

Visual Impact Assessment for the Sparrow PV Facility within the Stilfontein PV Cluster, Stilfontein, North West Province

Stilfontein PV VIAs, Stilfontein , South Africa

South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd



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Profile and Expertise of Specialists

SRK Consulting (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd (SRK) has been appointed by South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd (Mainstream) to undertake the Basic Assessment (BA) processes required in terms of the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA). SRK Consulting has appointed a team of professionals to conduct the Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) specialist study as part of the BA process. SRK comprises over 1 600 professional staff worldwide, offering expertise in a wide range of environmental and engineering disciplines. SRK's Cape Town Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) department has a distinguished track record of managing large environmental and engineering projects, extending back to 1979. SRK has rigorous quality assurance standards and is ISO 9001 accredited.

In accordance with the EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended), the qualifications and experience of the key individual specialists involved in the study are detailed below.

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Chris Dalgliesh is a Partner and Principal Environmental Consultant with over 36 years' experience, primarily in South Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa and South America (Suriname). Chris has worked on a wide range of projects, notably in the natural resources, Oil & Gas, waste, infrastructure (including rail and ports) and industrial sectors. He has managed and regularly reviews Visual Impact Assessments. He has directed and managed numerous Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) and associated management plans, in accordance with international standards. He regularly provides high level review of ESIAs, frequently directs Environmental and Social Due Diligence studies for lenders, and also has a depth of experience in Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), State of Environment Reporting and Resource Economics. He holds a BBusSci (Hons) and M Phil (Env).

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

amsl	Above Mean Sea Level
BA	Basic Assessment
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
DEA&DP	Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMPr	Environmental Management Programme
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
Mainstream	Mainstream Renewable Power Developments South Africa (Pty) Ltd
MTS	Main Transmission Station
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998
OP	Observation Points
PV	Photovoltaic
REDZ	Renewable Energy Development Zone
SRK	SRK Consulting (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd
ToR	Terms of Reference
VAC	Visual Absorption Capacity
VIA	Visual Impact Assessment

Useful Definitions

This list contains definitions of symbols, units, abbreviations, and terminology that may be unfamiliar to the reader.

After-image	Visual illusion that refers to an image continuing to appear after exposure to the original image as ceased.
Azimuth Angle	Direction (in degrees) measures clockwise from true north.
Glint	A momentary flash of bright light caused by a reflection of light off a surface.
Glare	A continuous source of bright light.
Landscape Integrity	The compatibility of the development/visual intrusion with the existing landscape.
Sense of Place	The identity of a place related to uniqueness and/or distinctiveness. Sometimes referred to as genius loci meaning 'spirit of the place'.
Shadow Flicker	Sunlight flickering effect caused when rotating wind turbine blades periodically cast shadows over small openings such as windows.
Viewshed	The topographically defined area from which the project could be visible.
Visibility	The area from which the project components would actually be visible and which depends upon topography, vegetation cover, built structures and distance.
Visual Absorption Capacity	The potential for the area to conceal the proposed development.
Visual Character	The elements that make up the landscape including geology, vegetation and land-use of the area.
Visual Exposure	The zone of visual influence or viewshed. Visual exposure tends to diminish exponentially with distance.
Visual Impact	A change to the existing visual, aesthetic or scenic environment, either adverse or beneficial, that is directly or indirectly due to the development of the project and its associated activities.
Visual Intrusion	The effect of the artificial insertion (construction) of an object on the visual quality of the environment resulting in its compatibility (absorbed into the landscape elements) or discord (contrasts with the landscape elements) with the landscape and surrounding land uses.
Visual Obtrusion (or Obstruction)	The effect of the artificial insertion (construction) of an object into a landscape, typically blocking and/or foreshortening views.
Visual Quality	The experience of the environment with its particular natural and cultural attributes.
Visual Receptors	Potential viewers (individuals or communities) who are subjected to the visual influence of a project.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

South Africa Mainstream Renewable Power Developments (Pty) Ltd (Mainstream) propose to construct and operate nine Photovoltaic (PV) Facilities with maximum nameplate capacity of up to 150 MW, each with an on-site substation (IPP-Portion), battery energy storage systems (BESS) and associated infrastructure. The nine PV Facilities, grid connections and associated infrastructure (referred to as “projects”) are located on seven farms and are collectively referred to as the Stilfontein PV Cluster, with a total footprint of ~2 737 ha, extending ~7 km from north to south and ~5.5 km from west to east (see Figure 1-1).

In addition, each PV Facility will be connected to an on-site substation (Eskom-Portion). From the on-site substation (Eskom-Portion) the grid connection will route to the proposed Main Transmission Substation (MTS) which will step up the power from 132 kV to 400 kV. The MTS will be connected to the existing 400 kV powerlines on the project site. Each PV Facility and the grid connections will all be submitted as **separate environmental authorisation applications (i.e. there will be 19 separate applications¹)**.

The Stilfontein PV Cluster is located ~25 km south-west of Potchefstroom and ~6 km north-east of Stilfontein, in North West Province and within the Klerksdorp Renewable Energy Development Zone (REDZ).

SRK Consulting (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd (SRK) has been appointed by Mainstream to conduct 19 Basic Assessment (BA) processes for

individual projects within the Stilfontein PV Cluster required in terms of the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014 (as amended).

A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) of each project within the Stilfontein PV Cluster is one of the specialist studies commissioned for each BA process. The VIA describes the visual baseline and rates the significance of visual and sense of place impacts, utilising the standard impact rating methodology, prescribed in the Terms of Reference (ToR). **This VIA relates to the Sparrow PV Facility (Figure 1-2).**

1.2 Terms of Reference

The primary aims of the study are to describe the visual baseline, assess the visual (including glint and glare) impacts of the project and identify effective and practicable mitigation measures. More specifically, the ToR for the study are as follows:

- Describe the baseline visual characteristics of the study area, including landform, visual character and sense of place, and place this in a regional context;
- Identify potential impacts of the project on the visual environment through analysis and synthesis of the following factors:
 - Visual exposure;
 - Visual absorption capacity;
 - Sensitivity of viewers (visual receptors);
 - Viewing distance and visibility;
 - Landscape integrity; and

¹ Nine PV Facility, nine Electrical Grid Infrastructure and one MTS.

- Solar radiation.
- Model glare generated by the proposed PV arrays;
- Assess potential visual and sense of place impacts of the project using SRK’s impact assessment methodology (see Appendix C);
- Identify and assess the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts (pre- and post-mitigation) of the proposed project (and alternatives, if applicable) on visual resources in relation to other proposed and existing developments in the surrounding area; and
- Recommend practicable mitigation measures to avoid and/or minimise impacts and/or optimise benefits.

1.3 Content of the Report

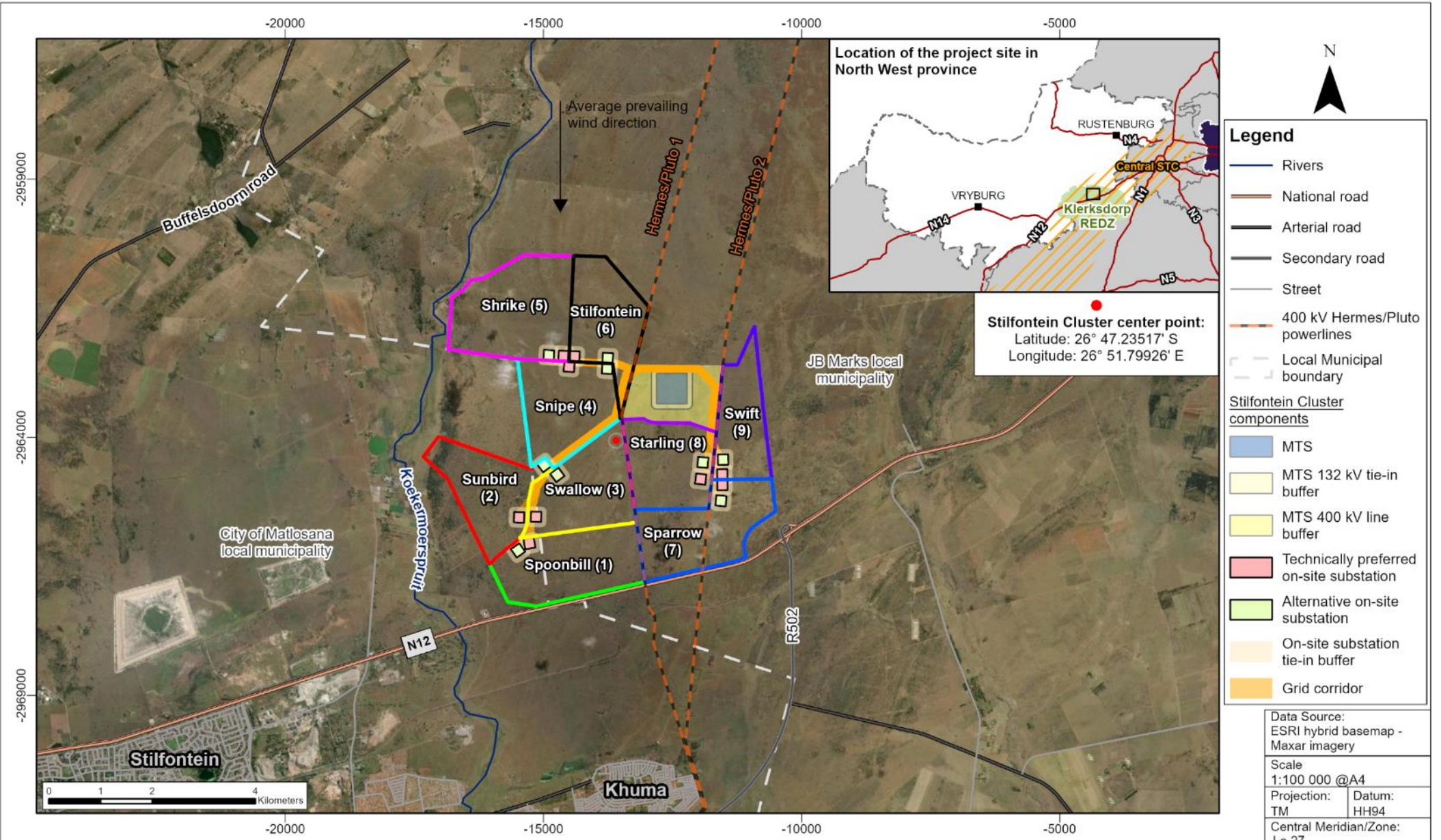
The EIA Regulations, 2014 (R982 of 2014, as amended by R326 of 2017 and R517 of 2021), prescribe the required content of a specialist report prepared in terms of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended). These requirements, and the sections of this VIA in which they are addressed, are summarised in Table 1-1.

