromise of ecological processes as well as ecological functioning of important freshwater resource habitats</li> <li>Rated <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cumulative impact to the cultural sense of place.</li> <li>Rated <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cumulative impact to the cultural sense of place.</li> <li>Rated <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>

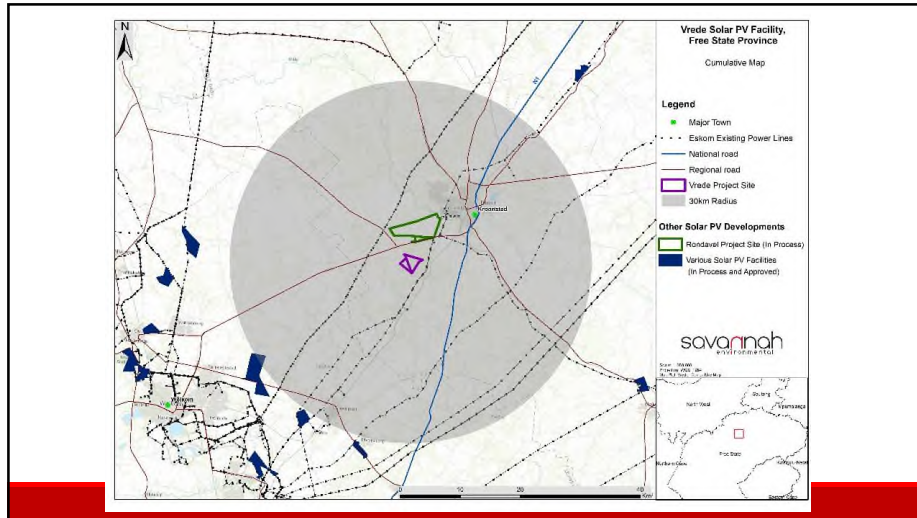
## SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Specialist	Assessment of Issues – Vrede SEF	Assessment of Issues – Rondavel SEF
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The potential cumulative visual impact of the solar energy facilities on the visual quality of the landscape.</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>moderate</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The potential cumulative visual impact of the solar energy facilities on the visual quality of the landscape.</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>moderate</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(negative) Visual impacts associated with the establishment of more than one SEF and the potential impact on the area's rural sense of place and character of the landscape.</li> <li>(negative) The establishment of a number of renewable energy facilities in the Moqhaka Local Municipality (MLM) has the potential to place pressure on local services, specifically medical, education and accommodation</li> <li>(positive) The establishment of a number of solar energy facilities in the MLM will create employment, skills development and training opportunities, creation of downstream business opportunities.</li> <li>All negative impacts <b>medium to low</b> in isolation and <b>low to medium</b> considered within the broader region</li> <li>Positive impact rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>high</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(negative) Visual impacts associated with the establishment of more than one SEF and the potential impact on the area's rural sense of place and character of the landscape.</li> <li>(negative) The establishment of a number of renewable energy facilities in the Moqhaka Local Municipality (MLM) has the potential to place pressure on local services, specifically medical, education and accommodation</li> <li>(positive) The establishment of a number of solar energy facilities in the MLM will create employment, skills development and training opportunities, creation of downstream business opportunities.</li> <li>All negative impacts <b>medium to low</b> in isolation and <b>low to medium</b> considered within the broader region</li> <li>Positive impact rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>high</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>

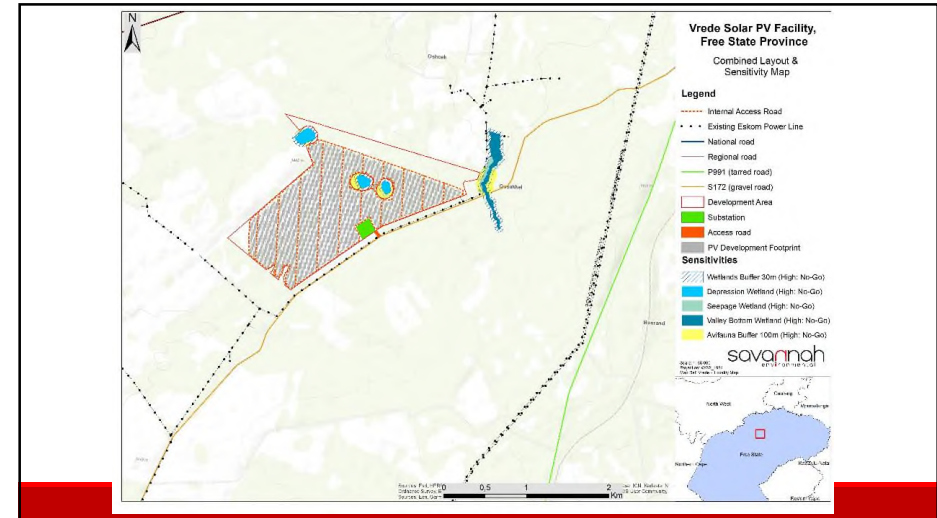
## SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Specialist	Assessment of Issues – Vrede SEF	Assessment of Issues – Rondavel SEF
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in areas with suitable land capability for cattle farming.</li> <li>Increase in areas susceptible to soil erosion.</li> <li>Increase in areas susceptible to soil pollution</li> <li>All impacts <b>medium to low</b> in isolation and <b>low to medium</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in areas with suitable land capability for cattle farming.</li> <li>Increase in areas susceptible to soil erosion.</li> <li>Increase in areas susceptible to soil pollution</li> <li>All impacts <b>medium to low</b> in isolation and <b>low to medium</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>

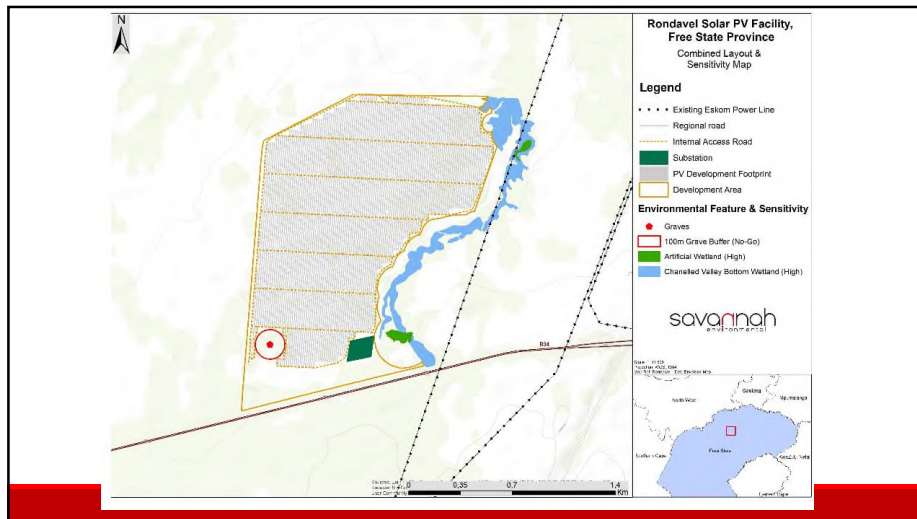
- Based on the specialist cumulative assessment and findings, the respective developments and their contribution to the overall impact of all existing and proposed solar energy facilities within a 30km radius, it was concluded that cumulative impacts will be of a low to medium significance, with only a high positive impact determined in terms of social cumulative impacts. Therefore, the development of both projects will not result in unacceptable, high cumulative impacts and will not result in a whole-scale change of the environment, and is therefore considered acceptable from a cumulative impact perspective.



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## FINDINGS (both projects)

- Majority of potential impacts are associated with the construction phase
- Impacts range from local to regional/national in extent
- The specialist findings have indicated that there are no identified environmental fatal flaws associated with the implementation of either Vrede or Rondavel SEFs.
- The developer had proposed technically viable layouts for the projects and associated infrastructure
- High sensitivity features, all no-go zones and associated buffer areas were avoided for both projects.
- The proposed layouts are therefore considered as the most appropriate from an environmental perspective and are both considered to be acceptable within all fields of specialist study undertaken for the project.
- All impacts associated with the proposed layouts can be mitigated to acceptable levels or enhanced through the implementation of the recommended mitigation or enhancement measures.
- It was concluded that the development of both Vrede SEF and Rondavel SEF is considered environmentally acceptable, subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures.

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## DISCUSSIONS



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## WAY FORWARD

- » Meeting notes will be distributed for verification
- » Presentation will be distributed
- » Review and comment period ending **01 June 2021** (for both projects)
- » Incorporate issues and concerns raised during the Public Participation Process into the respective Final EIA Reports
- » Submission of final EIA Reports to DFFE for decision-making in June 2021.



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## WHO TO CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

### **Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd**

Nicolene Venter

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PO Box 148, Sunninghill, 2157

Tel: 011 656 3237

Mobile: 060 978 8396 (*'please call me'*)

Fax: 086 684 0547

[www.savannahsa.com](http://www.savannahsa.com)



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## Nicolene Venter

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**From:** Public Process <publicprocess@savannahsa.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 9, 2021 5:12 PM  
**To:** Spiro Khoury; Braam Visagie; Braam Visagie; Keke Ramantso  
**Cc:** Nicolene Venter; Nicolene Venter  
**Subject:** Vrede SEF & Rondavel SEF: FGM Draft Meeting Notes  
**Attachments:** SE2710-FGM MFP Meeting Minutes-Draft FINAL.pdf

Dear Braam,

Thank you for Moqhaka for the People's participation in the EIA and public participation process for the above-mentioned projects.

Please find attached the meeting notes of the Focus Group Meeting held on Tuesday, 18 May 2021 for your review and inputs.

Kind regards,



t: 011 656 3237  
f: 086 684 0547

**Nicolene Venter**  
Public Process

e: publicprocess@savannahsa.com  
c: +27 (0) 60 978 8396

SAWEA Award for Leading Environmental Consultant on Wind Projects in 2013 & 2015

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESSES FOR THE  
100MW<sub>ac</sub> VREDE SOLAR PV FACILITY, BATTERY ENERGY  
STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
AND THE  
100MW<sub>ac</sub> RONDAVEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, BATTERY  
ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED  
INFRASTRUCTURE LOCATED NEAR KROONSTAD, FREE  
STATE PROVINCE**

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**MEETING NOTES OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING HELD WITH WARD 7  
COUNCILLOR AND WORD COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 19 MAY 2021 AT 09H00  
VENUE: VIRTUAL MEETING USING ZOOM PLATFORM**

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**Meeting notes prepared by:**

Nicolene Venter  
Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd  
E-mail: [publicprocess@savannahsa.com](mailto:publicprocess@savannahsa.com)

*Please note that these notes are not verbatim, but a summary of the comments submitted at the meeting.  
Please address any comments to Savannah Environmental at the above address*

**100MWac VREDE SOLAR PV FACILITY, BESS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE 100MWac RONDAVEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, BESS AND ASSOCIATED INSTRUCTURE PROJECTS NEAR KROONSTAD, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

**MEETING ATTENDEES**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Cllr Tshidiso Bolofo	Councillor: Ward 7	Moqhaka Local Municipality
Aaron Maruluba	Representative	SMME Forum: Moqhaka
Gesie Theron	Project Manager	SA Mainstream Renewable Power
Rafeeqah Kamish	Project Assistant	
Gideon Raath	Environmental Assessment Practitioner	Savannah Environmental
Nicolene Venter	Public Participation and Social Consultant	

Cllr Bolofo and Mr Marubulo joined the meeting from their mobile phones and could therefore not confirm their attendance on the chat function.

**INTRODUCTION**

Nicolene Venter welcomed Cllr Bolofo and Mr Marubulo at the online focus group meeting (FGM) for the Vrede and Rondavel Solar PV and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and association infrastructure facility projects located approximately 6 and 11km south of Kroonstad in the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Fezile Dabi District Municipality in the Free State Province.

Gideon Raath presented an overview of the projects and a summary of the key environmental findings as documented in the Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIARs) available for a 30- day review and comment period. A copy of the slides presented during the virtual meeting is attached as **Appendix A** to the meeting notes and also e-mailed to the participants.

The meeting notes below are not captured verbatim.

## DISCUSSION SESSION

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Question / Comment	Response
Aaron Maruluba asked what benefit there would be for local SMMEs during the construction and operational phase.	<p>Gideon Raath responded that not only would there be employment opportunities during the construction phase but in terms of benefits to SMMEs would be the sourcing of construction material. It needs to be noted that not all construction material might be available locally.</p> <p>With the influx of workers to the area, not only during construction but also the operation team, services such as accommodation, meals, etc would be required.</p> <p>Additional to employment is the upskill of local labour by providing on training.</p>
Aaron Maruluba asked what the process is to register companies timeously to become involved in the phases or to be known to the Developer once the projects starts.	<p>Gesie Theron responded that, should the projects received preferred bidder status, the process would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• appoint a main contractor;</li><li>• advertise various services that would be required;</li><li>• consult with Moqhaka Local Municipalities for existing databases of SMMEs and skills available in the area;</li><li>• hold community consultation meetings, and</li><li>• by attending this meeting, the Councillor and Mr Maruluba contact details are on the project's database, which also forms a basis of contact details of local residents.</li></ul>

## CLOSURE

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Cllr Bolofo thanked Savannah Environmental for the opportunity to be informed and participate in the process.

Nicolene Venter presented the way forward and thanked the participants for their valuable inputs into the EIA processes. The meeting was closed at 10h00.

## ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS

SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise
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# **APPENDIX A: Presentation**

# 100MW Vrede Solar PV facility, Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure, Kroonstad, Free State Province &

# 100MW Rondavel Solar PV facility, Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure, Kroonstad, Free State Province

Public Participation Presentation  
May 2021



## AGENDA

- Welcome and Introduction
- Meeting Conduct
- Project Overview
- Environmental Process, Studies & Findings
- Discussion
- Way Forward



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## CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

- Please stay on mute during the presentation
- Register attendance on Chat function (name, surname & affiliation)
- Please raise your hand to indicate comment / question to raise
- Questions submitted in Chat function will be responded to after the presentation
- Equal opportunity
- Recording of meeting
- Attendees welcome to switch video on



## PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

- Provide stakeholder & IAPs with an overview of the two respective Vrede & Rondavel Solar PV Facilities (separate projects)
- Summary of the **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) & Public Participation** being undertaken for both projects
- Present summary of the key environmental findings as documented in the **EIA Reports** of both projects
- Provide stakeholders the opportunity to seek clarity regarding the projects and their respective environmental studies
- Obtain and record comments for inclusion in the **Final EIA Reports** to be submitted to the DFFE



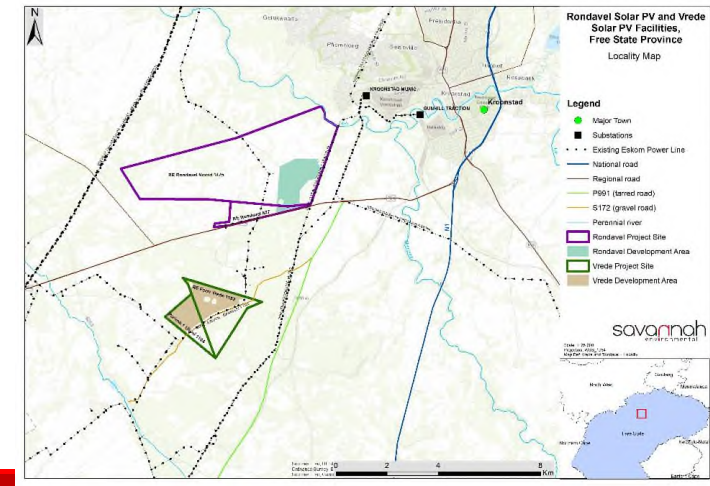
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## PROJECTS OVERVIEW

- **Applicant –**
  - Vrede Solar PV Facility: South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd
  - Rondavel Solar PV Facility: South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd
- **Location –**
  - Vrede Solar PV Facility: Farm Vrede No. 1152 and the Farm Uitval No. 1104;
  - Rondavel Solar PV Facility: Remaining Extent of the farm Rondavel Noord No. 1475 and Remaining Extent of the farm Rondavel No. 627.
- **Project proposal –**
  - Proposed construction and operation of two separate 100MW Photovoltaic Solar Energy Facilities including Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure near Kroonstad in the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Fezile Dabi District in the Free State Province.
  - Projects respectively called Vrede Solar PV Facility and Rondavel Solar PV Facility.