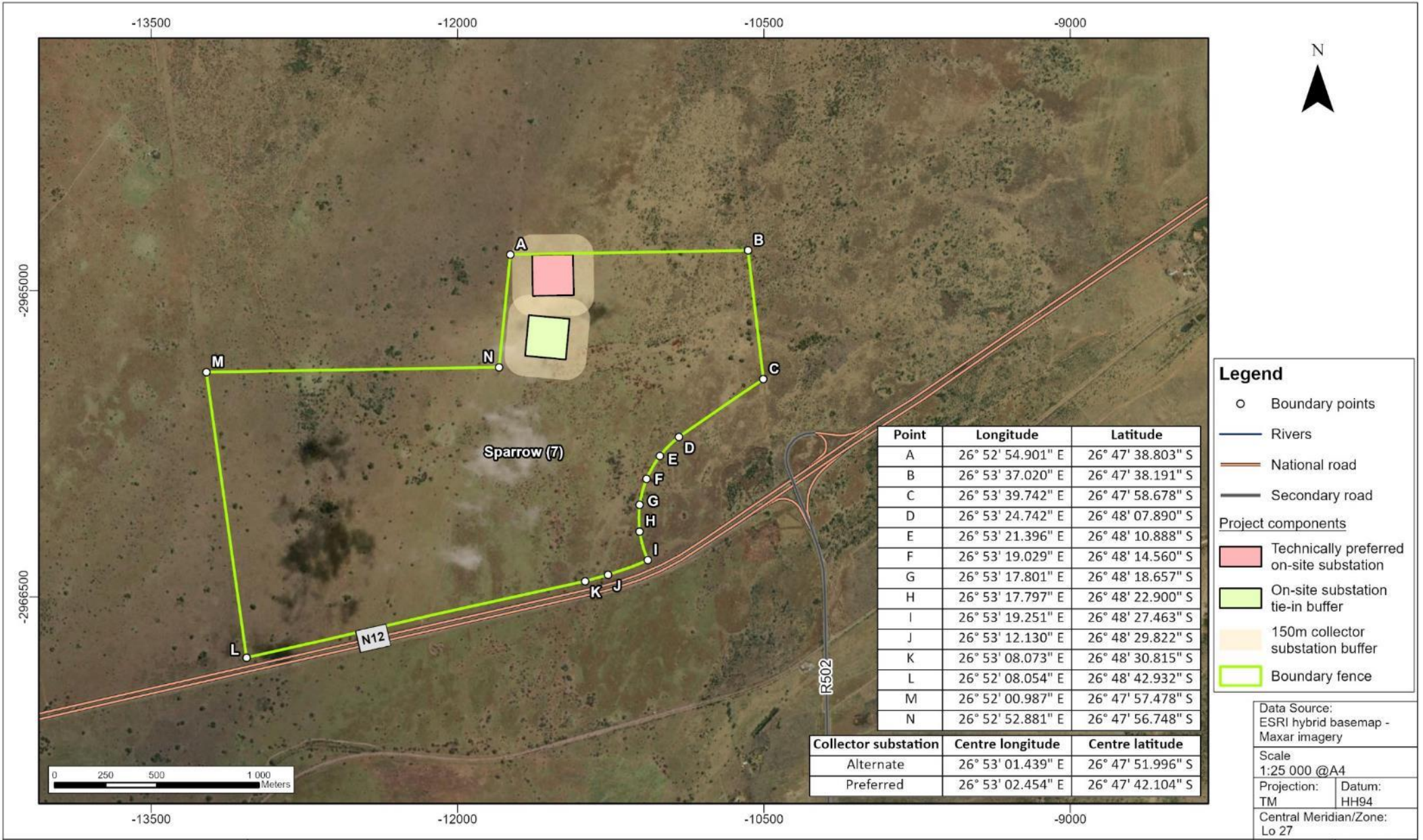
Table 1-1: Required content of a specialist report

App 6	Item	Section
(a) (i)	Details of the specialist who prepared the report;	Page 3
(a) (ii)	Expertise of that specialist to compile a specialist report, including a curriculum vitae,	Page 3, Appendix A
(b)	A declaration that the specialist is independent in a form as may be specified by the competent authority;	Appendix B
(c)	An indication of the scope of, and the purpose for which, the report was prepared;	1.2
(cA)	An indication of the quality and age of base data used for the specialist report;	2.4, 2.5

App 6	Item	Section
(cB)	A description of existing impacts on the site, cumulative impacts of the proposed development and levels of acceptable change;	6
(d)	The duration, date and season of the site investigation and the relevance of the season to the outcome of the assessment;	2.4
(e)	A description of the methodology adopted in preparing the report or carrying out the specialised process inclusive of equipment and modelling used;	2
(f)	Details of an assessment of the specific identified sensitivity of the site related to the proposed activity or activities and its associated structures and infrastructure, inclusive of a site plan identifying site alternatives;	5, 6
(g)	An identification of any areas to be avoided, including buffers;	5.7
(h)	A map superimposing the activity including the associated structures and infrastructure on the environmental sensitivities of the site including areas to be avoided, including buffers;	N/A (see above)
(i)	A description of any assumptions made and any uncertainties or gaps in knowledge;	2.5
(j)	A description of the findings and potential implications of such findings on the impact of the proposed activity or activities;	6, 7
(k)	Any mitigation measures for inclusion in the EMPr;	6
(l)	Any conditions for inclusion in the environmental authorisation;	6
(m)	Any monitoring requirements for inclusion in the EMPr or environmental authorisation;	6
(n) (i)	A reasoned opinion whether the proposed activity or portions thereof should be authorised;	7.2

App 6	Item	Section
(n) (iA)	A reasoned opinion regarding the acceptability of the proposed activity or activities;	7.2
(n) (ii)	If the opinion is that the proposed activity, activities or portions thereof should be authorised, any avoidance, management and mitigation measures that should be included in the EMPr, and where applicable, the closure plan;	7
(o)	A description of any consultation process that was undertaken during the course of preparing the specialist report;	None undertaken by the specialist
(p)	A summary and copies of any comments received during any consultation process and where applicable all responses thereto; and	N/A (see above)
(q)	Any other information requested by the competent authority.	None was requested





Point	Longitude	Latitude
A	26° 52' 54.901" E	26° 47' 38.803" S
B	26° 53' 37.020" E	26° 47' 38.191" S
C	26° 53' 39.742" E	26° 47' 58.678" S
D	26° 53' 24.742" E	26° 48' 07.890" S
E	26° 53' 21.396" E	26° 48' 10.888" S
F	26° 53' 19.029" E	26° 48' 14.560" S
G	26° 53' 17.801" E	26° 48' 18.657" S
H	26° 53' 17.797" E	26° 48' 22.900" S
I	26° 53' 19.251" E	26° 48' 27.463" S
J	26° 53' 12.130" E	26° 48' 29.822" S
K	26° 53' 08.073" E	26° 48' 30.815" S
L	26° 52' 08.054" E	26° 48' 42.932" S
M	26° 52' 00.987" E	26° 47' 57.478" S
N	26° 52' 52.881" E	26° 47' 56.748" S

Collector substation	Centre longitude	Centre latitude
Alternate	26° 53' 01.439" E	26° 47' 51.996" S
Preferred	26° 53' 02.454" E	26° 47' 42.104" S

Legend

- Boundary points
- Rivers
- National road
- Secondary road

Project components

- Technically preferred on-site substation
- On-site substation tie-in buffer
- 150m collector substation buffer
- Boundary fence

Data Source: ESRI hybrid basemap - Maxar imagery	
Scale 1:25 000 @A4	
Projection: TM	Datum: HH94
Central Meridian/Zone: Lo 27	
Date: 09/01/2023	Compiled by: BRCH
Project No. 581877	Fig No. 1-2



**STILFONTEIN PV CLUSTER VIA
SPARROW PV PROJECT LAYOUT**

2 Methodology

Visual impacts are a function of the physical transformation of a landscape on account of the introduced object, and the experiential perceptions of viewers.

Given the subjective nature of visual issues, assessing the visual impacts of a project in absolute and objective terms is not achievable. Thus, qualitative as well as quantitative techniques are required.

In this VIA, emphasis has therefore been placed on ensuring that the methodology and rating criteria are clearly stated and transparent. The focus of the study is to determine the character and sensitivity of the visual environment, identify visual receptors and viewing corridors, model glare potential and identify and assess potential visual (including glint and glare) impacts and mitigation measures. Glint and glare are defined as follows:

- Glint: A momentary flash of bright light caused by a reflection of light off a surface; and
- Glare: A continuous source of bright light.

Glint cannot be meaningfully modelled but is described should it occur. Glare is the more likely and, arguably, more pertinent impact. Impact assessment ratings are motivated and, where possible, assessed against explicitly stated and objective criteria.

2.1 Guidelines

Relevant guidelines that provide direction for visual assessment include the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning's (DEA&DP) "Guideline for Involving Visual and Aesthetic Specialists in EIA Processes" (DEA&DP, 2005), the Landscape Institute's "Guidelines

for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments" (2013), and Pager Power's "Solar Photovoltaic Development – Glint and Glare Guidance" (2018), which have been considered in this VIA.

DEA&DP's Guideline (2005) identifies typical components of a visual study:

- Identification of issues and values relating to visual, aesthetic and scenic resources through involvement of stakeholders;
- Identification of landscape types, landscape character and sense of place, generally based on geology, landforms, vegetation cover and land use patterns;
- Identification of viewsheds, view catchment area and the zone of visual influence, generally based on topography;
- Identification of important viewpoints and view corridors within the affected environment, including sensitive receptors;
- Indication of distance radii from the proposed project to the various viewpoints and receptors;
- Determination of the visual absorption capacity (VAC) of the landscape, usually based on topography, vegetation cover or urban fabric in the area;
- Determination of the relative visibility, or visual intrusion, of the proposed project;
- Determination of the relative compatibility or conflict of the project with the surroundings; and
- A comparison of the existing situation with the probable effect of the proposed project.

Projects that warrant a visual specialist study include those:

- Located in a receiving environment with:

- Protection status, such as national parks or nature reserves;
- Proclaimed heritage sites or scenic routes;
- Intact wilderness qualities, or pristine ecosystems;
- Intact or outstanding rural or townscape qualities;
- A recognized special character or sense of place;
- Outside a defined urban edge line;
- Sites of cultural or religious significance;
- Important tourism or recreation value;
- Important vistas or scenic corridors;
- Visually prominent ridgelines or skylines; and/or
- Where the project is:
 - High intensity, including large-scale infrastructure;
 - A change in land use from the prevailing use;
 - In conflict with an adopted plan or vision;
 - A significant change to the fabric and character of the area;
 - A significant change to the townscape or streetscape;
 - A possible visual intrusion in the landscape; or
 - Obstructing views of others in the area.

In terms of the guideline, the proposed PV Facilities and associated infrastructure can be classified as a Category 4 development, which includes medium-scale development generally 1 to 3-storey structures and usually more than 25% of the area retained as green open space. As the project is situated within an area of medium scenic, cultural, historical significance, with a number of Nature Reserves and tourist

attractions within the region (Wikipedia, 2022) a high visual impact is expected (see Table 2-1), which introduces:

- Potential effects on protected landscapes and/or scenic resources;
- Some change in the visual character of the area; and
- New development or adds to existing development in the area.

Such a project typically warrants a Level 3 assessment (see Table 2-2), which includes the following generic steps:

- Identification of issues and site visit;
- Description of receiving environment and proposed project;
- Establishment of view catchment area, view corridors, viewpoints and receptors;
- Indication of potential visual impacts using established criteria;
- Inclusion of potential lighting impacts at night; and
- Description of alternatives, mitigation measures and monitoring programmes.

Table 2-1: Expected visual impact significance

Type of environment	Type of development				
	Cat 1	Cat 2	Cat 3	Cat 4	Cat 5
Protected / wild areas	Moderate	High	High	Very high	Very high
High scenic, cultural, historical value	Minimal	Moderate	High	High	Very high
Medium scenic, cultural, historical value	Little or none	Minimal	Moderate	High	High
Low scenic, cultural, historical value / disturbed	Little or none Possible benefits	Little or none	Minimal	Moderate	High
Disturbed or degraded sites	Little or none Possible benefits	Little or none Possible benefits	Little or none	Minimal	Moderate

Table 2-2: Recommended approach for visual assessment

Approach	Type of issue expected				
	Little or no visual impact	Minimal visual impact	Moderate visual impact	High visual impact	Very high visual impact
Level of visual impact recommended	Level 1 visual input	Level 2 visual input	Level 3 visual assessment	Level 4 visual assessment	

Glint and glare (also referred to as solar reflection) analyses are required for projects that may cause visual discomfort to surrounding receptors (particularly aviation activity, motorists and residents). A glint and glare analysis was conducted due to the project's proximity to the N12 motorway and some residences, and for the Klerksdorp Airport (see Figure 5-6).

PV panels vary in their reflectivity with none absorbing 100% of the incoming light, thus leading to solar reflection which may be experienced by receptors. Glint and/or glare can only be experienced by receptors with a direct line of sight to the PV array. Whether a receptor experiences glint or glare depends on the receptor's location and movement in relation to the PV panels.

Several countries, including South Africa, require Glint and Glare Impact Assessments for certain projects, *inter alia*, PV projects located in close proximity to aircraft approach and take-off centrelines, an aerodrome or heliport². However, no content requirements or associated guidelines have been released by the authorities.

Pager Power's "Solar Photovoltaic Development – Glint and Glare Guidance" (2018) considered and is based on a suite of international planning and aviation guidelines related to glint and glare originating specifically from PV projects. In the absence of established international glare thresholds (for solar), Pager Power considered the threshold durations of shadow flicker (from wind turbines) beyond which mitigation is required in some European countries. The threshold is 30 minutes per day or more and more than 30 hours per year within 500 m of the turbine. Considering, *inter alia*, that shadow flicker inherently flickers at a third of the frequency of the rotating blades (assuming three blades), the recommended threshold for glint and glare (which is continuous) beyond

² South African Civil Aviation Authority Obstacle Notice 3/2020: Additional Requirements for Solar Project Applications.

which mitigation is required, is 60 minutes per day, for three or more months of the year (see Section 5.6.1) (Pager Power, 2018).

In the absence of other authoritative regulatory guidelines, the Pager Power Guideline has been used for the Glint and Glare analysis in this VIA.

2.2 Approach

The approach adopted for the VIA is intended to be as accurate and thorough as possible. Analytical techniques are selected to endorse the reliability and credibility of the assessment.

The approach to and reporting of the VIA study comprises three major, phased elements (as summarised in Figure 2-1 below):

- Description of the visual context;
- Identification and discussion of the potential visual (including glint and glare) impacts; and
- Assessment of those potential impacts.

Visual impacts are assessed as one of many interrelated effects on people (i.e. the viewers and the impact of an introduced object into a particular view or scene) (Young, 2000). In order to assess the visual impact the project has on the affected environment, the visual context (baseline) in which the project is located must be described. The inherent value of the visual landscape to viewers is informed by geology / topography, vegetation and land-use, and is expressed as *Visual Character* (overall impression of the landscape), *Visual Quality* (how the landscape is experienced) and *Sense of Place* (uniqueness and identity).

Visual impact is measured as the change to the existing visual environment caused by the project as perceived by the viewers (Young,

2000). The visual impact(s) may be negative, positive or neutral (i.e. the visual quality is maintained). The magnitude or intensity of the visual impacts is determined through analysis and synthesis of the VAC of the landscape (potential of the landscape to absorb the project), zone of visual influence or exposure, visibility (viewing distances), compatibility of the project with landscape integrity (congruence), the sensitivity of the viewers (receptors) and the duration and intensity of glare.

Sources of visual impacts are identified for the construction and operational phases of the project. The significance of those visual impacts is then assessed using the prescribed impact rating methodology, which includes the rating of:

- Impact consequence, determined by extent, duration and magnitude/intensity of impact (see above);
- Impact probability;
- Impact significance, determined by combining the ratings for consequence and probability; and
- Confidence in the significance rating.