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

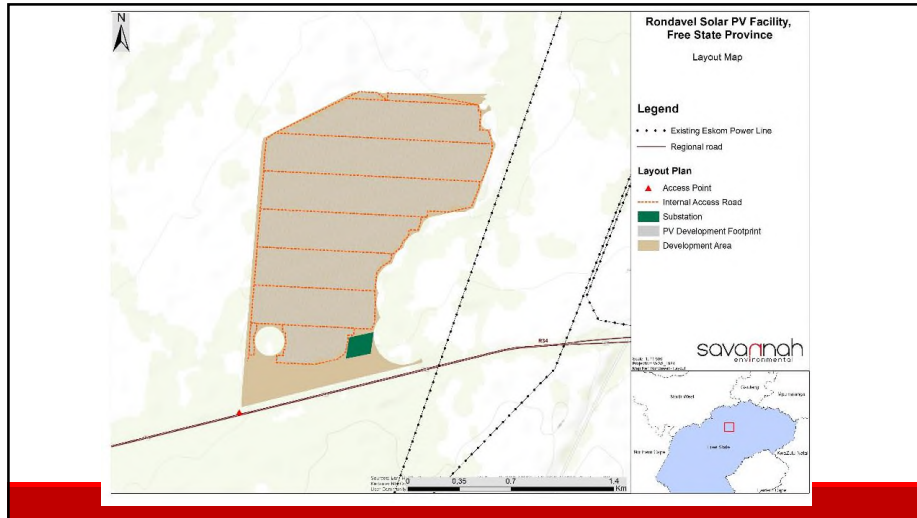
- **Infrastructure associated with both solar PV facilities will include:**
  - Solar PV array comprising PV modules, mounting structures, underground cabling between the project components, inverters and transformers, and underground cabling between the project components.
  - On-site facility substation to facilitate the connection between the solar PV facility and the Eskom electricity grid.
  - Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).
  - Site offices and maintenance buildings, including workshop areas for maintenance and storage, operational control center, maintenance area, warehouse, ablutions,
  - Laydown areas and temporary man camp area.
  - Access roads, internal distribution roads and fencing around the development area.
  - Electrical infrastructure including 33/132kV Independent Power Producer (IPP) onsite substation including associated equipment and infrastructure, underground cabling and overhead power lines (up to 33kV)
  - Associated Infrastructure including access roads and internal gravel roads, fencing and lighting, lightning protection, permanent laydown area, temporary construction camp and laydown area, telecommunication infrastructure, batching plant (if required), stormwater channels and water pipelines.

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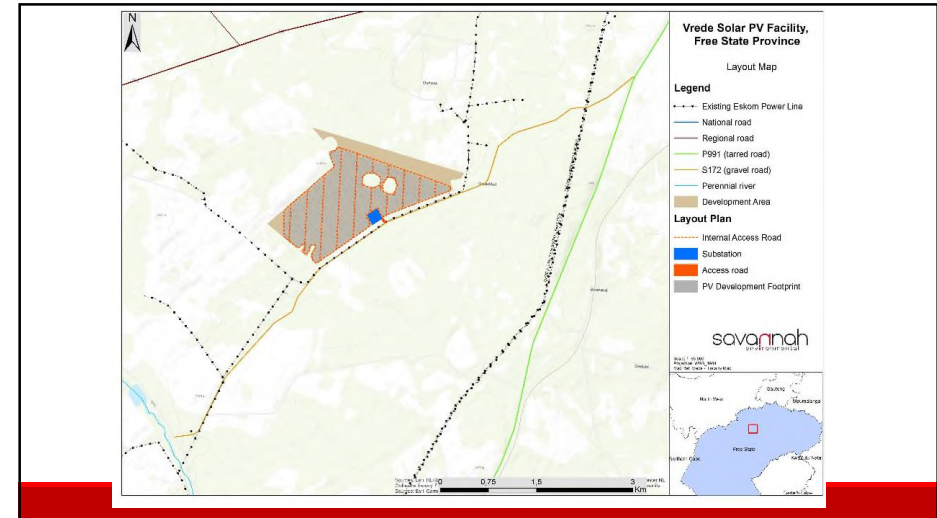
## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- **Activities associated with both solar PV facilities may include:**
  - Surveys and studies during planning, including obtaining all permits and required approvals
  - Procurement of contractor teams
  - Establishment of access roads
  - Site preparation, including vegetation clearing and soil preparation
  - Component and equipment transport to site
  - Establishment of laydown areas
  - Erection of PV panels and installation of structural and electrical infrastructure (cabling, substations, inverters etc.)
  - Establishment of support infrastructure
  - Site rehabilitation
  - Operation and maintenance
  - Site decommissioning

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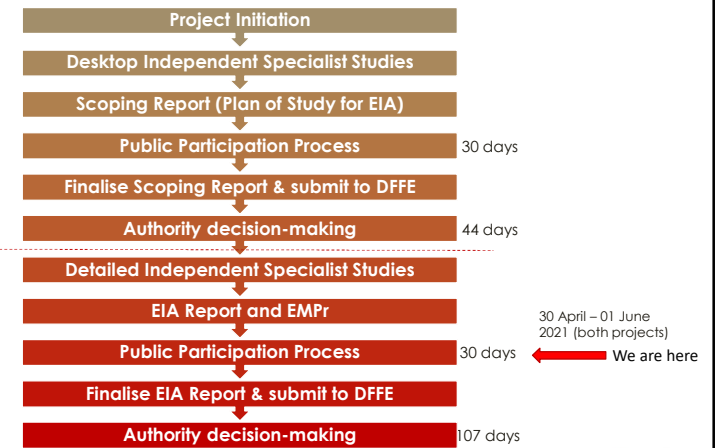
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## EIA PROCESS

- The proposed projects both requires Environmental Authorisation (EA) in terms of NEMA & the EIA Regulations (2014), as amended
- An EIA towards environmental authorisation is being undertaken for both, based on Listing Notice 2 activities being triggered
- An EIA Report has been prepared for each project respectively and is available for a 30-day review period (30 April – 01 June 2021)
- Following the conclusion of the 30-day review period the Final EIA Reports will be prepared & submitted to DFFE

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## EIA PROCESS



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## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS/SENSITIVITIES IDENTIFIED

- Understanding the nature of the proposed developments and the impacts associated with the projects (as identified in the EIA phase), the following has been considered and assessed within the EIA phase:
  - Impacts on ecology (including flora and fauna)
  - Impacts on freshwater resources
  - Impacts on avifauna
  - Impacts on soils, geology, agricultural potential and land-use
  - Impacts on heritage (archaeology and palaeontology)
  - Visual impacts
  - Social impacts
  - Evaluation of potential cumulative impacts associated with the project



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## SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Ecology (including flora and fauna)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, no significant terrestrial ecological fatal flaws were identified during the EIA phase assessment.</li> <li>• All wetland features were deemed very high ecological sensitivity and a 30m no-go buffer around them is recommended.</li> <li>• Natural grassland features that are representative of Vaal-Vet Sandy Grassland (Endangered) and which are located within CBA1 regions were also considered very high sensitivity features, although these were not considered no-go areas. High and medium sensitivity areas, within which development was considered acceptable was also determined.</li> <li>• Layout avoids all high sensitivity features including buffer zones</li> <li>• All impacts were rated low following implementation of mitigation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, no significant terrestrial ecological fatal flaws were identified during the EIA phase assessment.</li> <li>• All wetland features were deemed very high ecological sensitivity and a 30m no-go buffer around them is recommended.</li> <li>• Dolerite outcrops and Acacia karoo – Asparagus laricinus Shrub-Grassland were considered to be of medium sensitivity.</li> <li>• Layout avoids all high sensitivity features including buffer zones</li> <li>• All impacts were rated low following implementation of mitigation</li> </ul>



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## SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS



Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Freshwater resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The specialist identified a few wetlands within the development area, which were at risk of impact.</li> <li>• These were defined as no-go areas together with their defined 30m buffer zones.</li> <li>• These features have been avoided by the proposed layout.</li> <li>• With the implementation of mitigation measures, impacts will be localised, short-term and of low intensity and is expected to have a moderate-low to low overall significance in terms of its impact on the identified aquatic ecosystems in the area.</li> <li>• Based on the findings of the Freshwater Resources Impact Assessment there is no objection to the authorisation of the proposed activities provided that the recommended mitigation measures are implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The specialist identified two wetland areas close to the development area, which were at risk of impact.</li> <li>• These were defined as no-go areas together with their defined 30m buffer zones.</li> <li>• These features have been avoided by the proposed layout.</li> <li>• With the implementation of mitigation measures, impacts will be localised, short-term and of low intensity and is expected to have a moderate-low to low overall significance in terms of its impact on the identified aquatic ecosystems in the area.</li> <li>• Based on the findings of the Freshwater Resources Impact Assessment there is no objection to the authorisation of the proposed activities provided that the recommended mitigation measures are implemented.</li> </ul>

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## SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS



Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Impacts on avifauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 100m solar panel free buffer zone must be implemented around the pans on site (-27.736377° 27.134694°, -27.740910° 27.141575°, -27.741723° 27.144815°) to provide avifauna with unhindered access to the water.</li> <li>• In addition, a 100m solar panel free buffer zone must be implemented on both sides of the drainage line on the development area, to maintain a corridor of woodland.</li> <li>• The layout considers the above sensitivities by exclusion of these areas from the development footprint and facility layout.</li> <li>• A <b>medium negative</b> impact on priority avifauna, which can be reduced to <b>low</b> with appropriate mitigation was found.</li> <li>• The development is supported provided the mitigation measures listed in this report are strictly implemented. No fatal flaws were discovered in the course of the investigations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 100m solar panel free buffer zone must be implemented around the dam at -27.704605° 27.178359° to provide avifauna with unhindered access to the water.</li> <li>• In addition, a 100m solar panel free buffer zone must be implemented on both sides of the drainage line on the development area, to maintain a corridor of woodland.</li> <li>• The layout considers the above sensitivities by exclusion of these areas from the development footprint and facility layout.</li> <li>• A <b>medium negative</b> impact on priority avifauna, which can be reduced to <b>low</b> with appropriate mitigation was found.</li> <li>• The development is supported provided the mitigation measures listed in this report are strictly implemented. No fatal flaws were discovered in the course of the investigations.</li> </ul>

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### SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Soils and agricultural potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The specialist determined that even though the development footprint includes areas with High agricultural sensitivity, this application may be considered favourably.</li> <li>The area has not been used for crop production since 2005 and the landowner further indicated that crop farming is not a viable option and that he will not return the fields to crop fields again. The farm is currently used for commercial cattle production of 35 head of cattle and can at most provide employment for two farmworkers.</li> <li>In contrast to that, the project will contribute a significant amount of expenditure to the area and employ more than 230 workers during the construction phase and more than 17 workers during the operational phase.</li> <li>In the light of the high number of employment opportunities that will be created per hectare of land, the proposed Vrede solar PV facility is considered an acceptable land use change.</li> <li>The specialist concluded that this application be considered favourably, on the condition that the mitigation measures are followed to prevent soil erosion and soil pollution and to minimise impacts on the veld quality of the farm portions that will be affected.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The land capability of the site is mainly Low-Moderate (Class 06) and the grazing capacity (according to DAFF, 2018), is around 5ha/LSU. Site observations found that a realistic grazing capacity is considered to be 6ha/LSU.</li> <li>Soil and agricultural impacts were determined to range from <b>medium to low</b> which with mitigation can be reduced to low.</li> <li>The area that will be fenced off is approximately 186.1ha and this will alienate grazing veld for about 50 head of cattle.</li> <li>The specialist concluded that this application be considered favourably, on the condition that the mitigation measures are followed to prevent soil erosion and soil pollution and to minimise impacts on the veld quality of the farm portions that will be affected.</li> </ul>

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### SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Heritage (archaeology and Palaeontology)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was noted that the area proposed for development has been historically disturbed through agricultural activities.</li> <li>No archaeological resources were determined within the development footprint</li> <li>The overall palaeontological sensitivity was high to very high.</li> <li>It was recommended that all excavations into bedrock are monitored by a suitably qualified palaeontologist and a report and a report submitted to SAHRA post-construction</li> <li>Chance find procedure implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four observations of varied cultural significance were recorded, the most significant being RDW002, a possible grave marked with a pile of stones.</li> <li>A no development buffer of 100m is implemented around the heritage features identified</li> <li>The development will not negatively impact on any archaeological heritage resources on condition that the recommendations and buffer zones are adhered to.</li> <li>A layout responding to these sensitivities was developed</li> <li>The overall palaeontological sensitivity was high to very high.</li> <li>It was recommended that all excavations into bedrock are monitored by a suitably qualified palaeontologist and a report and a report submitted to SAHRA post-construction</li> <li>Chance find procedure implemented</li> </ul>



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### SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The visual impact will differ amongst places, depending on the distance from the facility.</li> <li>The intensity of visual impact to exposed receptors, especially those located within a 3km radius, is expected to be greater than it would be for a single solar energy facility. It is however still more preferable that these renewable energy developments are concentrated within this area rather than being spread further apart.</li> <li>Significance of visual impacts determined to range from <b>moderate to low</b> as a result of the generally undeveloped character of the landscape and the remote location of the project infrastructure.</li> <li>A number of mitigation measures have been proposed.</li> <li>If mitigation is undertaken as recommended, it is concluded that the significance of most of the anticipated visual impacts will remain at or be managed to acceptable levels, and the facility considered acceptable from a visual perspective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The visual impact will differ amongst places, depending on the distance from the facility.</li> <li>The intensity of visual impact to exposed receptors, especially those located within a 3km radius, is expected to be greater than it would be for a single solar energy facility. It is however still more preferable that these renewable energy developments are concentrated within this area rather than being spread further apart.</li> <li>Significance of visual impacts determined to range from <b>moderate to low</b> as a result of the generally undeveloped character of the landscape and the remote location of the project infrastructure.</li> <li>A number of mitigation measures have been proposed.</li> <li>If mitigation is undertaken as recommended, it is concluded that the significance of most of the anticipated visual impacts will remain at or be managed to acceptable levels, and the facility considered acceptable from a visual perspective.</li> </ul>

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### SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Social Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The findings of the SIA indicated that the development of the proposed 100 MWac Vrede SEF will create employment and business opportunities for locals during both the construction and operational phase of the project.</li> <li>The enhancement measures listed should be implemented</li> <li>The proposed development represents an investment in clean, renewable energy infrastructure, which represents a significant positive social benefit for society as a whole.</li> <li>The findings also indicated that the REIPPPP has resulted in significant socio-economic benefits, both at a national level and at a local, community level. These benefits are linked to foreign Direct Investment, local employment and procurement and investment in local community initiatives.</li> <li>The facility establishment was supported by the findings of the SIA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The findings of the SIA indicated that the development of the proposed 100 MWac Rondavel SEF will create employment and business opportunities for locals during both the construction and operational phase of the project.</li> <li>The enhancement measures listed should be implemented</li> <li>The proposed development represents an investment in clean, renewable energy infrastructure, which represents a significant positive social benefit for society as a whole.</li> <li>The findings also indicated that the REIPPPP has resulted in significant socio-economic benefits, both at a national level and at a local, community level. These benefits are linked to foreign Direct Investment, local employment and procurement and investment in local community initiatives.</li> <li>The facility establishment was supported by the findings of the SIA.</li> </ul>

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## SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Specialist	Assessment of Issues – Vrede SEF	Assessment of Issues – Rondavel SEF
Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The loss of unprotected vegetation types on a cumulative basis from the broader area impacts the country's ability to meet its conservation targets</li> <li>Impacts on Critical Biodiversity Areas and Broad-Scale Ecological Processes</li> <li>Cumulative impacts due to nearby renewable energy developments</li> <li>All impacts <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The loss of unprotected vegetation types on a cumulative basis from the broader area impacts the country's ability to meet its conservation targets</li> <li>Impacts on Broad-Scale Ecological Processes</li> <li>Cumulative impacts due to nearby renewable energy developments</li> <li>All impacts <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>
Avifaunal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mortality and displacement of priority avifauna due to the construction of the PV facility and associated infrastructure</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mortality and displacement of priority avifauna due to the construction of the PV facility and associated infrastructure</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>

## SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Specialist	Assessment of Issues – Vrede SEF	Assessment of Issues – Rondavel SEF
Freshwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compromise of ecological processes as well as ecological functioning of important freshwater resource habitats</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compromise of ecological processes as well as ecological functioning of important freshwater resource habitats</li> <li>Rated <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cumulative impact to the cultural sense of place.</li> <li>Rated <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cumulative impact to the cultural sense of place.</li> <li>Rated <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>

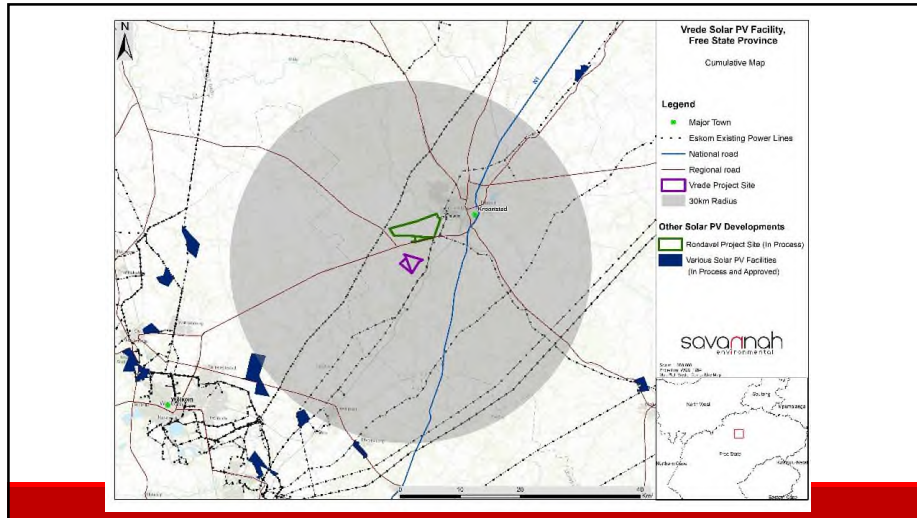
## SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Specialist	Assessment of Issues – Vrede SEF	Assessment of Issues – Rondavel SEF
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The potential cumulative visual impact of the solar energy facilities on the visual quality of the landscape.</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>moderate</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The potential cumulative visual impact of the solar energy facilities on the visual quality of the landscape.</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>moderate</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(negative) Visual impacts associated with the establishment of more than one SEF and the potential impact on the area's rural sense of place and character of the landscape.</li> <li>(negative) The establishment of a number of renewable energy facilities in the Moqhaka Local Municipality (MLM) has the potential to place pressure on local services, specifically medical, education and accommodation</li> <li>(positive) The establishment of a number of solar energy facilities in the MLM will create employment, skills development and training opportunities, creation of downstream business opportunities.</li> <li>All negative impacts <b>medium to low</b> in isolation and <b>low to medium</b> considered within the broader region</li> <li>Positive impact rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>high</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(negative) Visual impacts associated with the establishment of more than one SEF and the potential impact on the area's rural sense of place and character of the landscape.</li> <li>(negative) The establishment of a number of renewable energy facilities in the Moqhaka Local Municipality (MLM) has the potential to place pressure on local services, specifically medical, education and accommodation</li> <li>(positive) The establishment of a number of solar energy facilities in the MLM will create employment, skills development and training opportunities, creation of downstream business opportunities.</li> <li>All negative impacts <b>medium to low</b> in isolation and <b>low to medium</b> considered within the broader region</li> <li>Positive impact rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>high</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>

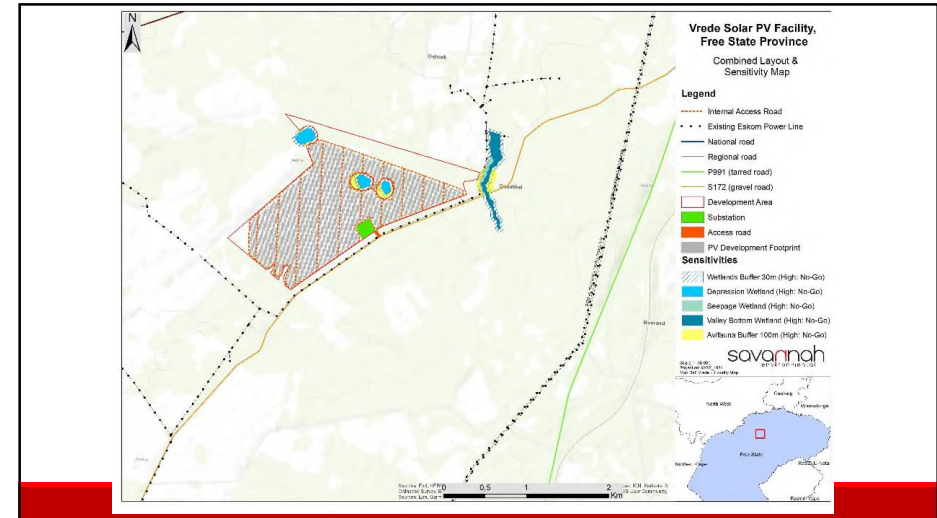
## SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Specialist	Assessment of Issues – Vrede SEF	Assessment of Issues – Rondavel SEF
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in areas with suitable land capability for cattle farming.</li> <li>Increase in areas susceptible to soil erosion.</li> <li>Increase in areas susceptible to soil pollution</li> <li>All impacts <b>medium to low</b> in isolation and <b>low to medium</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in areas with suitable land capability for cattle farming.</li> <li>Increase in areas susceptible to soil erosion.</li> <li>Increase in areas susceptible to soil pollution</li> <li>All impacts <b>medium to low</b> in isolation and <b>low to medium</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>

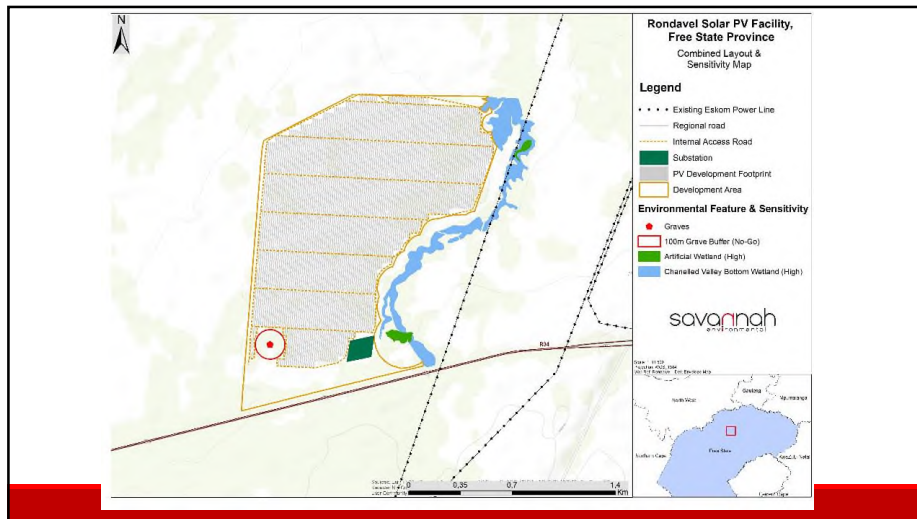
- Based on the specialist cumulative assessment and findings, the respective developments and their contribution to the overall impact of all existing and proposed solar energy facilities within a 30km radius, it was concluded that cumulative impacts will be of a low to medium significance, with only a high positive impact determined in terms of social cumulative impacts. Therefore, the development of both projects will not result in unacceptable, high cumulative impacts and will not result in a whole-scale change of the environment, and is therefore considered acceptable from a cumulative impact perspective.



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## FINDINGS (both projects)

- Majority of potential impacts are associated with the construction phase
- Impacts range from local to regional/national in extent
- The specialist findings have indicated that there are no identified environmental fatal flaws associated with the implementation of either Vrede or Rondavel SEFs.
- The developer had proposed technically viable layouts for the projects and associated infrastructure
- High sensitivity features, all no-go zones and associated buffer areas were avoided for both projects.
- The proposed layouts are therefore considered as the most appropriate from an environmental perspective and are both considered to be acceptable within all fields of specialist study undertaken for the project.
- All impacts associated with the proposed layouts can be mitigated to acceptable levels or enhanced through the implementation of the recommended mitigation or enhancement measures.
- It was concluded that the development of both Vrede SEF and Rondavel SEF is considered environmentally acceptable, subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures.

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## DISCUSSIONS



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## WAY FORWARD

- » Meeting notes will be distributed for verification
- » Presentation will be distributed
- » Review and comment period ending **01 June 2021** (for both projects)
- » Incorporate issues and concerns raised during the Public Participation Process into the respective Final EIA Reports
- » Submission of final EIA Reports to DFFE for decision-making in June 2021.



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## WHO TO CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

### **Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd**

Nicolene Venter

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Fax: 086 684 0547

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## Nicolene Venter

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**From:** Public Process <publicprocess@savannahsa.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 9, 2021 5:27 PM  
**To:** Tshidiso Bolofo  
**Cc:** Nicolene Venter; Nicolene Venter  
**Subject:** Vrede SEF & Rondavel SEF: FGM Draft Meeting Notes  
**Attachments:** SE2710 FGM MLM CllrWard Meeting Minutes-Draft FINAL.pdf

Dear Cllr Bolofo,

Thank you for your participation in the EIA and public participation process for the above-mentioned projects.

Please find attached the draft meeting notes of the Focus Group Meeting held on Wednesday, 19 May 2021 for your review and inputs.

Kind regards,

[Unsubscribe this type of email](#)



t: 011 656 3237  
f: 086 684 0547

**Nicolene Venter**  
Public Process

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c: +27 (0) 60 978 8396

SAWEA Award for Leading Environmental Consultant on Wind Projects in 2013 & 2015

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESSES FOR THE  
100MW<sub>ac</sub> VREDE SOLAR PV FACILITY, BATTERY ENERGY  
STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
AND THE  
100MW<sub>ac</sub> RONDAVEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, BATTERY  
ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED  
INFRASTRUCTURE LOCATED NEAR KROONSTAD, FREE  
STATE PROVINCE**

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**MEETING NOTES OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS MEETING  
HELD ON THURSDAY, 20 MAY 2021 AT 18H00  
VENUE: CONSTANTIA COMMUNITY HALL, KROONSTAD**

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**Meeting notes prepared by:**

Nicolene Venter  
Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd  
E-mail: [publicprocess@savannahsa.com](mailto:publicprocess@savannahsa.com)

*Please note that these notes are not verbatim, but a summary of the comments submitted at the meeting.  
Please address any comments to Savannah Environmental at the above address*

# 100MWac VREDE SOLAR PV FACILITY, BESS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE 100MWac RONDAVEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, BESS AND ASSOCIATED INSTRUCTURE PROJECTS NEAR KROONSTAD, FREE STATE PROVINCE

## MEETING ATTENDEES

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Refer to **Appendix A** for the Record of Attendance which was completed and collected with adherence to COVID-19 Regulations.

## INTRODUCTION

Nicolene Venter welcomed all attendees present at the Public Participation Process Meeting (PPM) where project related information for the 100MWac Vrede Solar PV and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and association infrastructure facility and the 100MWac Rondavel Solar PV and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure facility projects was presented which are located approximately 6 and 11km south of Kroonstad in the Moqhaka Local Municipality.

After introducing herself and her role at the PPPM, she requested the project team to introduce themselves to the community members and also to inform them of their roles for the two projects.

Gideon Raath presented an overview of the projects and a summary of the various environmental studies, and the key environmental findings as documented in the Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIARs). The presentation as presented is attached as **Appendix B** to the meeting notes.

Nicolene Venter asked the participants whether there are any objections to record the meeting to ensure that the comments and questions raised are captured in the PPPM notes. No objections were submitted.

The comments and questions raised at the PPPM have been summarised and are not captured verbatim.



## DISCUSSION SESSION

Question / Comment	Response
<p>Reginald Ntloko asked the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what the impact of radiation would be?</li> </ul>	<p>Gideon Raath explained that there is no radiation emitted at health-impacting levels associated with solar panels.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what is the proximity of the closest community to the sites?</li> </ul>	<p>Gideon Raath responded that both the sites are approximately 6km to 11km south of the town of Kroonstad.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• would potable water be used during the construction and operation of the plants?</li> </ul>	<p>Gideon Raath responded that potable water will be required on site for the construction and operation phase and due to the location of the sites, the project will utilise and develop its own water provision as the municipal services do not currently reach the sites.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• would there be a buffer zone around the panels?</li> </ul>	<p>Gideon Raath responded that the sites will be fenced, and all necessary security measures would be in place i.e. cameras, security access, etc.</p>
<p>Khunong Morabe said that as the electricity generated by these proposed developments would be fed into the national electricity grid network, he asked whether the sites would be declared National Key Points.</p>	<p>Gideon Raath responded that the sites would not be declared National Key Points.</p>
<p>Daniel George thanked the team for an informative presentation.</p> <p>He enquired whether a Councillor/s are present at the meeting as he would want to pose questions to them that requires responses from them.</p>	<p>Nicolene Venter responded that all registered I&amp;APs on the project database were invited and, in the invitation, it was requested that it be extended to any other person who the recipient believes should be informed of these proposed developments. It is every person's right to attend or not to attend the meeting.</p> <p>She added that this meeting forms part of the EIA and public participation process for these two applications and cannot be seen as a Local Municipality stakeholder meeting.</p>
<p>Daniel George asked how far the consultation with the Local Municipality is.</p>	<p>Gideon Raath responded that the Local Municipality is consulted as part of the EIA and public participation process and their participation is the same as what is currently being conducted at the meeting. He added that they have been invited to submit comments on the projects as per the EIA Regulations.</p>

	<p>The Municipal Officials, including the Councillor, have been part of the consultation since the start of the EIA process. Comments submitted by the Municipality would be included in the C&amp;RR.</p> <p>Nicolene Venter added that FGM was held with the Councillor of Ward 7 in which the sites are located and that a meeting with the Municipal Officials was scheduled to take place but due to internet connection, the virtual FGM could not take place. An alternative date is being discussed.</p>
<p>Daniel George asked what benefits there would be for the Kroonstad communities since the proposed projects would, combined, generate 200MW electricity in their area.</p>	<p>Gideon Raath responded that the electricity generated by these two proposed developments would be a national benefit and not directly localised. However, there are local indirect benefits associated with these two proposed projects such as business development, local procurement, etc.</p>
<p>Daniel George asked what the project timeframes are in terms of starting with construction.</p>	<p>Gideon Raath responded that there is currently not a fixed date as there are a number of variables. The envisaged time frames are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In terms of the EIA process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once all comments have been incorporated, the reports would be updated and submitted to the DFFE.</li> <li>• The DFFE has 107 days to issue their decision.</li> <li>• Once the decision has been issued, there would be a 20-day appeal period.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Applicant's process for their financial close for bidding the project into Round 5 of the REIPPP includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoning applications</li> <li>• WULA applications</li> <li>• Secure funding, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Should all applicable applications and authorisation be obtained, it is envisaged that the construction would only start in two (2) to 3 (three) years' time.</p> <p><b><u>Post-meeting note:</u></b></p>

	<p>These two projects would not be submitted in Round 5 of the REIPPP, but rather a suitable similar programme under the IRP (2019).</p>
<p>Keke Moeketsi informed the project team that previously a mining company did the same process and presentation and thereafter no further interaction with the community.</p> <p>He stated that as community members they value and appreciate the projects being proposed in their area, but that the community needs to be considered and involved when the project starts.</p>	<p>Nicolene Venter responded that Mainstream would be provided an opportunity to present their process regarding local content regarding their proposed development projects.</p>
<p>Mr Nduna asked that since electricity generated from these projects would be renewable, would the electricity rate decrease.</p>	<p>Gideon Raath responded that the developer sells the electricity to Eskom and the rate of electricity is determined between Eskom and NERSA.</p>
<p>Paul Kagabe said that as Mainstream and Savanna Environmental are the applicants / bidders for these projects, who are the decision maker at the end and what is the Municipality's involvement in the project i.e. do they have an allocated percentage decision making vote.</p>	<p>Nicolene Venter corrected Mr Kagabe that Savannah Environmental is not an Applicant for the proposed projects but appointed as the independent EAP conducting the EIA processes and application for EA.</p> <p>Gideon Raath responded that the role of the Municipality within the EIA process is to provide inputs and comments and not approval to the EA applications.</p> <p>Nicolene Venter added that the decision maker regarding the EA application is the DFFE.</p> <p>Gideon Raath informed the attendees, as per the question raised earlier as to how to become involved when the projects start, is that by virtue of completing the registration form, they are added to the project database which would be submitted to the client. Should they be successful bidders, the database would be a starting point in contacting community members.</p>
<p>Doctor Motsapele asked how labour intensive would the project be i.e. how many people would be appointed during the construction and the operation phases.</p>	<p>Gideon Raath responded that at the peak of the construction phase, there would be a maximum of 250 – 300 employment opportunities for a period of approximately 18 – 24 months.</p>

	During the operation phase, there would be approximately 20 full-time employment positions varying from low-skilled, semi-skilled and skilled personnel.
Romeo Modise asked what opportunities would be available for disabled people.	Nicolene Venter acknowledged the question raised and as it is an important question, it also covers the SED process that Mainstream needs to follow in terms of their bidding to DMRE, and requested Mainstream's economic development team to present their procurement and employment process to the attendees:
<p>Ttiana Stefanus-Zincke informed the attendees that the process is as follows, should all approval be in place and Mainstream is ready for the bidding phase and selected as a preferred bidder by DMRE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start engaging with the Local Municipality to establish community beneficiaries base within the locality of projects.</li> <li>• From these, a community forum is established and represented by Mainstream and the EPC</li> <li>• These representatives generally consist of government officials such Councillors, schools (education) clinics (health), SAPS etc and generally the forum will consist of 15 members.</li> <li>• Once the community forum has been established, workshops will be held within the local municipal area to roll out the ABCDP</li> <li>• These workshops would identify the asset within the community i.e. existing contractors – as was mentioned during the meeting – to collaborate with.</li> <li>• An open day would be held to provide community members and contractors to register their skills and/or companies. This information will be shared with the EPC.</li> <li>• Communication throughout the process with community representatives are important as community members need to be made aware of what is happening in their area.</li> <li>• EPC will appoint a CLO with the guidance of community forum.</li> <li>• A Project Officer from the community would also be appointed as this person needs to know the culture of the community and also how things are done. The Project Officer's office will be in town and open to all community members to visit.</li> <li>• Advertisements for specific positions would be advertised.</li> <li>• At the Project Office a Grievance Register will be available to lodge any grievances / complaint and these are discussed in the community forum meeting which are held monthly. These meetings are attended by a Mainstream and EPC representative. These representatives report back to the community forum on the progress and status of the projects and attend and respond to the grievances lodged.</li> </ul> <p>Nicolene Venter tabled the question raised as to how people with disability would form part of the employment opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ttiana Stefanus-Zincke responded that in terms of the DMRE requirements and as part of the bidding process, the bidder is obliged to include a certain percentage of their SED to people with disabilities. It is envisaged that positions would be available in the Project Office or support to the CLO.</li> <li>• People with disabilities can also inform the community forum of their skills i.e. computer skills, etc.</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is also important that people up their skills during the construction and implementation phases and these are generally done through on the job training by the EPC, or attending training courses, as it is important to leave community members with a skill once the core activities are done.</li> </ul>	
<p>Motsiliso Kokoropo informed the project team that he is speaking on behalf of a community members who is training community members in the electrical field and these trainees knows electrical work but does not have the necessary qualifications i.e. N6 or a wireman licence, which in turn is an expensive licence to get. This person knows the how but does not speak the technical language.</p> <p>Would Mainstream be willing or able to assist these people i.e. would Mainstream be willing to sub-lease 1MW or 2MW to a SMME company such as the one mentioned that is training community members?</p>	<p>Ttiania Stefanus-Zincke responded that at this stage of the planning phase, Mainstream cannot make any commitments, however the request will be kept on the register until such time that it can be attended to. Information will also be sourced from Mainstream colleagues and a response will be provided in the meeting notes as a post-meeting note.</p> <p>These projects are being developed to be bid in terms of the REIPPPP and there are certain requirements to reach at that stage. It is uncertain whether Mainstream would be able to integrate existing SMMEs into the development phase of the projects of this nature.</p> <p>Ttiania Stefanus-Zincke responded that prior to construction workshops will be held and it would be at these workshops that existing SMMEs can register or present their services to the community forum. As mentioned earlier, it is at these workshops that the asset of the community is identified. She informed the attendee that these workshops will be advertised and depending on how many beneficiary communities are based within the Municipality, additional workshops could be held to accommodate as many community members and SMMEs as possible.</p>
<p>Daniel George asked for clarification purposes whether the reference to the 20 years life span of the project whether it is the operation time of the plant or the construction phase.</p> <p>If the plant is terminated after 20 years of being operational, would the plant be sold to the community.</p>	<p>Gideon Raath responded that with the current technology available, the plant would operate for 20 years. However, as technology improves, the lifespan of the plants could increase.</p> <p>Should the plant only operate for 20 years, the plant i.e. panels, buildings, etc, would be decommissioned. Should the plant be commercially viable to operate after 20 years, it would continue.</p>

	If the plant is not economically viable, infrastructure would be sold off i.e. panels, but not the project as whole.
<p>Spiro Khoury informed the project team that the MFP, the umbrella of various forums, is in support of the projects and presented information regarding their IPP and PPA licenses allowing them to produce its own electricity.</p> <p>He stated, for the records, that they demand the first right of refusal to electricity being produced in their municipal area as it would benefit the community of Moqhaka.</p> <p>Kroonstad needs 60MW electricity, and based on that, their first right of refusal to electricity needs to be minuted.</p>	Nicolene Venter acknowledged the inputs made by Spiro Khoury and that their first right of refusal is minuted.
Keke Moeketsi asked how Mainstream would be spending the carbon credit that they would be earning.	Spiro Khoury responded that the carbon credit is not applicable to these types of developments.
Thabang Molefe requested that there need to be collaborations between Mainstream and the community of Moqhaka as they are the main consumers of electricity in the area.	Gideon Raath acknowledged the request and responded that is recorded as such.
It was asked how many households could be provided with 200MW electricity.	<p>Nicolene Venter responded that the team would provide this information in the meeting notes.</p> <p><b><u>Post-meeting note:</u></b> Gideon Raath estimated that 200MWh equals 200 000 kWh, which utilising an estimated daily household consumption value of 30kWh, means that a 200MW facility could supply sufficient power for ~ 6 666 households. These values and the accuracy thereof will vary greatly depending on actual average household usage, amongst others.</p>

## CLOSURE

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Nicolene Venter presented the way forward and thanked the participants for their valuable inputs into the EIA processes and wished them all a safe journey home.

The meeting was closed at 20h00.

**ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS**

ABCDP	Asset Based Community Development Programme	MFP	Moqhaka for the People
CLO	Community Liaison Officer	PPA	Power Purchase Agreement
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment	PPPM	Public Participation Process Meeting
DMRE	Department of Mineral Resources and Energy	REIPPPP	Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme
EA	Environmental Authorisation	SED	Socio-Economic Development
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise
EPC	Engineering Procurement Company	WULA	Water Use Licence Application
IPP	Independent Power Producer		

**APPENDIX A: Attendance Record**

<b>Company</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>
	Abbey	Nthako
	Agnes	Thota
	Amanda	Phahlali
	Anna	Sekute
	Boitshoko	Nketu
	Daniel	George
	Dikeledi	Mamkulu
	Ditaba	Tsoeu
	Duma	Mazibuko
	Enerst	Lesia
	Fikile	Thekiso
	Francina	Tshabalala
	Gladys	Mogorogi
	Isaac	Pule
	Jacob	Maine
	Johannes	Makume
	Johannes	Mosokotsoane
	K.C	Kanono
	Kenneth	Tshotyana
	Kgomotso	Lekhobo
	Khetsi	Itumeleng
	Khunong	Morabe
	Lazarus	Seitshiro
	Lehlohonolo	Mothobi
	Lethetsa	Storm
	Luvuyo	Hleli
	Mapitso	Phakoe
	Mohlolo	Mosokotsoane
	Mojalefa	Mohanoe
	Ntinti	Sefatsa
	Mahlatsi	Dikeledi
	Mapitso	Phakoe
	Matsiliso	Kokoropo
	Mmui	Liphoko
	Mohlolo	Mosokotsoane
	Morena	Booi
	Motshidisi	Phakoe
	Mpho	Mbangula
	Mpho	Mbangula



Company	First Name	Last Name
	Mpho	Mokhemisa
	MR	Ntloko
	Natash	Nketu
	Nelson	Monokoane
	Noluna	Menzi
	Nthabiseng	Mofokeng
	Ntinti	Sefatsa
	Paul	Kgabale
	Paul	Pie
	Peter	Mothobi
	Petrus	Bekker
	Pontsho	Khotle
	Reginald	Ntloko
	Romeo	Modise
	Samuel	Nkomo
	Seipati	Lephuthing
	Sello	Khotlahomang
	Sibongile	Morabe
	Sthembiso	Ndlovu
	Tanani	Ramaisa
	Tebogo	George
	Teboho	Motete
	Teboho	Nketu
	Thabang	Mokhemia
	Thabang	Molefe
	Thabo	Mahlatsi
	Thabo	Raphuthing
	Thembi	Monyada
	Tshepo	Bahumi
	Tsitso	Chalale
	Windy	Senogo
Afriforum	Gabrie	Grobler
Moqhaka Business Forum	Elva	Motheke
Moqhaka Community Forum	Morena	Thebe
Moqhaka for the People	Anton	Meyer
Moqhaka for the People	Doctor	Motsapele
Moqhaka for the People	Keke	Ramantso
Moqhaka for the People	Paul	Pie
Moqhaka for the People	Spiro	Khoury
Vuka Safe Haven	Morena	Thebe

# APPENDIX B: Presentation

100MW Vrede Solar PV facility, Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure, Kroonstad, Free State Province  
&

100MW Rondavel Solar PV facility, Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure, Kroonstad, Free State Province

Public Participation Presentation  
May 2021



## AGENDA

- Welcome and Introduction
- Meeting Conduct
- Project Overview
- Environmental Process, Studies & Findings
- Discussion
- Way Forward



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## CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

- Recording of Meeting
- Comments & questions after the presentation
- Please raise your hand to indicate comment / question to the team
- Equal opportunity



## PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

- Provide stakeholder & I&APs with an overview of the **Vrede & Rondavel Solar PV Facilities (separate projects)**
- Summary of the **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) & Public Participation** being undertaken for both projects
- Present summary of the key environmental findings as documented in the **EIA Reports** of both projects
- Provide stakeholders the opportunity to seek clarity regarding the projects and their respective environmental studies
- Interact with the project team
- Obtain and record comments for inclusion in the **Final EIA Reports** to be submitted to the DFFE



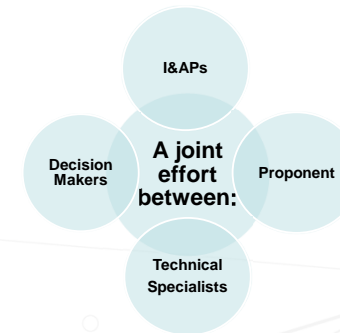
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# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

5

## WHAT IS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



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## WHAT IS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (continued)

- Inform a wide range of I&APs
- Allows I&APs to exchange information & express their views and concerns
- Information sharing
- I&APs to provide comments on the content of the specialists' studies
- Record & document contribution (C&RR) for DFFE decision-making

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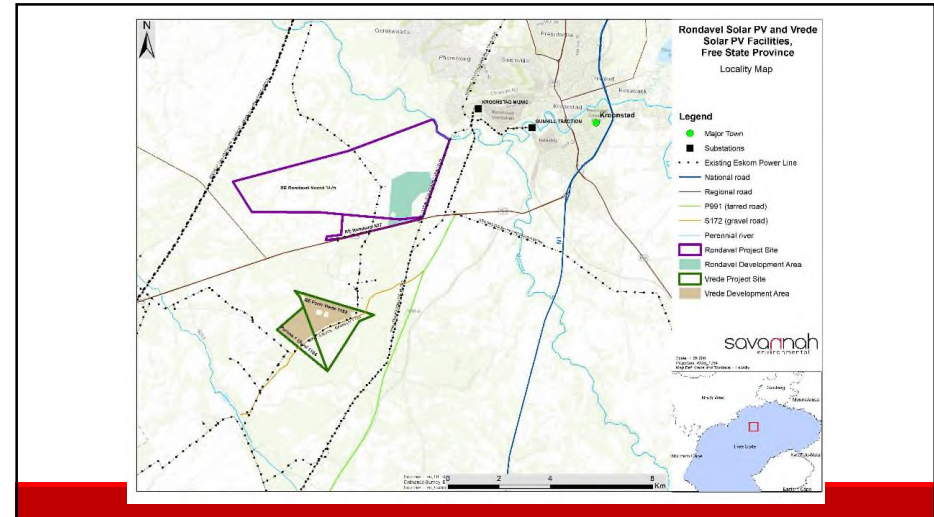
## PROJECTS OVERVIEW

8

## PROJECTS OVERVIEW

- **Applicant for both projects –**
  - South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd
- **Location –**
  - Vrede Solar PV Facility: Farm Vrede No. 1152 and the Farm Uitval No. 1104;
  - Rondavel Solar PV Facility: Remaining Extent of the farm Rondavel Noord No. 1475 and Remaining Extent of the farm Rondavel No. 627.
  - Near Kroonstad in the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Fezile Dabi District in the Free State Province.
- **Project proposal –**
  - Proposed construction and operation of two separate 100MW Photovoltaic Solar Energy Facilities
  - Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)
  - Associated infrastructure

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- **Infrastructure associated with both solar PV facilities will include:**
  - Solar PV array (PV modules, mounting structures, underground cabling between the project components, inverters and transformers).
  - On-site facility substation to facilitate connection to the Eskom electricity grid.
  - Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).
  - Site offices & maintenance buildings, including workshop areas, operational control center, maintenance area, warehouse, ablutions,
  - Laydown areas and temporary man camp area.
  - Access roads, internal distribution roads and fencing around the development area.
  - Associated Infrastructure including lighting, lightning protection, permanent laydown area, temporary construction camp and laydown area, telecommunication infrastructure, batching plant (if required), stormwater channels and water pipelines.