The significance rating methodology is described in more detail in Appendix C.

Mitigation measures recommended to avoid and/or reduce the significance of negative impacts, or to optimise positive impacts, are identified for the project. Impact significance is re-assessed assuming the effective implementation of mitigation measures.

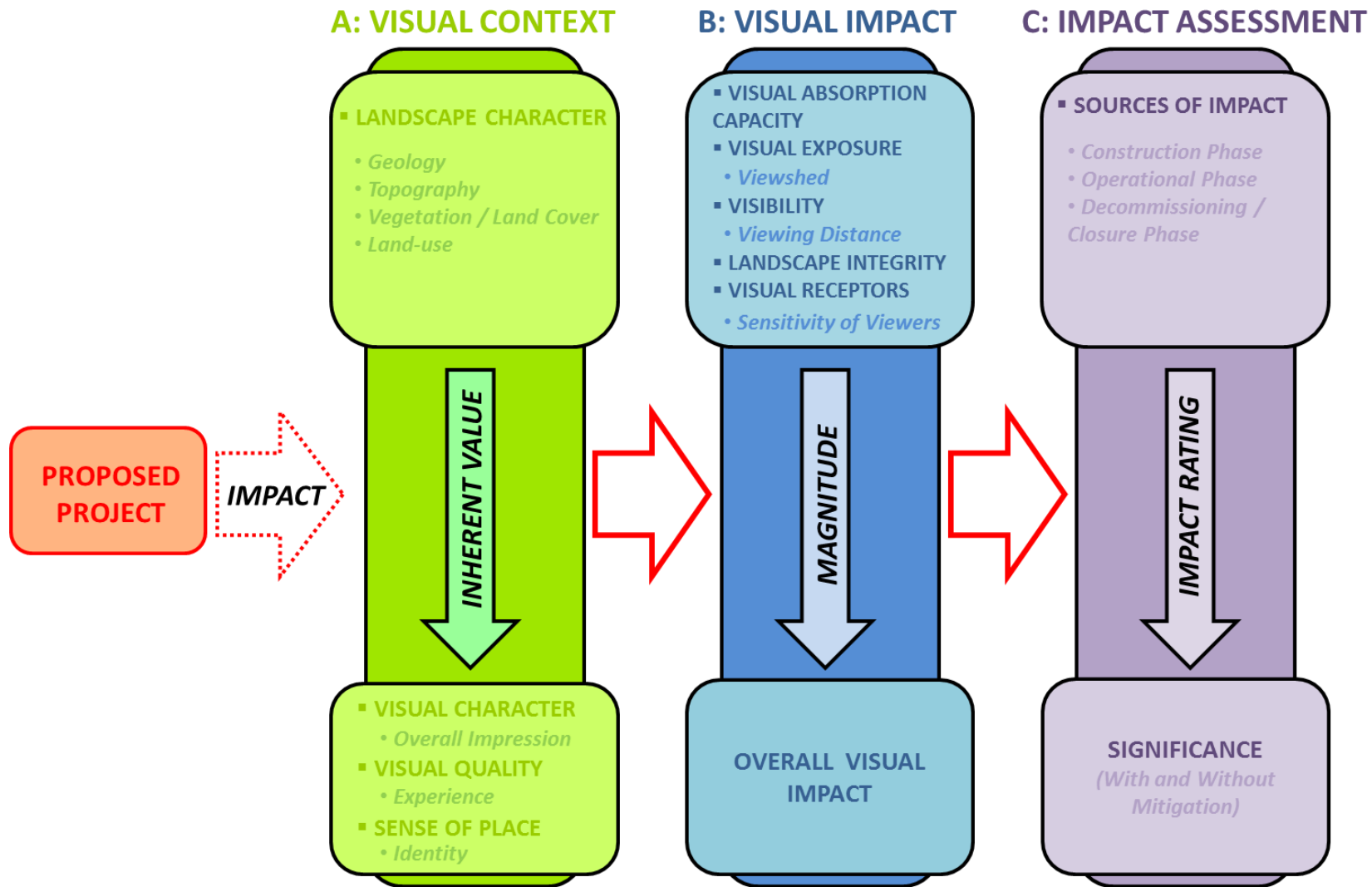


Figure 2-1: Approach to and method for the VIA

2.3 Method

The following method was used to assess the visual context (baseline) for the project:

1. Describe the project using information supplied by the proponent and BA team;
2. Collect and review visual data, including data on topography, vegetation cover, land-use and other background information;
3. Undertake fieldwork, comprising a reconnaissance of the study area, particularly the project site and key viewpoints. The objectives of the fieldwork were to:
 - Familiarise the specialist with the site and its surroundings;
 - Identify key viewpoints / corridors; and
 - Determine and groundtruth the existing visual character and quality in order to understand the sensitivity of the landscape.

Visual ‘sampling’ using photography was undertaken to illustrate the likely zone of influence and visibility. The location of the viewpoints was recorded with a GPS.

4. Undertake a mapping exercise to define the visual character of the study area; and
5. Identify sensitive receptors.

The following method was used to assess the visual impact of the project:

1. Determine the visual zone of influence or exposure by superimposing the proposed upgrades on aerial imagery, and verified during the site visit;
2. Make field observations at key viewpoints to determine the likely distance at which visual impacts will become indistinguishable;
3. Conduct glare modelling to identify the potential glint and duration of glare from the PV panels experienced by receptors, if any;
4. Rate impacts on the visual environment and sense of place based on a professional opinion and the prescribed impact rating methodology;
5. Recommend practicable mitigation measures to avoid and/or minimise impacts; and
6. Provide environmental management measures to be included in the Environmental Management Programme for the project (EMPr).

2.3.1 Glare Analysis Methodology

Glare can be modelled geometrically to accurately predict whether reflection will be experienced by receptors using the following parameters:

- The earth’s orbit around the sun;
- The earth’s rotation and orientation;
- The location of the PV array;
- The orientation of the PV panels and the azimuth angle³; and
- Local topography including (comparative) receptor and PV array heights above mean sea level (amsl).

³ Direction (in degrees) measures clockwise from true north.

The glare model provides a quantified assessment of:

- When and where glare will occur throughout the year for a prescribed PV installation; and
- Intensity of the effects on the human eye at those locations where glare occurs.

ForgeSolar's GlareGauge modelling software was used to model the anticipated intensity and duration of glare from the PV array. The results of the glare analysis are detailed in Section 5.6.2.

2.4 Site Visit and Data Acquisition

A site visit was undertaken on 2 February 2022. The duration and timing of the site visit were adequate to provide the specialist with a representative impression of the site and surroundings.

The following additional information sources were used:

- Maps indicating the location and layout of the project;
- Topographic data, including spatial files with 5 m contours obtained from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform;
- Biodiversity data from SANBI Biodiversity GIS;
- Aerial images; and
- Other available data on geology, vegetation, land use, receptors, glare etc.

The information is sufficiently recent and detailed to provide appropriate inputs into the VIA.

2.5 Assumptions and Limitations

As is standard practice, the VIA is based on a number of assumptions and is subject to certain limitations, which should be borne in mind when

considering information presented in this report. These assumptions and limitations include:

- VIA is not, by nature, a purely objective, quantitative process, and depends to some extent on subjective judgments. Where subjective judgments are required, appropriate criteria and motivations for these have been clearly stated;
- The study is based on technical information supplied to SRK, which is assumed to be accurate. This includes the proposed locations, dimensions and layouts of the project components;
- The glare analysis does not account for smaller physical obstructions between the PV panels and the receptors (e.g. buildings or tree cover);
- The glare analysis assumes clear, sunny skies year-round;
- The PV array tracking model assumes the modules move instantly when tracking the sun, and when reverting to the rest position of 0°;
- The study area is defined as the area within a 5 km radius of the site, as the visual impact beyond this distance is considered negligible due to the low vertical profile/dimensions of PV arrays which serve to limit visibility; and
- This study does not provide motivation for or against the project, but rather seeks to give insight into the visual character and quality of the area, its VAC and the potential visual (including glint and glare) impacts of the project.

The findings of the VIA are not expected to be affected by these assumptions and limitations.

3 Project Description and No Go Alternative

Mainstream proposes the construction and operation of the Sparrow PV Facility PV Facility (Sparrow) with up to 150 MW generation capacity, including grid connections, BESS and associated infrastructure (“the project”). The Sparrow facility is located in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality in the North West Province. The project site is located approximately 13 km east of the town of Stilfontein along the N12 and forms part of the larger proposed Stilfontein PV Cluster.

3.1 Stilfontein PV Cluster Overview

The project forms part of the larger proposed Stilfontein PV Cluster, which comprises up to nine 150 MW PV facilities, including grid connections, BESS and associated infrastructure. **Separate EA applications will be submitted for the individual PV facilities and grid connections through separate BA processes** (see Figure 3-1). The Stilfontein Cluster is briefly described here.