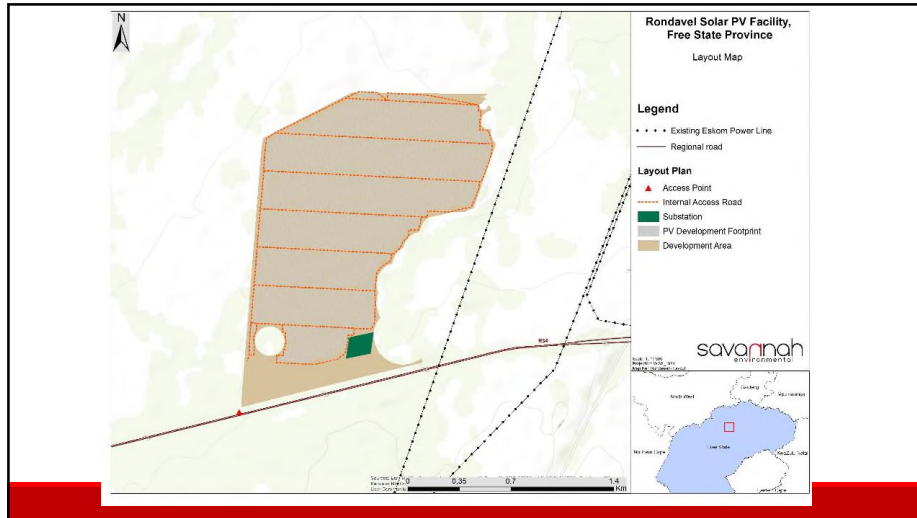
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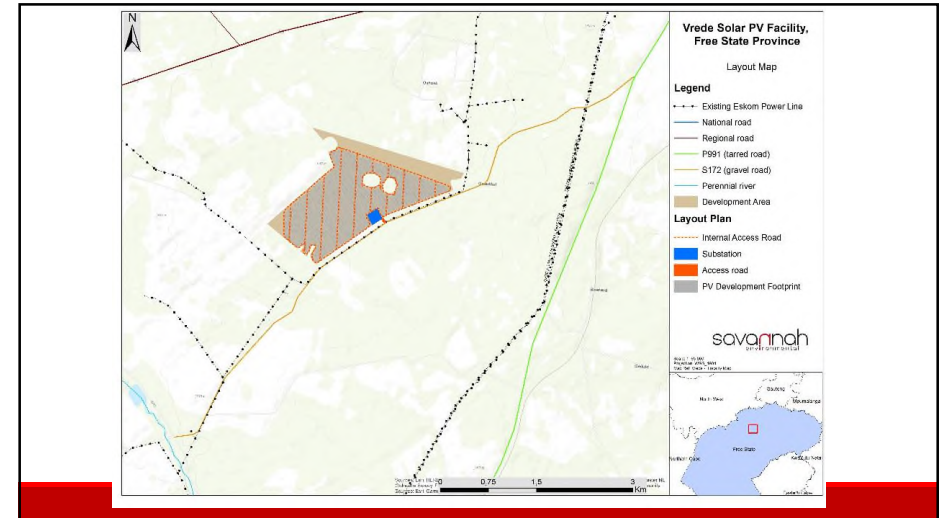
## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- **Activities associated with both solar PV facilities may include:**
  - Surveys and studies during planning, including obtaining all permits and required approvals
  - Procurement of contractor teams
  - Establishment of access roads
  - Site preparation, including vegetation clearing and soil preparation
  - Component and equipment transport to site
  - Establishment of laydown areas
  - Erection of PV panels and installation of structural and electrical infrastructure (cabling, substations, inverters etc.)
  - Establishment of support infrastructure
  - Site rehabilitation
  - Operation and maintenance
  - Site decommissioning

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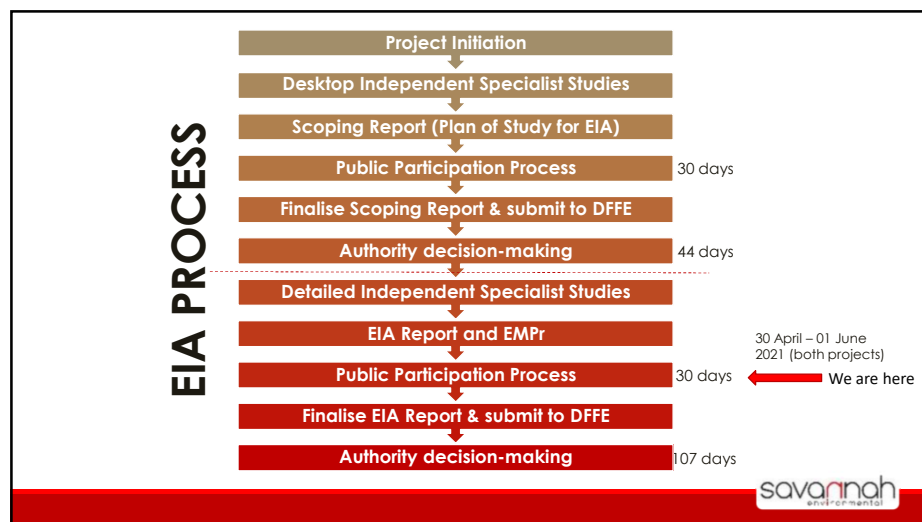
## EIA PROCESS, STUDIES & KEY FINDINGS

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## EIA PROCESS

- The proposed projects both require Environmental Authorisation (EA) in terms of NEMA & the EIA Regulations (2014), as amended
- An EIA in support of environmental authorisation is being undertaken for both, based on Listing Notice 2 activities being triggered
- An EIA Report has been prepared for each project and is available for a 30-day review period (30 April – 01 June 2021)
- Following the conclusion of the 30-day review period the Final EIA Reports will be prepared & submitted to DFFE

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**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS/SENSITIVITIES IDENTIFIED**

- Understanding the nature of the proposed developments and the impacts associated with the projects (as identified in the EIA phase), the following has been considered and assessed within the EIA phase:
  - Impacts on ecology (including flora and fauna)
  - Impacts on freshwater resources
  - Impacts on avifauna
  - Impacts on soils, geology, agricultural potential and land-use
  - Impacts on heritage (archaeology and palaeontology)
  - Visual impacts
  - Social impacts
  - Evaluation of potential cumulative impacts associated with the project

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**SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS**

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Ecology (including flora and fauna)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, no significant terrestrial ecological fatal flaws were identified during the EIA phase assessment.</li> <li>All wetland features were deemed very high ecological sensitivity and a 30m no-go buffer around them is recommended.</li> <li>Natural grassland features that are representative of Vaal-Vet Sandy Grassland (Endangered) and which are located within CBA1 regions were also considered very high sensitivity features, although these were not considered no-go areas. High and medium sensitivity areas, within which development was considered acceptable was also determined.</li> <li>Layout avoids all high sensitivity features including buffer zones</li> <li>All impacts were rated low following implementation of mitigation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, no significant terrestrial ecological fatal flaws were identified during the EIA phase assessment.</li> <li>All wetland features were deemed very high ecological sensitivity and a 30m no-go buffer around them is recommended.</li> <li>Dolerite outcrops and Acacia karroo – Asparagus larinicus Shrub-Grassland were considered to be of medium sensitivity.</li> <li>Layout avoids all high sensitivity features including buffer zones</li> <li>All impacts were rated low following implementation of mitigation</li> </ul> 

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**SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS**

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Freshwater resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The specialist identified a few wetlands within the development area, which were at risk of impact.</li> <li>These were defined as no-go areas together with their defined 30m buffer zones.</li> <li>These features have been avoided by the proposed layout.</li> <li>With the implementation of mitigation measures, impacts will be localised, short-term and of low intensity and is expected to have a moderate-low to low overall significance in terms of its impact on the identified aquatic ecosystems in the area.</li> <li>Based on the findings of the Freshwater Resources Impact Assessment there is no objection to the authorisation of the proposed activities provided that the recommended mitigation measures are implemented.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The specialist identified two wetland areas close to the development area, which were at risk of impact.</li> <li>These were defined as no-go areas together with their defined 30m buffer zones.</li> <li>These features have been avoided by the proposed layout.</li> <li>With the implementation of mitigation measures, impacts will be localised, short-term and of low intensity and is expected to have a moderate-low to low overall significance in terms of its impact on the identified aquatic ecosystems in the area.</li> <li>Based on the findings of the Freshwater Resources Impact Assessment there is no objection to the authorisation of the proposed activities provided that the recommended mitigation measures are implemented.</li> </ul>

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## SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS savannah environmental

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Impacts on avifauna 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 100m solar panel free buffer zone must be implemented around the pans on site (-27.736377°, -27.134694°, -27.740910°; 27.141575°, -27.741723°; 27.144815°) to provide avifauna with unhindered access to the water.</li> <li>In addition, a 100m solar panel free buffer zone must be implemented on both sides of the drainage line on the development area, to maintain a corridor of woodland.</li> <li>The layout considers the above sensitivities by exclusion of these areas from the development footprint and facility layout.</li> <li>A <b>medium negative</b> impact on priority avifauna, which can be reduced to <b>low</b> with appropriate mitigation was found.</li> <li>The development is supported provided the mitigation measures listed in this report are strictly implemented. No fatal flaws were discovered in the course of the investigations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 100m solar panel free buffer zone must be implemented around the dam at -27.704605°; 27.178359° to provide avifauna with unhindered access to the water.</li> <li>In addition, a 100m solar panel free buffer zone must be implemented on both sides of the drainage line on the development area, to maintain a corridor of woodland.</li> <li>The layout considers the above sensitivities by exclusion of these areas from the development footprint and facility layout.</li> <li>A <b>medium negative</b> impact on priority avifauna, which can be reduced to <b>low</b> with appropriate mitigation was found.</li> <li>The development is supported provided the mitigation measures listed in this report are strictly implemented. No fatal flaws were discovered in the course of the investigations.</li> </ul>

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## SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS savannah environmental

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Soils and agricultural potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The specialist determined that even though the development footprint includes areas with High agricultural sensitivity, this application may be considered favourably.</li> <li>The area has not been used for crop production since 2005 and the landowner further indicated that crop farming is not a viable option and that he will not return the fields to crop fields again. The farm is currently used for commercial cattle production of 35 head of cattle and can at most provide employment for two farmworkers.</li> <li>In contrast to that, the project will contribute a significant amount of expenditure to the area and employ more than 230 workers during the construction phase and more than 17 workers during the operational phase.</li> <li>In the light of the high number of employment opportunities that will be created per hectare of land, the proposed Vrede solar PV facility is considered an acceptable land use change.</li> <li>The specialist concluded that this application be considered favourably, on the condition that the mitigation measures are followed to prevent soil erosion and soil pollution and to minimise impacts on the veld quality of the farm portions that will be affected.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The land capability of the site is mainly Low-Moderate (Class 06) and the grazing capacity (according to DAFF, 2018), is around 5ha/LSU. Site observations found that a realistic grazing capacity is considered to be 6ha/LSU.</li> <li>Soil and agricultural impacts were determined to range from <b>medium to low</b> which with mitigation can be reduced to low.</li> <li>The area that will be fenced off is approximately 186.1ha and this will alienate grazing veld for about 50 head of cattle.</li> <li>The specialist concluded that this application be considered favourably, on the condition that the mitigation measures are followed to prevent soil erosion and soil pollution and to minimise impacts on the veld quality of the farm portions that will be affected.</li> </ul>

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## SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS

Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Heritage (archaeology and Palaeontology)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was noted that the area proposed for development has been historically disturbed through agricultural activities.</li> <li>No archaeological resources were determined within the development footprint</li> <li>The overall palaeontological sensitivity was high to very high.</li> <li>It was recommended that all excavations into bedrock are monitored by a suitably qualified palaeontologist and a report and a report submitted to SAHRA post-construction</li> <li>Chance find procedure implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four observations of varied cultural significance were recorded, the most significant being RDW002, a possible grave marked with a pile of stones.</li> <li>A no development buffer of 100m is implemented around the heritage features identified</li> <li>The development will not negatively impact on any archaeological heritage resources on condition that the recommendations and buffer zones are adhered to.</li> <li>A layout responding to these sensitivities was developed</li> <li>The overall palaeontological sensitivity was high to very high.</li> <li>It was recommended that all excavations into bedrock are monitored by a suitably qualified palaeontologist and a report and a report submitted to SAHRA post-construction</li> <li>Chance find procedure implemented</li> </ul>

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SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS 		
Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The visual impact will differ amongst places, depending on the distance from the facility.</li> <li>The intensity of visual impact to exposed receptors, especially those located within a 3km radius, is expected to be greater than it would be for a single solar energy facility. It is however still more preferable that these renewable energy developments are concentrated within this area rather than being spread further apart.</li> <li>Significance of visual impacts determined to range from <b>moderate to low</b> as a result of the generally undeveloped character of the landscape and the remote location of the project infrastructure.</li> <li>A number of mitigation measures have been proposed.</li> <li>If mitigation is undertaken as recommended, it is concluded that the significance of most of the anticipated visual impacts will remain at or be managed to acceptable levels, and the facility considered acceptable from a visual perspective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The visual impact will differ amongst places, depending on the distance from the facility.</li> <li>The intensity of visual impact to exposed receptors, especially those located within a 3km radius, is expected to be greater than it would be for a single solar energy facility. It is however still more preferable that these renewable energy developments are concentrated within this area rather than being spread further apart.</li> <li>Significance of visual impacts determined to range from <b>moderate to low</b> as a result of the generally undeveloped character of the landscape and the remote location of the project infrastructure.</li> <li>A number of mitigation measures have been proposed.</li> <li>If mitigation is undertaken as recommended, it is concluded that the significance of most of the anticipated visual impacts will remain at or be managed to acceptable levels, and the facility considered acceptable from a visual perspective.</li> </ul>

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SPECIALIST STUDY FINDINGS 		
Specialist	Findings – Vrede SEF	Findings – Rondavel SEF
Social Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The findings of the SIA indicated that the development of the proposed 100 MWac Vrede SEF will create employment and business opportunities for locals during both the construction and operational phase of the project.</li> <li>The enhancement measures listed should be implemented</li> <li>The proposed development represents an investment in clean, renewable energy infrastructure, which represents a significant positive social benefit for society as a whole.</li> <li>The findings also indicated that the REIPPPP has resulted in significant socio-economic benefits, both at a national level and at a local, community level. These benefits are linked to foreign Direct Investment, local employment and procurement and investment in local community initiatives.</li> <li>The facility establishment was supported by the findings of the SIA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The findings of the SIA indicated that the development of the proposed 100 MWac Rondavel SEF will create employment and business opportunities for locals during both the construction and operational phase of the project.</li> <li>The enhancement measures listed should be implemented</li> <li>The proposed development represents an investment in clean, renewable energy infrastructure, which represents a significant positive social benefit for society as a whole.</li> <li>The findings also indicated that the REIPPPP has resulted in significant socio-economic benefits, both at a national level and at a local, community level. These benefits are linked to foreign Direct Investment, local employment and procurement and investment in local community initiatives.</li> <li>The facility establishment was supported by the findings of the SIA.</li> </ul>

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## WHAT IS CUMULATIVE IMPACTS?



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## WHAT IS CUMULATIVE IMPACTS?

It is the result of assessing and considering the effects of **multiple actions** or **impacts** on the environment where two or more developments are taking place, or proposed to take place in the same area.

## SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Specialist	Assessment of Issues – Vrede SEF	Assessment of Issues – Rondavel SEF
Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The loss of unprotected vegetation types on a cumulative basis from the broader area impacts the country's ability to meet its conservation targets</li> <li>Impacts on Critical Biodiversity Areas and Broad-Scale Ecological Processes</li> <li>Cumulative impacts due to nearby renewable energy developments</li> <li>All impacts <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The loss of unprotected vegetation types on a cumulative basis from the broader area impacts the country's ability to meet its conservation targets</li> <li>Impacts on Broad-Scale Ecological Processes</li> <li>Cumulative impacts due to nearby renewable energy developments</li> <li>All impacts <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>
Avifaunal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mortality and displacement of priority avifauna due to the construction of the PV facility and associated infrastructure</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mortality and displacement of priority avifauna due to the construction of the PV facility and associated infrastructure</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>

## SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Specialist	Assessment of Issues – Vrede SEF	Assessment of Issues – Rondavel SEF
Freshwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compromise of ecological processes as well as ecological functioning of important freshwater resource habitats</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compromise of ecological processes as well as ecological functioning of important freshwater resource habitats</li> <li>Rated <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cumulative impact to the cultural sense of place.</li> <li>Rated <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cumulative impact to the cultural sense of place.</li> <li>Rated <b>low</b> in isolation and <b>low</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>

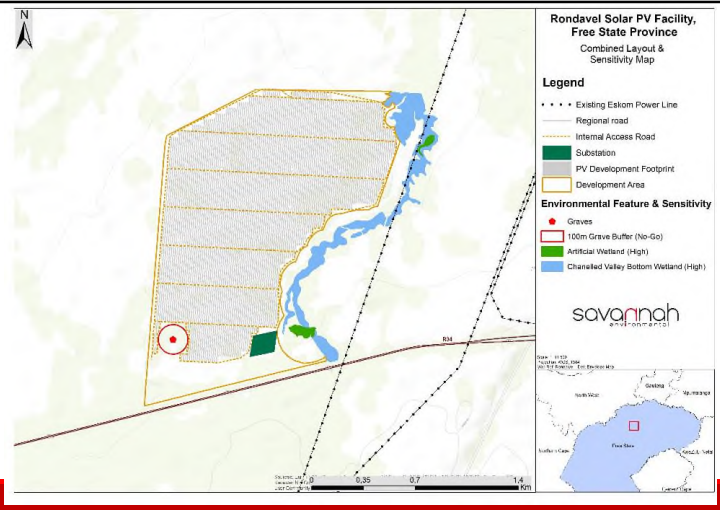
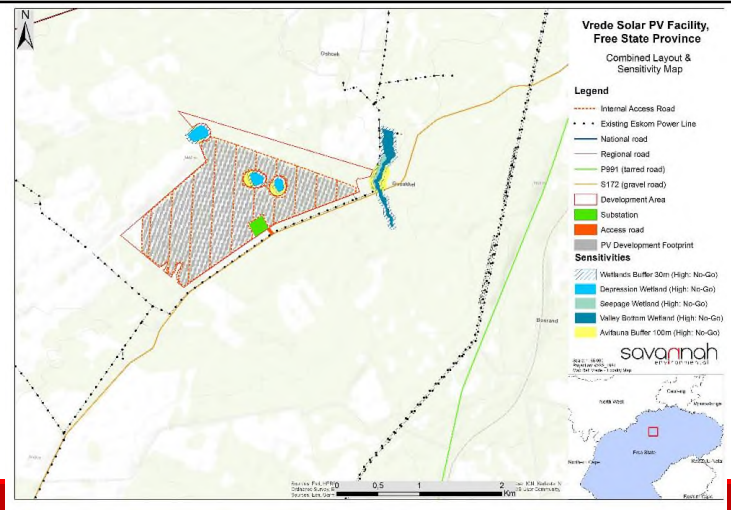
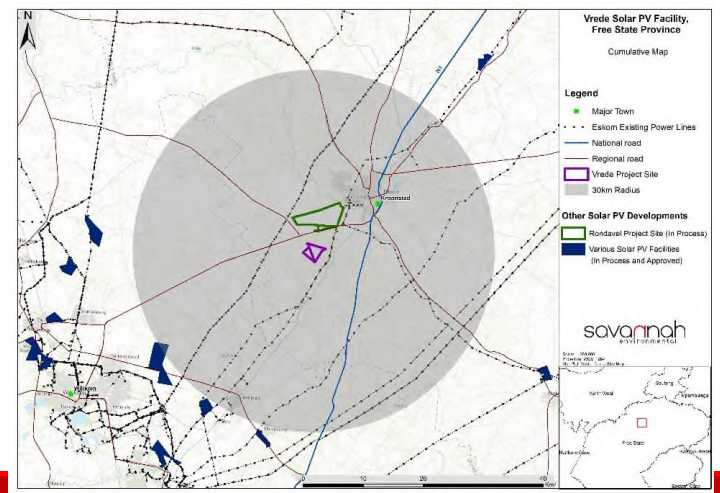
## SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Specialist	Assessment of Issues – Vrede SEF	Assessment of Issues – Rondavel SEF
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The potential cumulative visual impact of the solar energy facilities on the visual quality of the landscape.</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>moderate</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The potential cumulative visual impact of the solar energy facilities on the visual quality of the landscape.</li> <li>Rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>moderate</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(negative) Visual impacts associated with the establishment of more than one SEF and the potential impact on the area's rural sense of place and character of the landscape.</li> <li>(negative) The establishment of a number of renewable energy facilities in the Moqhaka Local Municipality (MLM) has the potential to place pressure on local services, specifically medical, education and accommodation</li> <li>(positive) The establishment of a number of solar energy facilities in the MLM will create employment, skills development and training opportunities, creation of downstream business opportunities.</li> <li>All negative impacts <b>medium to low</b> in isolation and <b>low to medium</b> considered within the broader region</li> <li>Positive impact rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>high</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(negative) Visual impacts associated with the establishment of more than one SEF and the potential impact on the area's rural sense of place and character of the landscape.</li> <li>(negative) The establishment of a number of renewable energy facilities in the Moqhaka Local Municipality (MLM) has the potential to place pressure on local services, specifically medical, education and accommodation</li> <li>(positive) The establishment of a number of solar energy facilities in the MLM will create employment, skills development and training opportunities, creation of downstream business opportunities.</li> <li>All negative impacts <b>medium to low</b> in isolation and <b>low to medium</b> considered within the broader region</li> <li>Positive impact rated <b>moderate</b> in isolation and <b>high</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>

# SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Specialist	Assessment of Issues – Vrede SEF	Assessment of Issues – Rondavel SEF
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in areas with suitable land capability for cattle farming.</li> <li>Increase in areas susceptible to soil erosion.</li> <li>Increase in areas susceptible to soil pollution</li> <li>All impacts <b>medium to low</b> in isolation and <b>low to medium</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in areas with suitable land capability for cattle farming.</li> <li>Increase in areas susceptible to soil erosion.</li> <li>Increase in areas susceptible to soil pollution</li> <li>All impacts <b>medium to low</b> in isolation and <b>low to medium</b> considered within the broader region</li> </ul>

Based on the specialist cumulative assessment and findings, the respective developments and their contribution to the overall impact of all existing and proposed solar energy facilities within a 30km radius, it was concluded that cumulative impacts will be of a low to medium significance, with only a high positive impact determined in terms of social cumulative impacts. Therefore, the development of both projects will not result in unacceptable, high cumulative impacts and will not result in a whole-scale change of the environment, and is therefore considered acceptable from a cumulative impact perspective.



## FINDINGS (both projects)

- Majority of potential impacts are associated with the construction phase
- Impacts range from local to regional/national in extent
- No identified environmental fatal flaws.
- The developer had proposed technically viable layouts for the projects and associated infrastructure
- High sensitivity features, all no-go zones and associated buffer areas were avoided for both projects.
- Layouts are considered as the most appropriate from an environmental perspective and are considered to be acceptable within all fields of specialist study undertaken for the project.
- All impacts associated with the proposed projects can be mitigated to acceptable levels or enhanced through the implementation of the recommended mitigation or enhancement measures.
- The development of both Vrede SEF and Rondavel SEF is considered environmentally acceptable, subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures.

## DISCUSSIONS

## WAY FORWARD

- » Meeting notes will be distributed for verification
- » Presentation will be distributed
- » Review and comment period ending **01 June 2021** (for both projects)
- » Incorporate issues and concerns raised during the Public Participation Process into the respective Final EIA Reports
- » Submission of final EIA Reports to DFFE for decision-making in June 2021.

## WHO TO CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

### Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd

Nicolene Venter

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PO Box 148, Sunninghill, 2157

Tel: 011 656 3237

Mobile: 060 978 8396 ('please call me')

Fax: 086 684 0547

[www.savannahsa.com](http://www.savannahsa.com)

## Nicolene Venter

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**From:** Savannah Public Process <publicprocess@savannahsa.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 14, 2021 9:41 AM  
**To:** Adrian Tiplady  
**Cc:** Nicolene Venter  
**Subject:** VREDE PV SEF & BESS and RONDAVEL PV SEF & BESS PROJECTS: Public Participation Process Meeting - Draft Meeting Minutes  
**Attachments:** SE2710-PPP\_Meeting\_Minutes-Draft\_FINAL.pdf

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE 100MWca VREDE PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY & BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE 100MWca RONDAVEL SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) ENERGY FACILITY AND BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS), INCLUDING ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, LOCATED NEAR KROONSTAD, FREE STATE PROVINCE (DFFE Ref.Nos.: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2038 and 14/12/16/3/3/2/2039 respectively)**

Dear Interested and Affected Parties,

Please find attached for your perusal the minutes of the Public Participation Process Meeting held on Thursday, 20 May 2021.

Kind regards,

[Unsubscribe this type of email](#)



t: 011 656 3237  
f: 086 684 0547

**Nicolene Venter**  
Public Process

e: publicprocess@savannahsa.com  
c: +27 (0) 60 978 8396

SAWEA Award for Leading Environmental Consultant on Wind Projects in 2013 & 2015

[Print](#)

# SE2716-Vrede&Rondavel PVs - Public Participation Process Meeting Minutes - Proof of email

Date: 14  
June 2021  
Time: 12:00  
PM

Company	Last Name	First Name	
	Bahumi	Tshepo	
	Bekker	Petrus	
	Booi	Morena	
	George	Tebogo	
	Hleli	Luvuyo	
	Itumeleng	Khetsi	
	Kgotlagomang	Sello	
	Kokoropo	Matsiliso	
	Lephuthing	Seipati	
	Mamkulu	Dikeledi	
	Mazibuko	Duma	
	Menzi	Noluna	
	Mokhemia	Thabang	
	Mokhemisa	Mpho	
	Monokoane	Nelson	
	Morabe	Khunong	
	Mosokotsoane	Johannes	
	Ndlovu	Sthembiso	
	Nketu	Natash	
	Nthako	Abbey	
	Ntloko	Reginald	
	Tshabalala	Francina	
	Tshotyana	Kenneth	
Afriforum	Grobler	Gabrie	
EPK Projects Sol (Pty) Ltd	Kgabale	Paul	
Moqhaka Business Forum	Mosokotsoane	Mohlolo	
Moqhaka Community Forum	Thebe	Morena	
Moqhaka for the People	Khoury	Spiro	
Moqhaka for the People	Meyer	Anton	
Moqhaka for the People	Motsapele	Doctor	
Moqhaka for the People	Pie	Paul	
Moqhaka for the People	Ramantso	Keke	
Moqhaka for the People	Visagie	Braam	
Moqhaka for the People	Visagie	Braam	
Moqhaka Local Municipality	Morabe	Sibongile	
Moqhaka Local Municipality	Sefatsa	Ntinti	
Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd	Raath	Gideon	
South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO)	Tiplady	Adrian	
Vuka Safe Haven	Thebe	Morena	

Totals:

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# Note Report

14 June 2021 11:29 AM

## Chalale, Tsitso

**2021-06-14 11:27 AM****Creator: MASTER Type: Manual (SMS Sent)**

SMS Message :VREDE&RONDAVEL:Stakeholder-Minutes of meeting 20/05/21 is available.For a copy,pls provide email address to 0609788396.Regards,Nicolene,SavannahEnvironmental.

**2021-06-14 11:27 AM****Creator: MASTER Type: Manual (SMS Sent)**

SMS Message :VREDE&RONDAVEL:Stakeholder-Minutes of meeting 20/05/21 is available.For a copy,pls provide email address to 0609788396.Regards,Nicolene,SavannahEnvironmental.

**2021-06-14 11:27 AM****Creator: MASTER Type: Manual (SMS Sent)**

SMS Message :VREDE&RONDAVEL:Stakeholder-Minutes of meeting 20/05/21 is available.For a copy,pls provide email address to 0609788396.Regards,Nicolene,SavannahEnvironmental.

## Dikeledi, Mahlatsi

**2021-06-14 11:27 AM****Creator: MASTER Type: Manual (SMS Sent)**

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## George, Dawid (Executive Member) Moqhaka for the People

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## **Johannes, Mphosi Nkopane**

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## **Kanono, K.C**

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## **Khotle, Pontsho**

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## **Lebona, Liphaphang**

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## **Lekhobo, Kgomotso**

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## **Lesia, Enerst**

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## **Liphoko, Mmui Elizabeth**

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## **Mahlatsi, Thabo Joseph Mohoedi**

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## **Maine, Jacob**

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## **Mathekhe, Elva Anna Masamuele**

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## **Mbangula, Mpho**

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## **Modiko, Luthando**

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## **Modise, Romeo Mojalefa**

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## **Mofokeng, Nthabiseng Cecilia**

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## **Mogorogi, Gladys Puseletso**

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## **Molefe, Thabang**

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## **Monyada, Thembi Elisa**

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## **Mosokotsoane, Mohlolo**

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## **Motete, Teboho**

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## **Mothekhe, Elva Anna Masamuele (Member) Moghaka Business Forum**

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## **Mothobi, Lehlohonolo**

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## **Mothobi, Peter**

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**Nketu, Boitshoko  
Moqhaka Local Municipality**

Department: Moqhaka Business Forum

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**Nkomo, Samuel**

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**Ntloko, Mr**

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**Ntloko, MR**

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**Phahlali, Amanda**

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**Phakoe, Mapitso  
Moqhaka Local Municipality**

Department: Moqhaka Business Forum

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**Phakoe, Motshidisi**



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## **Pule, Isaac**

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## **Ramaisa, Tanani Emily**

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## **Seitshiro, Lazarus**

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## **Sekute, Anna Mmajepi**

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## **Senogo, Windy**

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## **Steven, Maqabe**

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## **Storm, Lethetsa**

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# SCOPING PHASE

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESSES FOR THE  
100MW VREDE SOLAR PV FACILITY, BATTERY ENERGY  
STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
AND THE  
RONDAVEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, BATTERY ENERGY  
STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) AND ASSOCIATED  
INFRASTRUCTURE LOCATED NEAR KROONSTAD, FREE  
STATE PROVINCE**

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**MEETING NOTES OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING HELD WITH THE  
MOQHAKA FOR THE PEOPLE (MFP) EXECUTIVE MEMBERS  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 06 JANUARY 2021 AT 10H00  
VENUE: VIRTUAL MEETING USING MICROSOFT TEAMS PLATFORM**

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**Meeting notes prepared by:**

Nicolene Venter  
**Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd**  
E-mail: [publicprocess@savannahsa.com](mailto:publicprocess@savannahsa.com)

*Please note that these notes are not verbatim, but a summary of the comments submitted at the meeting.  
Please address any comments to Savannah Environmental at the above address*

**100MW VREDE SOLAR PV FACILITY, BESS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE and the 100MW RONDAVEL SOLAR PV FACILITY, BESS AND ASSOCIATED INSTRUCTURE PROJECTS NEAR KROONSTAD, FREE STATE PROVINCE.**

**MEETING ATTENDEES**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Spiro Khoury	Chairman	Moqhaka for the People
Keke Ramontso	Executive Member	Moqhaka for the People
Braam Visagie	Secretary	Moqhaka for the People
Mojalefa Mohanoe	Executive Member	Moqhaka for the People
Doctor Motsapele	Executive Member	Moqhaka for the People
Anton Meyer	Administrative Secretary	Moqhaka for the People
Daniel George	Executive Member	Moqhaka for the People
Paul Pie	Executive Member	Moqhaka for the People
Semang Simila	Executive Member	Moqhaka for the People
Eugene Marais	Applicant (Proponent)	SA Mainstream Renewable Power
Liza Janse van Vuuren	Project Assistant	
Karen Jodas	Director	Savannah Environmental
Gideon Raath	Environmental Assessment Practitioner	
Nicolene Venter	Public Participation and Social Consultant	

It was mentioned that the Executive Members of Moqhaka for the People (MFP) are also affiliated to other organisations and businesses within the Moqhaka Local Municipality.

**APOLOGIES:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Gesie Theron	Project Manager	SA Mainstream Renewable Power

The proof of attendance is attached as **Appendix A**.

**INTRODUCTION**

Nicolene Venter welcomed all attendees at the online focus group meeting (FGM) for the Vrede Solar PV facility and the Rondavel Solar PV facility projects located approximately 6 and 11km south of Kroonstad in the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Fezile Dabi District Municipality in the Free State Province. She requested that the participants introduced themselves and their representation at the FGM. She also requested the participants to register their attendance by submitting their names and roles on the chat function of Microsoft Teams.

She informed the participants that comments can be submitted on the chat function and verbally during the meeting and advised that any additional comments after the meeting can be submitted via e-mail, WhatsApp or SMS to the public participation team.



Spiro Khoury, Chairman: MFP, provided the project team with context as to who the MFP is, how it was formed and what their role as a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) is. Reference was also made to various projects that MFP initiated and are pursuing currently i.e. the Smart city proposal of which the repurposing of Moqhaka's power station in Kroonstad is proposed (amongst others), a solar park project, etc.

He informed the project team that the MFP is not against the proposed projects, rather the opposite and that the MFP welcomes projects such as these. The MFP's interest is in the best interest of the community and not for individual gain and the main interest of theirs is looking at electricity supply to the community, as well as general interests in energy supply.

Gideon Raath presented an overview of the projects and a summary of the key environmental findings as documented in the scoping reports available for a 30-day review and comment period. The slides presented during the virtual meeting was e-mailed to the MFP and a copy is attached as **Appendix B**.