The Stilfontein Cluster is entirely located within the Klerksdorp REDZ and the Central Strategic Transmission Corridor (STC) (see Figure 1-1). Individual PV facilities will be submitted as part of the REIPPPP bidding process. At this stage it is not known which facilities (projects) may be awarded preferred bidder status, and thus which portion of the Stilfontein Cluster will be developed.

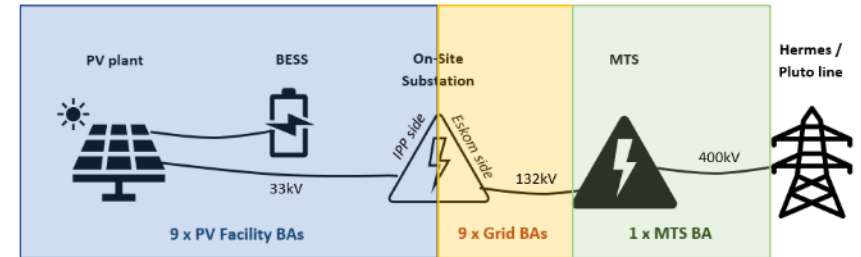


Figure 3-1: Components included in the individual BA processes for the Stilfontein Cluster

3.2 Sparrow PV Project Description

This section provides a summary of the proposed project and focuses on elements that are relevant to the VIA. A more detailed project description is provided in the BA Reports for the project.

Mainstream proposes to develop the Stilfontein PV Cluster, comprising nine facilities each generating up to 150 MW PV Facilities, including associated infrastructure. The Cluster will have a combined development footprint of 2 737 ha (Figure 1-1).

The project comprises the following key components:

- PV single axis tracking arrays with a maximum export capacity of up to 150 MW and a maximum height of 5 m. Panel technology will be either monofacial or bifacial;
- Internal gravel roads with a maximum width of up to 12 m;
- Power transformers;
- Fencing and lighting;
- Material laydown areas;
- Stormwater infrastructure;

- Water supply and water storage infrastructure;
- Offices, including ablutions with septic / conservancy tank sewage treatment infrastructure;
- Operational control centre and maintenance area;
- Lithium-Ion BESS;
- IPP-portion of the 11-33/132kV on-site substation, each serving one PV facility. The proposed step-up substation facility will have a development footprint of up to 4 ha, with a 100 m wide buffer around each on-site substation to accommodate powerline tie-ins at any point of the substation and other associated activities. Two alternative locations are identified for each substation; and
- Medium voltage 11-33kV underground cabling and / or overhead power lines between the PV facilities and on-site substation

3.3 Project Alternatives

3.3.1 Location Alternatives

PV Facilities

Mainstream conducted an internal constraint mapping exercise to identify the project buildable area for the Sparrow PV facility (and the Stilfontein Cluster) which has the least environmental impact.

The identified available buildable area has been fully allocated to the nine proposed PV facilities and associated infrastructure that comprise the Stilfontein Cluster (see Figure 1-1). As such, no alternative sites are being assessed for the Sparrow PV facility.

On-Site Substation (IPP-Portion)

Two on-site substation location alternatives were identified per project along with a corresponding grid corridor.

The location of the Sparrow Substation is broadly determined by the location of the PV facilities. The location of the on-site substation and corresponding powerline corridor was optimised to:

- Optimally serve the relevant PV facilities;
- Minimise the required length of powerlines;
- Provide adequate accessibility;
- Provide adequate space for other infrastructure; and
- Take account of topographical and environmental characteristics.

Two alternative on-site substation locations were identified per project. A technically preferred substation location was indicated for each project (Figure 1-1).

3.3.2 Activity Alternatives

The proposal is to generate renewable power as part of the REIPPPP. The project lies within the Klerksdorp REDZ which was specifically identified for the deployment of large-scale PV facilities. As such, there are no reasonable activity alternatives.

3.3.3 Technology Alternatives

Cell Technology

Different solar cell and panel technologies are being considered; these do not meaningfully affect the significance of visual impacts.

Panel Technology

Two panel technologies are considered; monofacial panels or bifacial panels. Bifacial panels are technically preferred as they have a:

- Higher yield per module area unit;
- Lower light-induced degradation;
- Longer operational lifetime; and
- Comparable cost.

Mounting Technology

Mainstream considered various mounting technologies during the pre-feasibility stage which are described in detail in the BA Report.

The PV panels will be mounted on single-axis tracking structures, with multiple rows of supporting structures installed on a north-south axis, and will have a maximum height of 5 m above ground.

BESS Technology

Mainstream considered various BESS technologies during the pre-feasibility stage which are described in detail in the BA Report.

Solid state lithium-ion batteries will be used. Solid state battery cells are integrated into battery modules and installed into racks, that are then installed into specifically prepared shipping containers to function as an integrated battery system. Containers will be placed on raised concrete plinths and may be stacked on top of each other to a maximum height of ~ 15 m. Each container has a footprint of ~ 60 m² and is ~ 4 m high. Each BESS will have a footprint of up to 10 ha.

⁴ These terms are explained in the relevant sections below.

3.3.4 No-Go Alternative

The No-Go alternative will be considered in the study in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended). The No-Go alternative implies that the project will not be implemented, visual impacts will not occur, and additional renewable electricity will not be generated by this project.

4 Visual Context (Affected Environment)

The following description of the affected environment focuses on the *Visual Character* of the area surrounding and including the project (the study area), and discusses the *Visual Quality* and *Sense of Place*⁴. This baseline information provides the context for the visual analysis.

4.1 Landscape Character

Landscape character is the description of the pattern of the landscape, resulting from particular combinations of natural (physical and biological) and cultural (land use) characteristics. It focuses on the inherent nature of the land rather than the response of a viewer (Young, 2000).

4.1.1 Geology and Topography

The geology and topography of the area, together with the temperate highveld climate, provide the framework for the basic landscape features and visual elements of the study area.

The project falls within the western portion of the highveld, the elevated inland plateau that comprises roughly 30% of South Africa's land area.

The highveld terrain is generally devoid of mountains and consists primarily of rolling plains. This region experiences summer rainfall, with substantial afternoon thunderstorms and frost in winter.

The project site comprises seven relatively flat properties in a uniform environment, at an elevation of ~1 380 (above mean sea level [amsl]) (in the north), gently falling over ~ 7 km to ~1 340 amsl (near the N12) and dropping to 1 300 m amsl over ~12 km to the Vaal River, south of the project site. Gently undulating topography to the northeast and northwest of the sites rises to ~1 500 m amsl (Figure 4-3).

The expansive and somewhat unspectacular landscape is further characterised by tailings dams and overburden stockpiles to the southwest, ranging from ~15 m to ~30 m in height, evidence past and present mining activity in the surrounding area (Figure 4-1).



Figure 4-1: Tailings dams to the south of the PV Facilities (photo taken from the N12)

The project is underlain by dolomite and limestone of the Malmani Subgroup of the Chuniespoort Group. The Koekermoerspruit forms an informal boundary to the immediate west of the project site.

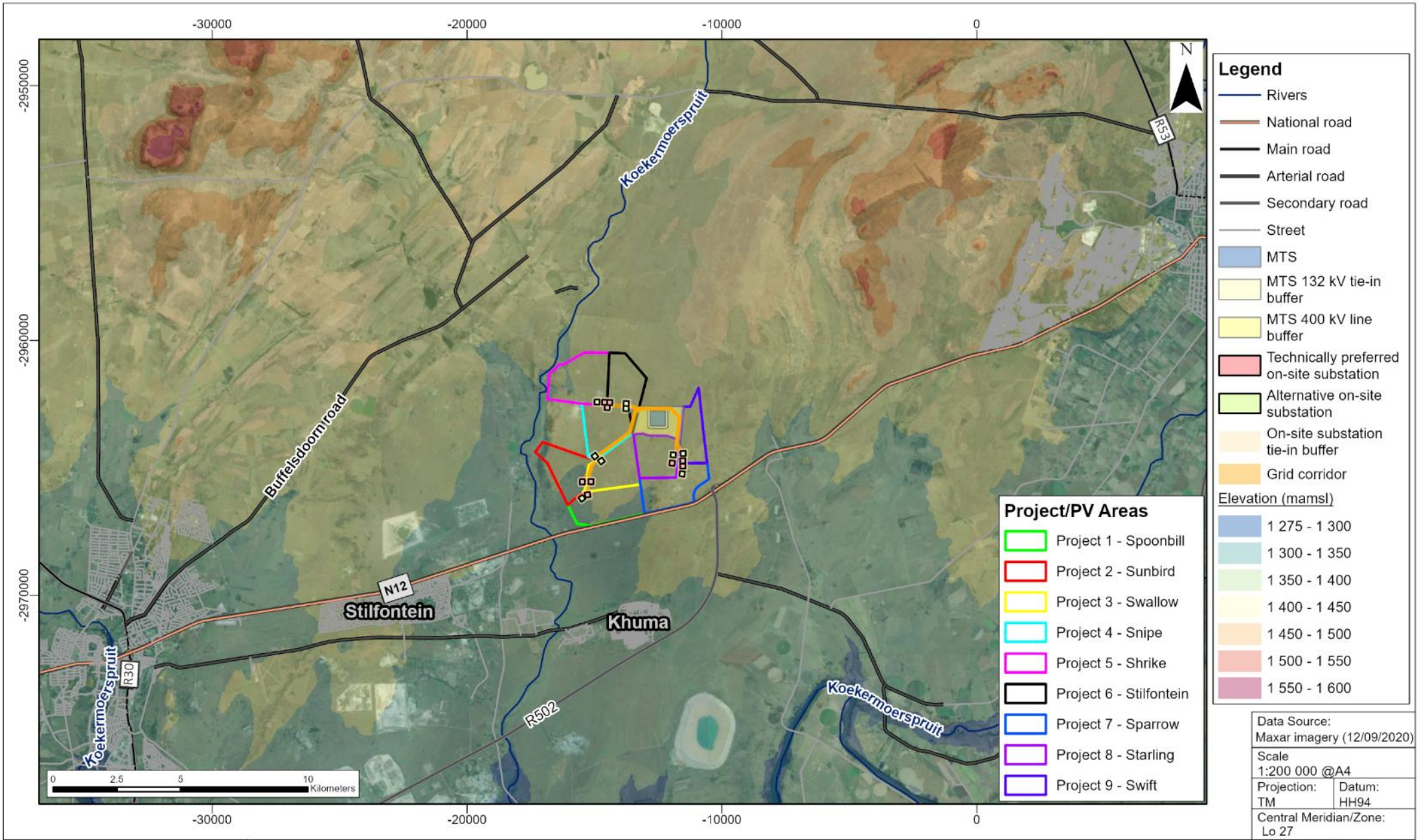
⁵ The National Park was proposed in 1984 (Daemane & Bezuidenhout, 2012), but the area has not and will not be declared a National Park (per comms. Bezuidenhout, 2023).