The meeting was conducted and recorded in English, as the preferred language of the attendees, and the meeting notes for the record, are not captured verbatim.

## DISCUSSION SESSION

Question / Comment	Response
<p>Anton Meyer requested that the Global Positioning System (GPS) points of both properties be included in the minutes.</p>	<p>The Surveyor GPS for both Rondavel and Vrede Solar PV Facilities were detailed in Appendix O of the draft Scoping reports made available to the public during the report review period. These appendices were circulated to all members along with these meeting minutes (refer Appendix 1 and 2 of these minutes).</p>
<p>Anton Meyer stated that in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, access roads to a proposed development must be indicated on the maps. The locality map as presented only indicates the road to Kroonstad, the N1 and the R34 but not the Hennenman Road where it crosses the Bloem Spruit towards Hennenman.</p>	<p>The access road to the Vrede Solar PV Facility development site, which is the road turning off from the R34 towards Hennenman, is indicated on the locality map but is not clear on the presentation slide.</p>
<p>Spiro Khoury summarised the concern raised by Anton Meyer as to how to get the project information to the communities, especially also with COVID-19. To ensure that information reached communities, the MFP disseminate the information at Ward meetings.</p> <p>He recommended that the public participation team make use of the Lesedi FM and Radio Oranje, ensuring that communities are informed about the projects. As the MFP welcomes the projects, it is the MFP's aim to avoid any mistakes.</p> <p>He also suggests that Savannah Environmental secure a slot with the radio station giving the public the opportunity to participate in the process.</p> <p>Should it be required, the MFP will assist with the contact details of these radio stations, to ensure transparency.</p>	<p>Nicolene Venter informed the MFP members that community members can reach the public participation office through the dedicated mobile number which include the function of <i>please call me</i> making it accessible for community members to contact the public participation team.</p> <p>The suggestion regarding securing a discussion slot on the radio stations will be discussed with the project team.</p> <p>She thanked the MFP for the information and confirmed that the office does have the contact details of these radio stations. However, should assistance be required, contact will be made with the MFP.</p>
<p>The questions submitted by the MFP prior to the FGM are listed below and responded to</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the advantage for the MFP from these two projects?</li> </ul>	<p>Gideon Raath responded that there will be no specific advantages to the MFP itself but there will be advantages to the broader community, i.e. economic investment which includes the supply of electricity, job creation of which the bulk would be during construction and less</p>

	<p>during the operational phase i.e. permanent employment.</p> <p>Spiro Khoury, in response to Gideon Raath's response, informed the project team that, as mentioned during the introductions that the MFP is a public participation vessel acting on behalf of the communities. Therefore, the discussion points submitted as per the Agenda are not applicable to the MFP members personally, but for the communities in general.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment opportunity &amp; training (skills) – expanded upon by Eugene Marais</li> </ul>	<p>Eugene Marais responded that the company approach their projects in three phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development phase: going through the EIA process and other applicable permitting processes as to legally construct and operate this type of facilities;</li> <li>• tender phase: tender in terms of the REIPPPP (or similar, suitable procurement programme). Once a preferred bidder, the project is handed over to the appointed construction company. During this phase, consisting between 16 to 22 months, job opportunities are created. In terms of trailing, the current the ratio of employment is 70% unskilled and semi-skilled and these are sourced from the local areas.</li> <li>• Operation phase: employment opportunities are limited and therefore big emphases is placed, in terms of the economic development (ED) funding, is placed on economic and social development. As part of the BID submission, commitment is made towards training and skills transfer. During COVID-19, communities are provided with masks, hand sanitisers, etc. However, during the normal cause of business, ED funding will go to further training and support to local enterprise development.</li> </ul> <p>References were made regarding Mainstream's project in Noupoot where a community member selling eggs has been supported to extend his business almost going into commercial production, dress and hat making businesses, etc. (as</p>

	<p>examples of economic development related to project development)</p> <p>Another skill transfer opportunity from these projects are panel assembly.</p> <p>The aim is to ensure that once the construction period has ended, community members can find employment opportunities elsewhere.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would cheaper electricity be supplied to Moqhaka Local Municipality</li> </ul>	<p>Gideon asked for clarification regarding this question, as it is not sure who the recipients would be.</p> <p>Eugene Marias responded that, in short, no, the electricity will not be supplied directly to the supplied to the Moqhaka Local Municipality. Currently the system is set up as a single buyers' market and electricity generated can only be sold to Eskom. In terms of Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) 2019 provision has been made for 500MW local generation enabling mining companies, data centres, breweries, etc that utilised a large amount of electricity to procure electricity directly. The Minister also alluded that Municipalities will also be allowed to procure electricity directly from Independent Power Producers (IPP) however, the regulations have not been made available yet and it is envisaged that only a few Metros are financially secured to purchase electricity directly from an IPP.</p> <p>The rate that Eskom charges their clients are not up to the IPP.</p>
<p>Spiro Khoury commented that as mentioned by Eugene Marias' feedback that looking at a project, SA Mainstream Renewable Power only look at communities that are associated with the area. The MFP see this as a fundamental difference between their approach and what Mainstream is offering. SA Mainstream Renewable Power would like to sell the electricity generated to Eskom, but the expectation from the public, since the MFP's public participation efforts were</p>	<p>Eugene Marias reiterated that the currently the business model of Mainstream is to develop and supply energy to Eskom directly once preferred bidder status is awarded under any of the IRP procurement programmes, and that direct sales to other entities may be possible in the future but is not presently a possibility for Mainstream.</p>

<p>started, since Kroonstad has its own grid network and that is where Moqhaka, as a whole, comes into play. This grid extends to Viljoenskroon, Vierfontein, Steynsrus and Moqhaka, which has power lines going out to Welkom and this network is owned by Moqhaka. It is the expectation from the public that when electricity is produced in this area, it must be fed into this grid network and it will benefit the community at first, and any excess electricity to be sold to Eskom.</p> <p>Anton Meyer elaborated on the above differences by stating that in terms of the IRP October 2020, Sections 33 &amp; 34, IPP can be bought and developed by mining houses and that they have the capacity. However, Kroonstad, has its own IPP which has been seeded to Imperial Investments (an affiliate of MFP) and part of the appointment is on risk, and as per the agenda point submitted by Braam Visser “our grid, our rules”.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda item inquiring if there is any economic development if purchaser is Eskom</li> </ul>	<p>Gideon Raath requested clarification from the MFP.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda item around the the mantra of “charity begins at home” – our house, our rules</li> </ul>	<p>Anton Meyer informed the project team that part of the agreements the MFP has with one or two landowners is that 30% to 40% local employment will be sourced firstly from Moqhaka, then Kroonstad and then the Free State and then the rest of the country (please note: this is in the context of ongoing projects being pursued by the MFP). It was emphasised that “charity begins at home” – meaning benefits derived from the project should benefit the local community first before benefits are derived further afield. He mentioned that there are various local companies that can produce materials required for the building of panels, etc and it is not necessary to source these outside the borders of South Africa.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda item relating to the impact of the two projects on the MFP's Smart City proposal</li> </ul>	<p>Response was provided later in the meeting and copied below:</p> <p><i>Spiro provided the project team with background to the concept of the Smart City. The purpose of the proposed Smart City is to</i></p>

<p>Gideon Raath requested clarification and what is the background and scope of the Smart City</p>	<p><i>develop a biogas system, using the products from Moqhaka Municipality's sewage farm. This will also work toward a cleaner Kroonstad.</i></p> <p><i>He informed the project team that the Vals River, which flows into the Vaal River, and Bloem Spruit, which also flows through SA Mainstream Renewable's project site, the MFP is proposing creating several dams by totally cutting off the waterflow and pumping it between the several dams.</i></p> <p><i>Imperial Investment (an affiliate of the MFP) is proposing constructing a University City for the whole of Africa. The University will serve to train Africa and South Africa in renewable energy and recycling.</i></p>
<p>Additional comments / questions as per Agenda</p>	
<p>Anton Meyer asked whether SA Mainstream Renewable is operating as an Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC).</p>	<p>Eugene Marais responded that they are not an EPC, SA Mainstream Renewable Power is a project developer and IPP.</p>
<p>Anton Meyer, as a follow-up question, ask who SA Mainstream Renewable's EPC is.</p>	<p>Eugene Marais responded that the EIA process just commenced and as per SA Mainstream Renewable's project development process, they will tender the project and if a preferred bidder, then an EPC will be appointed to do final design. It is too early in these projects' timeframes to know who would be the EPCs.</p> <p>Eugene Marias reiterates that during the REIPPP, the IPP must make, during the bidding process, commitments to local content and that the percentage are determined by Government and not the IPP. SA Mainstream Renewable does not only meet the requirements but try to exceed it.</p> <p>The REIPPP system, in terms of your ED &amp; SED commitments, it should benefit the district municipality, starting closer at home and then extend to the district municipality.</p> <p>He mentioned that the reality is that there are professional services that are not locally readily available, i.e. panel manufacturers. It needs to be noted that approximately 80% of the project</p>

	cost will go into the manufacturing of the panels.
<p>Spiro Khoury clarified the point raised by Anton Meyer, that the MFP's biggest concern is that the energy is reaped in their area and the term "charity begins at home" means that the need of the area's energy supply needs to be looked at first. All are aware of Eskom's downfall resulting in the country looking at energy resources elsewhere. Although the green energy is mandatory worldwide, Eskom should have implemented these types of projects long ago, and now private companies, including the MFP, are doing it.</p> <p>The MFP's concern is that the energy generated from these projects will supply Eskom and Moqhaka needs to buy it back from Eskom. Moqhaka has an IPP and PPA allowing to produce its own electricity. The MFP has been working had on these projects and these projects were already presented to the Municipality, which are similar to these projects.</p> <p>He mentioned that discussions have also taken place with De Beers for putting up a possible solar farm at their Voorspoed Mine.</p> <p>The problem is not with SA Maintream Renewable's product, but where is the end product going to.</p> <p>What the MFP had achieved so far is a company, signed on risk, that will produce 1 300MW, of which the offset of 300MW for free to the Moqhaka Municipality. The MFP is not expecting this the same, but what the MFP is saying is that Moqhaka must benefit from the energy REIPPP in the area. It is not acceptable that energy is generated in this area and then given to neighbouring towns before Moqhaka had looked after their own interest.</p> <p>Spiro Khoury stated that the above is the core interest in the project.</p>	<p>Eugene Marias reiterated that the currently the business model of Mainstream is to develop and supply energy to Eskom directly once preferred bidder status is awarded under any of the IRP procurement programmes, and that direct sales to other entities may be possible in the future but is not presently a possibility for Mainstream.</p>

<p>He stated that it is important that the MFP and SA Mainstream Renewable holds hand and work together.</p>	
<p>Doctor Motsapele informed the project team that in the mindset of the people of Moqhaka in terms of the MFP's power station project, they already expect that there will be cheaper electricity when electricity is generated.</p> <p>He asked, in terms of the short term, on what scale will the community benefit economically and in the long term from these projects.</p>	<p>Eugene Marais responded that as mentioned earlier, the bulk of short-term employment will be during the construction phase envisaged to be between 16 to 22 months.</p> <p>During the operation phase, as everyone knows on both wind and solar farms, the employment opportunity is less. The REIPPP is set up in such a way that during the operation phase the developer commits to assist with local enterprises and socio-economic developments apart from employment opportunities. As mentioned previously, the percentage are set in the bidding documents as minimum requirement and SA Mainstream Renewable tries not only to achieve the set percentage, but to exceed it. This will be the major benefit for the community from these projects.</p> <p>Eugene further informed the MFP that these projects will have an increase in Rates and Taxes where currently taxes are only paid on agricultural value. Once the projects are operational, the taxes will be recalculated at commercial rates.</p>
<p>Anton Meyer informed the project team that as per his knowledge, there are no REIPPP regulations currently available or published. The last regulations he is aware of is the procurement one dated September / October 2020.</p> <p>He raised the question that if SA Mainstream Renewable is going to work on the existing regulations i.e. Window 4 REIPPP, what will SA Mainstream approach be should there be substantial changes.</p>	<p>Eugene Marais, after clarifying the key point of the question, responded that what SA Mainstream Renewable are currently busy with is the EIA process as this process is one of the main boxes that need to be completed and ticked off, and apart from this process, no other processes are embarked on. Subsequent phases and process will only be embarked on once an Environmental Authorisation has been granted.</p> <p>The previous REIPPP process, i.e. Round 4.5, was cancelled. There is a lot of speculations regarding the possible changes to the RFP and SA Mainstream Renewable expect that one of these changes will be the local content, black ownership, etc and not necessarily the project specific details.</p>



<p>Spiro Khoury acknowledged the response provided by Eugene in terms of the REIPPP phase and raised the question whether SA Mainstream Renewable had any discussions with the Moqhaka Local Municipality regarding these projects.</p>	<p>Nicolene Venter responded that in terms of the public participation process, a meeting was requested but due to other commitments the Municipality could not attend. A meeting will be arranged with the Municipality as part of the ongoing public participation process.</p> <p>Nicolene informed the attendees that it is important to note that although there are strict timeframes associated to the EIA i.e. report review periods, submissions of reports to the decision-making authorities, the public participation process is a transparent, open and ongoing process throughout the EIA. Consultation with organs of state and I&amp;APs continues until the environmental authorisation is issued.</p>
<p>Spiro Khoury said that it is important that the MFP and the project team take hands as the MFP had also embarked on a similar project during which the MFP had contacted NERSA and De Beers (their Voorspoed Mine), saying that if the MFP fails with the local municipality, their project will provide electricity to Eskom.</p> <p>It is important that both the projects, that of the MFP and SA Mainstream Renewable, succeeds, and as previously mentioned, that it is not the MFP's intention to shoot these projects down, but to it is the MFP's intention to make these projects work. To make these projects to work, one needs an end buyer.</p> <p>The MFP's strength is with the community, and as the Municipality has the IPP and the PPA they are currently facing major challenges with the political leadership within the local municipality. It is the MFP's intention to bring as many IPP projects to Moqhaka as possible and the 200MW these two projects will contribute is great and the MFP would like to add it to their projects. It is acknowledged that these projects need to go through local government before reaching national government.</p>	<p>Eugene Marais acknowledged and understood what is being said and stated by the MFP as SA Mainstream Renewable had gone through these processes at numerous times before. In the initial stage of the project, local municipalities are not actively involved but as the process progress, they contribute valuable inputs.</p> <p>The municipalities involvement at a later stage of a project is understood as the project is tangible once you are a preferred bidder. Obtaining an environmental authorisation is not yet a guarantee that your project will receive bidder status.</p> <p>The legislated process is followed, and engagement will take place with the municipality and it is envisaged that the project will be presented to the Council in the same format as being presented to the MFP.</p>

<p>Spiro expressed, on behalf of the MFP, that these projects will make progress with the local municipality because if progress had been made, it make the job of the MFP easier.</p>	
<p>Spiro Khoury asked who SA Mainstream Renewable is, i.e. who is behind this application and provided Eugene the opportunity to refrain from answering the question.</p>	<p>Eugene Marais responded by providing a summary of who SA Mainstream Renewable is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project developers and IPPs financed by SA Mainstream Renewable</li> <li>• Have investors investing in the company</li> <li>• Utilising development funding to develop projects Some projects are on SA Mainstream Renewable's books for 10 years and one keeps tendering until you are successful. These are risks taken by the company and there is no government funding involved in the development of these type of projects.</li> <li>• When a preferred bidder, the company comply with the local requirement for example as recalled, Round 4 required 40% black ownership, 50% local ownership and woman and youth ownership are also coming into the fold now. At financial close, the company sells off to individual investors to comply with the above. Currently all proposed developments are owned by SA Mainstream Renewable</li> </ul>
<p>Spiro Khoury asked what projects SA Mainstream Renewable are currently running, i.e. securing their income from.</p> <p>The reason for raising this type of questions is that the MFP are representing the public and the public pose these questions to the MFP expecting responses as to whether companies are reputable or not. It also assists the MFP to try and ensure that these projects become a reality.</p>	<p>Eugene Marais replied in terms of their success in South Africa, Round 1 to 4 that various projects were won and briefly explained details of these projects.</p> <p>He further detailed that they are operating various developments in Africa and Internationally. He further explained the various offices SA Mainstream Renewable have and the company structure.</p> <p>Eugene summarised by informing the attendees that the company finance projects themselves and then sell the projects.</p>
<p>Spiro Khoury, on behalf of the MFP, thanked SA Mainstream Renewable Energy for putting the organisation at ease with his response regarding the company and said that the MFP is ready to assist with the projects brought to their area as it will contribute with the development of the community.</p>	<p>Eugene Marais noted and thanked the MFP for their contributions.</p>

<p>Nicolene Venter asked, for confirmation purpose, whether only the MFP's executive members will be registered on the project database and that they, as representatives for the MFP member, will disseminate the information to their members.</p> <p>She requested that all future correspondence the executive members of the MFP receives regarding these proposed projects, also be shared with their members</p> <p>She informed the MFP executive members that any of their members who contact the public participation office and request to register, will be register on the project database.</p>	<p>Spiro Khoury informed Savannah Environmental that the MFP's attendance register, which will contain the contact details of the MFP's executive members will be forwarded to Savannah Environmental. He reiterated the importance of the proposed projects and that the project team and the MFP, going forth, must work together</p> <p>He confirmed that, although COVID-19 regulations prevent the MFP to conduct meeting, the information received at the meeting will be shared with their members. A copy of the minutes will be distributed to Imperial Investment who is proposing the development of the Smart City development and that of their members (an affiliate of MFP).</p>
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**CLOSURE**

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Nicolene Venter provided the attendees an opportunity to submit any last comment they wish to make before officially closing the meeting.