4.1.2 Vegetation

The project will be located across the Vaal Reefs Dolomite Sinkhole Woodland and Carlton Dolomite Grassland vegetation types of the Dry Highland Grassland Biome. The Dry Highland Grassland Biome occurs at mid-altitudes of 1 300 – 1 600 m amsl and undulating topography with small outcropping mountains and river valleys. The biome comprises grasses and low shrubby vegetation with small clusters of trees and bushes, reminiscent of African savannah landscapes (Figure 4-2). The proposed Highveld National Park is located ~13 km to the northeast of the Cluster site. The proposed Park would occupy ~ 10 200 ha and would cover ~0.3% of the endangered grassland biome, the vegetation type the Park aims to preserve (Daemane, Cilliers, & Bezuidenhout, 2010)⁵.



Figure 4-2 : Vegetation type across the sites



Data Source: Maxar imagery (12/09/2020)	
Scale 1:200 000 @A4	
Projection: TM	Datum: HH94
Central Meridian/Zone: Lo 27	
Date: 22/03/2022	Compiled by: BRCH
Project No. 581877	Fig No. 4-3

4.1.3 Land Use

The highveld is home to some of South Africa's most important commercial farming areas, as well as its largest concentration of metropolitan centres. Potchefstroom, ~ 25 km to the northeast of the site, is one of the largest urban centres in the North West Province with tertiary institutions, industry, services and agriculture being key economic sectors.

The area surrounding the site is predominantly characterised by agricultural and mining activities (tailings dam), urban development, infrastructure (roads and rail) and natural highveld grassland. Hartebeesfontein, Buffelsfontein and Stilfontein mines are located to the south of the site, while the mining towns of Klerksdorp, Stilfontein and Orkney, and the Khuma township are located to the southwest. Agriculture, mainly crop and cattle farming, is the predominant land use to the north, east and west of the sites. Farmsteads are dotted throughout the area, especially to the east and west. National, regional and provincial roads criss-cross the region. A railway line runs parallel to the N12 to the south of the site. The existing 400 kV Hermes/Pluto 1 and 2 powerlines traverse the site in a north-southerly direction (Figure 4-4).



Figure 4-4: Hermes/Pluto 400 kV powerline

In addition, land use in the surrounding the project area includes the following:

- Frontier Shooting Range;
- Frontier Metal Processing;
- Chubby Chick poultry farm;
- Club Louico; and
- Khora Lion Park.

The seven farms that constitute the Cluster site are undeveloped and used for agricultural purposes.

4.2 Visual Character

Visual character is descriptive and non-evaluative, which implies that it is based on defined attributes that are neither positive nor negative. It refers to the overall experience and impression of the landscape, such as natural or transformed.

A change in visual character cannot be described as having positive or negative attributes until the viewer's response to that change has been taken into consideration. The probable change caused by the project is assessed against the existing degree of change caused by previous development.

Typical character attributes, used to describe the visual character of the affected area and to give an indication of potential value to the viewer, are provided in Figure 4-5.

The basis for the visual character is provided by the topography, vegetation and land use of the area, which is predominantly a rural environment characterised by the undulating, vegetated landscape, albeit with large pockets of settlements and mining activity. Harsh, man-made structures and landforms introduced by mining dominate the

landscape to the south-west of the sites. The rolling expanse of vegetated landscape to the north and east of the site further evokes the natural, rural environment. The project area can therefore be defined as a modified rural landscape as it is mostly rural but settlements, mining activities and busy roads and railway are visible in the landscape.

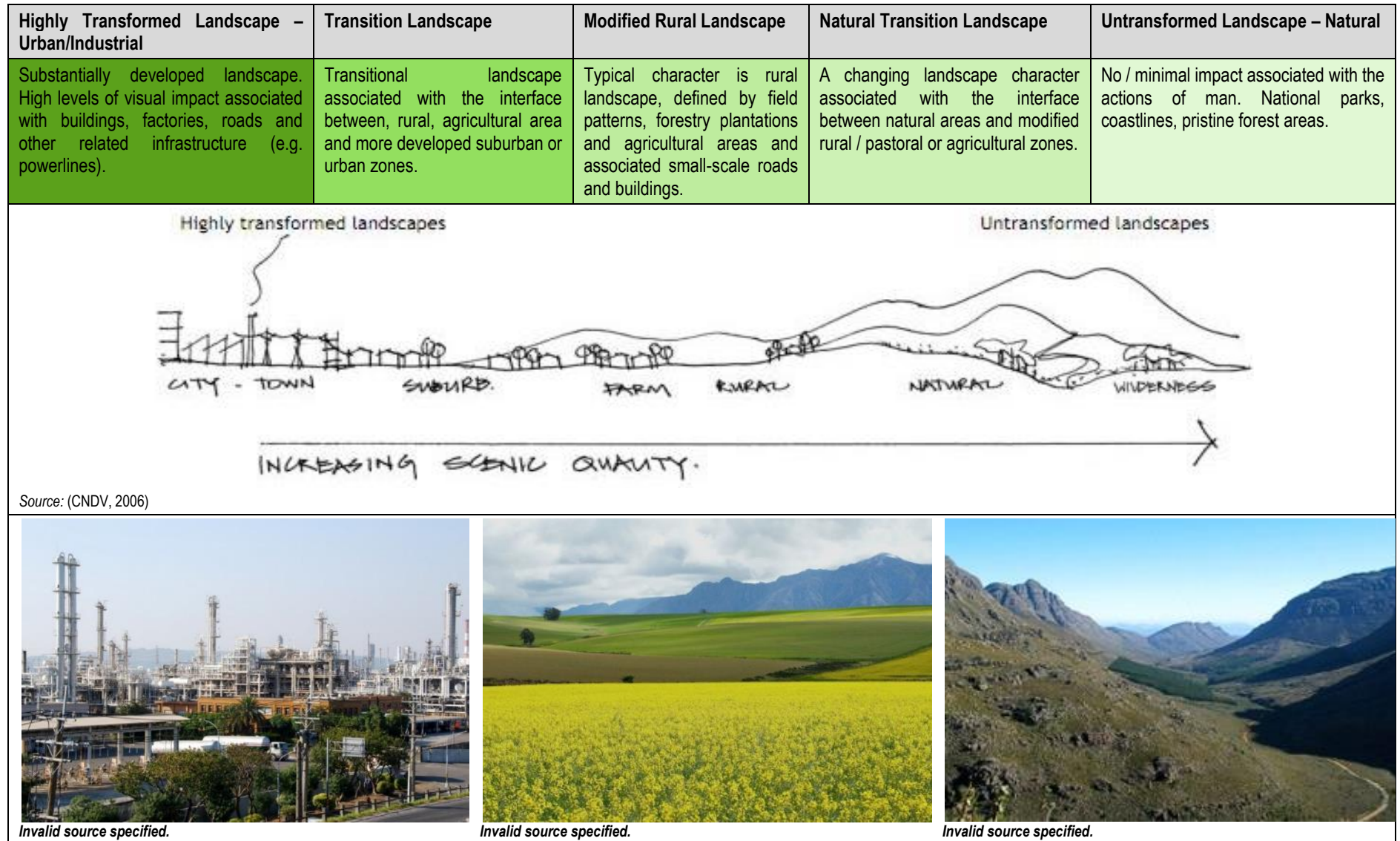


Figure 4-5: Typical visual character attributes

4.3 Visual Quality

Aesthetic value is an emotional response derived from our experience and perceptions. As such, it is subjective and difficult to quantify in absolute terms. Studies in perceptual psychology have shown that humans prefer landscapes with higher complexity (Crawford, 1994). Landscape quality can be said to increase when:

- Topographic ruggedness and relative relief increases;
- Water forms are present;
- Diverse patterns of grasslands, shrubs and trees occur;
- Natural landscape increases and man-made landscape decreases; and
- Where land use compatibility increases.

The visual quality of the area is largely experienced through rolling views of the undulating landscape, especially from and across the site (Figure 4-6).

The visual quality of the study area is defined by the fabric of developed settlements and infrastructure surrounded by agricultural and mining activity. The naturally undulating landscape is interrupted by exposed, unvegetated tailings dams and overburden stockpiles which detract from the visual quality of the surrounding area. Streams and rivers add to visual quality.

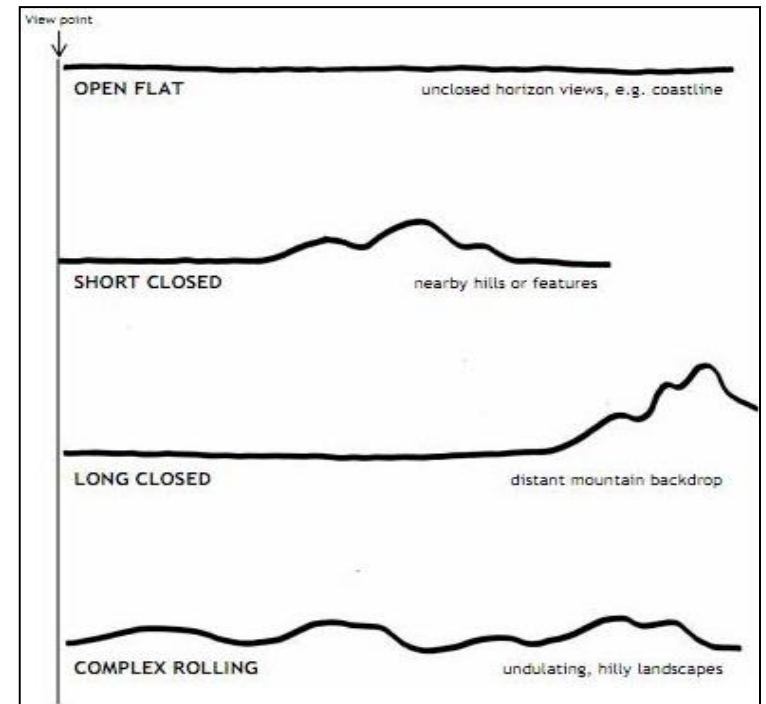


Figure 4-6: Typical views in the landscape

Sources: CNDV (2006)

4.4 Visual Receptors

The Stilfontein Cluster is located across seven farms that neighbour farms to the north, east and west, and abut the N12 national highway to the south (Figure 1-1). Beyond the N12 to the southeast is the town of Stilfontein and various industrial and mining areas.

Visual receptors have been identified based on surrounding land uses. The visual receptors are briefly described below and linked to viewpoints (VP) indicated in Figure 5-4:

- **Residents** (VP2 – VP3, VP6 – VP8, VP11 – VP13): The residential areas of Stilfontein and Khuma are located to the southwest of the PV Facilities. Isolated farmsteads are interspersed throughout the area surrounding the PV Facilities in all directions, but especially to the east and west.
- **Recreational** (VP8 - VP10): The Frontier Shooting Range (VP 8), Camp Louico (VP9) and Khora Lion Park (VP10) are located to the west of the sites.
- **Motorists** (VP1 - VP5, VP7 – VP8, VP15 – VP18): Three roads are located in close proximity, to the east, south and west of the sites. To the east is an unnamed street (hereafter referred to as Road East). The N12 national dual-carriage way is situated to the south of the site. Vermaasdrift Road extends north - south, to the west of the project site.

Landowners and occupiers (tenants) of the seven farms are considered as receptors; however, they have reached a negotiated agreement with Mainstream and will receive financial remuneration in compensation for development on their properties. As such, they are not deemed to be sensitive receptors.

4.5 Sense of Place

Our sense of a place depends not only on spatial form and quality, but also on culture, temperament, status, experience and the current purpose of the observer (Lynch, 1992). Central to the idea of ‘sense of place’ or Genius Loci is identity. An area will have a stronger sense of place if it can easily be identified with, that is to say if it is unique and distinct from other places. Lynch defines ‘sense of place’ as “the extent to which a person can recognise or recall a place as being distinct from other places – as having a vivid or unique, or at least a particular, character of its own” (Lynch, 1992).

It is often the case that sense of place is linked directly to visual quality and that areas / spaces with high visual quality have a strong sense of place. However, this is not an inviolate relationship, and it is plausible that areas of low visual quality may have a strong sense of place or – more commonly – that areas of high visual quality have a weak sense of place. The defining feature of sense of place is uniqueness, generally real or biophysical (e.g. trees in an otherwise treeless expanse), but sometimes perceived (e.g. visible but unspectacular sacred sites and places which evoke defined responses in receptors). In this context Cross (2001) identified six categories of relationships with place: biographical, spiritual, ideological, narrative, cognitive and dependent (Table 4-1).

The region has scenic value in terms of its undulating natural landscape and views over large portions of agricultural land and – within the project site – fairly pristine if undramatic grasslands and treescapes, reminiscent of African savannah landscapes. The natural landscape and rustic character contrast with evidence of anthropogenic influence in the region, viz. mining, dense urban fabric and industry. To the north of the project site, visual-spatial quality is informed by the rural character of the area (farmsteads, smallholdings, rolling hills), while to the south it is informed by industrial and peri-urban textures (residential areas, mines and industrial areas).

Table 4-1: Relationship to place

Type of Relationship	Process
Biographical (historical and familial)	Being born in and living in a place. Develops over time
Spiritual (emotional, intangible)	Feeling a sense of belonging
Ideological (moral and ethical)	Living according to moral guidelines for human responsibility to place Guidelines may be religious or secular

Type of Relationship	Process
Narrative (mythical)	Learning about a place through stories, family histories, political accounts and fictional accounts
Cognitive (based on choice and desirability)	Choosing a place based on a list of desirable traits and lifestyle preferences
Dependent (material)	Constrained by lack of choice, dependency on another person or economic opportunity

Sources: Adapted from Cross (2001)

The sense of place of the surrounding area is strongly influenced by the surrounding land use, which can generally be described as a rural mining area.

The relationship of receptors in the study area (Section 4.4) to place may be predominantly biographical and dependent. A family, for example, who has lived or worked in Klerksdorp or Stilfontein for a few generations will have a biographical and dependent attachment to the area.

5 Analysis of the Magnitude of the Visual Impact

The following section outlines the analysis that was undertaken to determine the **magnitude or intensity** of the overall visual impact resulting from the project. Various factors were considered in the assessment, including:

- Visual exposure;
- Visual absorption capacity;
- Sensitivity of visual receptors;
- Visibility and viewing distance;
- Integrity with existing landscape / townscape; and

- Glare analysis.

The analysis of the magnitude or intensity of the visual impact, as described in this section, is summarized and integrated in Table 5-8 and forms the basis for the assessment and rating of the impact as documented in Section 6.

5.1 Visual Exposure

Visual exposure is determined by the zone of visual influence or viewshed. The viewshed is the topographically defined area that includes all the major observation sites from which the project *could* be visible. The viewshed analysis assumes maximum visibility of the project, or part thereof, in an environment stripped bare of vegetation and structures. The viewshed indicates the visibility of the project accounting for the decrease in visibility as distance from the project increases (Figure 5-1).

It is anticipated that visibility of the combined Stilfontein Cluster with a footprint of 2 114 ha – if all projects are developed – will be high within the project area, and to receptors immediately south of the project site beyond the N12, as well as those to the immediate southwest and northwest of the sites (Figure 5-1). The project will be marginally visible in the background to receptors approximately 3 – 5 km from the project site.