Spiro Khoury thanked the project team in manner which the meeting was conducted, the transparency of the process, and acknowledges the MFP's interest in the project. The MFP are committed to the assist with the projects to ensure that it becomes a reality.

The project team members expressed their appreciated towards the MFP's valuable contributions made during the meeting and looking forward to the next phase of the EIA.

Nicolene Venter informed the executive members of the MFP that, as previously mentioned, that although the comment period of the scoping report is ending on Monday, 11 January 2021, any additional comments and queries they, or their members have, can still be submitted.

Anton Meyer stated that more outreach is needed to create a rainbow nation, and this can be reached by working together. He reiterated the fact that the projects need to be presented to the communities, as the MFP had held massive meetings where the response from communities were very positive and the options raised by community members, absolutely astound the MFP.

Nicolene Venter thanked the participants for their valuable inputs into the scoping phase of the EIA processes. The meeting was closed at 11h45.

# APPENDIX A

MFP		ATTENDANCE REGISTER		Mooqaka For the People
MFP Executive - Savannah 06.01.2021				
Name/Surname	Represent/Ward	Tel/Cell	email	
Spero Kasey	MFP CHAIRMAN	0723416891	spirokasey@hotmail.com	
B. VISAGE	MFP: SECRETARY	0839961379	braamvisage@gmail.com	
M. Ramantso	M.B.F Chairman	0766041311 0604781259	kelce.ramantso1@gmail.com	
M.C. MORGAN	MEMBER OF MFP	0732312173	morganc@doornan.org.za doornanmorganc@gmail.com	
Motsapele Doota	WARD 14	0735584478		
ANTON B. MEYER	WARD 16	074-265-3962	meyelab7@gmail.com	
Louise George	Ward 9	079 747 5026		
PAUL PIE	WARD 10	0839621778	motlhudip@gmail.com	
Seimone Seike	WARD 10	0720099875	SeimoneSeike@ymail.com	

## MS TEAMS RECORD

Full Name	User Action	Timestamp
Nicolene Venter	Joined	1/6/2021, 9:49:44 AM
MFP	Joined before	1/6/2021, 9:49:44 AM
Karen	Joined	1/6/2021, 9:50:59 AM
Eugene Marais	Joined	1/6/2021, 9:57:39 AM
Gideon Raath	Joined	1/6/2021, 9:58:17 AM
Liza Janse van Vuuren	Joined	1/6/2021, 9:59:13 AM

## 100MW Vrede Solar PV facility, Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure, Kroonstad, Free State Province &

## 100MW Rondavel Solar PV facility, Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure, Kroonstad, Free State Province

Public Participation Presentation  
January 2021



## AGENDA

- Welcome and Introduction
- Meeting Conduct
- Project Overview
- Environmental Process, Studies & Findings
- Discussion
  - Responding to MFP's agenda items:
    - Advantage for MFP from Vrede SEF & Rondavel SEF projects
    - Employment opportunity
    - Training (skills)
    - Would cheaper electricity be supplied to Mochaka Local Municipality
    - Economic development if purchaser is Eskom
    - The mantra of "charity begins at home" – our house, our rules (to be queried)
    - Impact of these two projects on the MFP's Smart City proposal
  - Additional comments / questions
- Way Forward



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## CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

- Please stay on mute during the presentation
- Register attendance on Chat function (name, surname & affiliation)
- Please raise your hand to indicate comment / question to raise
- Questions submitted in Chat function will be responded to after the presentation
- Equal opportunity
- Recording of meeting
- Attendees welcome to switch video on



## PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

- Provide stakeholder & IAPs with an overview of the two respective Vrede & Rondavel Solar PV Facilities (separate projects)
- Summary of the **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) & Public Participation** being undertaken for both projects
- Present summary of key environmental findings as documented in the **Scoping Reports** of both projects
- Provide stakeholders the opportunity to seek clarity regarding the projects and their respective environmental studies
- Opportunity to provide valuable input into/to inform the EIA processes for both projects
- Obtain and record comments for inclusion in the **Final Scoping Reports** to be submitted to the DEFF



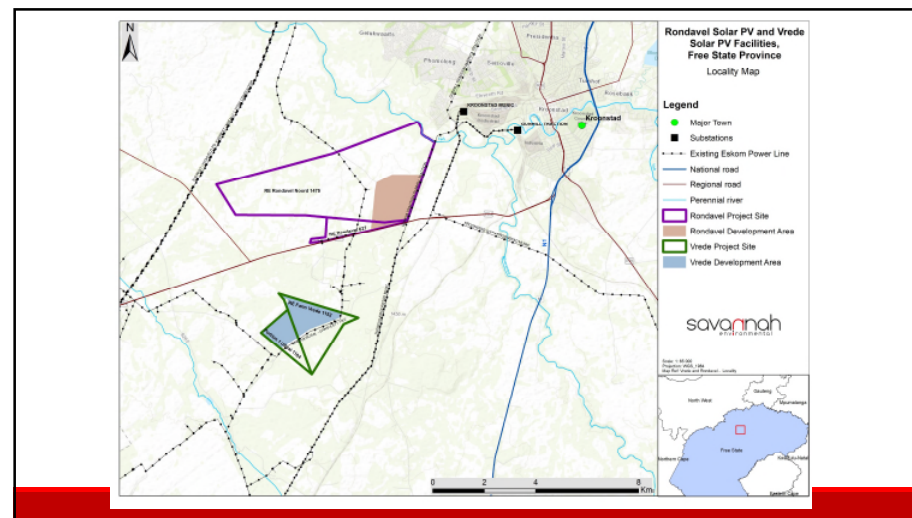
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## PROJECTS OVERVIEW

- **Applicant –**
  - Vrede Solar PV Facility: South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd
  - Rondavel Solar PV Facility: South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd
- **Location –**
  - Vrede Solar PV Facility: Farm Vrede No. 1152 and the Farm Uitval No. 1104;
  - Rondavel Solar PV Facility: Remaining Extent of the farm Rondavel Noord No. 1475 and Remaining Extent of the farm Rondavel No. 627.
- **Project proposal –**
  - Proposed construction and operation of two separate 100MWac Photovoltaic Solar Energy Facilities including Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure near Kroonstad in the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Fezile Dabi District in the Free State Province.
  - Projects respectively called Vrede Solar PV Facility and Rondavel Solar PV Facility.

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

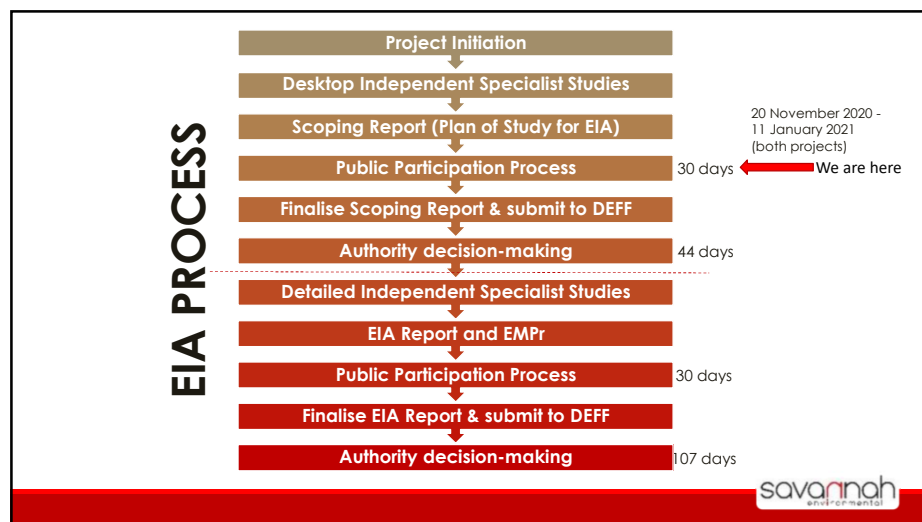
- **Infrastructure associated with both solar PV facilities will include:**
  - Solar PV array comprising PV modules and mounting structures.
  - Inverters and transformers.
  - Underground cabling between the project components.
  - On-site facility substation to facilitate the connection between the solar PV facility and the Eskom electricity grid.
  - Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).
  - Site offices and maintenance buildings, including workshop areas for maintenance and storage.
  - Laydown areas and temporary man camp area.
  - Access roads, internal distribution roads and fencing around the development area.
  - Telecommunication infrastructure;
  - Stormwater channels and water pipelines.

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## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- **Activities associated with both solar PV facilities may include:**
  - Surveys and studies during planning, including obtaining all permits and required approvals
  - Procurement of contractor teams
  - Establishment of access roads
  - Site preparation, including vegetation clearing and soil preparation
  - Component and equipment transport to site
  - Establishment of laydown areas
  - Erection of PV panels and installation of structural and electrical infrastructure (cabling, substations, inverters etc.)
  - Establishment of support infrastructure
  - Site rehabilitation
  - Operation and maintenance
  - Site decommissioning

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## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS/SENSITIVITIES IDENTIFIED

- Understanding the nature of the proposed development and the impacts associated with the projects (as identified in the Scoping phase), the following has been considered and assessed within the Scoping phase (for both projects):
  - Impacts on ecology (including flora and fauna)
  - Impacts on freshwater resources
  - Impacts on avifauna
  - Impacts on soils, geology, agricultural potential and land-use
  - Impacts on heritage (archaeology and palaeontology)
  - Visual impacts
  - Social impacts
  - Evaluation of potential cumulative impacts associated with the project

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## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The following findings were determined for both the Vrede Solar PV and Rondavel Solar PV facilities respectively:
  - Potential impact of low significance to ecology related to loss of vegetation, habitat and faunal species. Disturbance to fauna and flora, impact on CBA or ESA and spread of invasive alien plants.
  - Potential impact of low significance to freshwater features related to sedimentation, erosion, habitat and wetland vegetation loss, runoff and surface water quality alteration
  - Potential impact of medium to low significance on avifauna related to priority species displacement, habitat transformation, collisions, fence entrapment, electrocutions
  - Potential impact of high to low significance on agricultural potential and soils related to soil compaction, erosion, loss of soil fertility, soil pollution, and change in land capability

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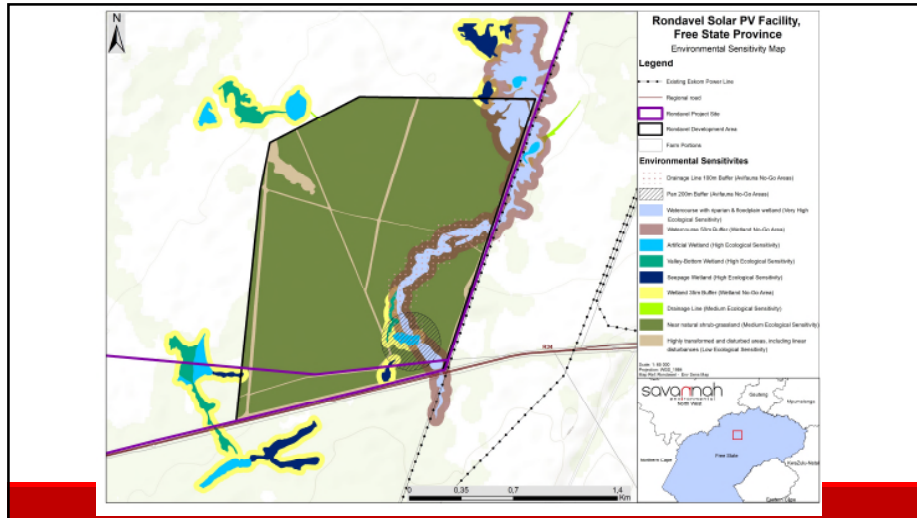
## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The following findings were determined for both the Vrede Solar PV and Rondavel Solar PV facilities respectively:
  - Potential impact of high to low significance on heritage resources related to damage to archaeological or Palaeontological heritage resources
  - Potential impact of high to low significance on visual receptors
  - Potential impact of low to medium significance (both positive and negative) on the social environment related to direct and indirect employment opportunities, pressure on infrastructure, social conflict, temporary security concerns, alteration of sense of place, socio-economic development and economic multiplier effects.
  - No environmental fatal flaws were determined for either of the Vrede or Rondavel solar PV projects.
  - Further specialist studies to be conducted in the EIA phase
  - Mitigation measures proposed may reduce impact significance

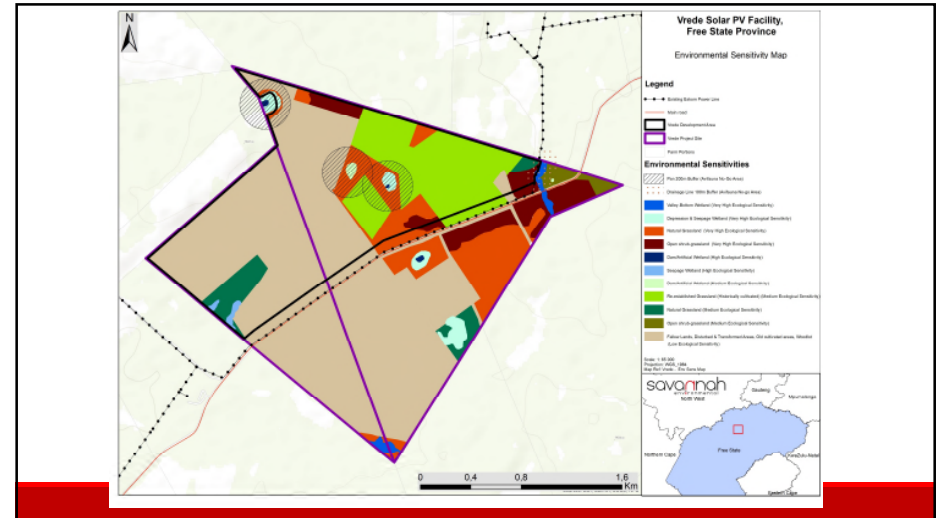
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## PLAN OF STUDY FOR EIA PHASE ASSESSMENTS

- » Based on the findings of the Scoping assessments (both projects), the following further investigation within the EIA phase are required:
  - Ecology impact assessment
  - Freshwater impact assessment
  - Avifaunal impact assessment
  - Soils, land use, land capability and agricultural potential
  - Visual impact assessment
  - Heritage (archaeology and palaeontology) impact assessment
  - Socio-economic impact assessment

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## WAY FORWARD

- » Meeting notes will be distributed for verification
- » Presentation will be distributed
- » Review and comment period ending **11 January 2021**
- » Incorporate issues and concerns raised during the Public Participation Process into the respective Final Scoping Reports
- » Submission of final Scoping Reports to DEFF for decision-making

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## WHO TO CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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## DISCUSSION SESSION