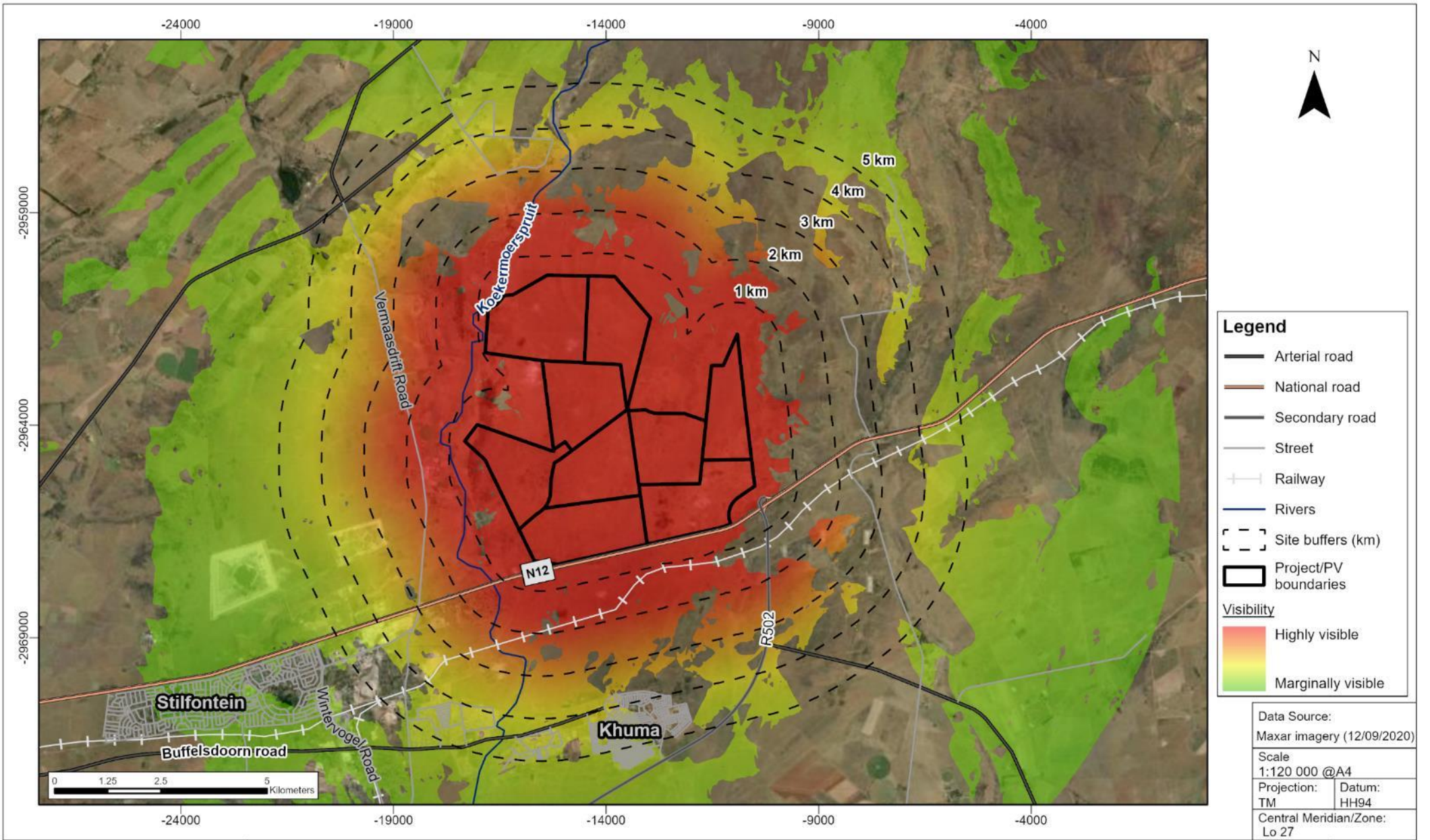
The overall visibility of the Stilfontein Cluster (in the region) is moderate due to the proximity of receptors to the project site, moderated by the undulating topography which screens the site from surrounding receptors. However, the project will be visible in the following areas:

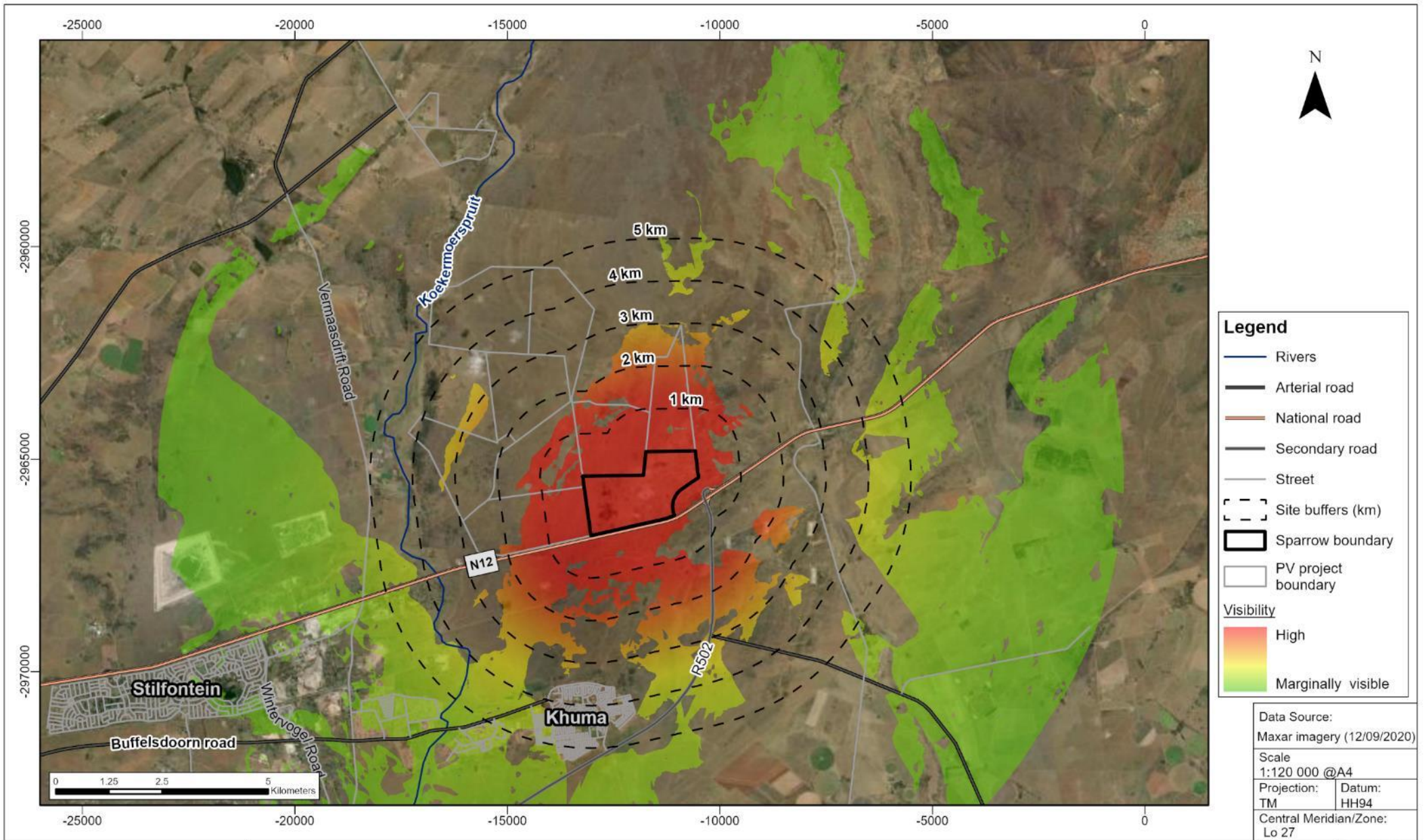
- Farmsteads to the south of the N12. The viewshed indicates that the project will be visible from only a few farmsteads located 1 – 2 km to the south of the project site;

- Transient receptors on the N12 and railway located 1 – 5 km to the south and south-west of the project site;
- Industrial area adjacent to the N12, 1 – 4 km southwest of the project site;
- Stilfontein residential area over 5 km southwest of the project site. These residents, while sensitive receptors, are situated at a distance that renders the project marginally visible in the background;
- Residents located between 1-3 km west of the project site;
- Farmsteads north of the N12 and less than 2 km to the southwest of the project site;
- Motorists on Vermaasdrift Road will experience views of the project. Visibility ranges from high to moderate along this road with the project likely to be visible in the middleground - to background; and
- Farmsteads located 3.5 – 4.5 km northwest of the project site. These residents are considered sensitive receptors; however due to their distance from the project site, it will be visible in the background.

The viewshed for the Sparrow PV Facility is included in Figure 5-2.

The visual exposure of proposed project is deemed ***high***.





Legend

- Rivers
- Arterial road
- National road
- Secondary road
- Street
- Site buffers (km)
- Sparrow boundary
- PV project boundary

Visibility

- High
- Marginally visible

Data Source: Maxar imagery (12/09/2020)	
Scale 1:120 000 @A4	
Projection: TM	Datum: HH94
Central Meridian/Zone: Lo 27	
Date: 22/03/2022	Compiled by: BRCH
Project No. 581877	Fig No. 5-2



**STILFONTEIN PV CLUSTER VIA
SPARROW VIEWSHED**

The project area has a **low** VAC.

5.2 Visual Absorption Capacity

The VAC is the potential for an area to conceal and assimilate the proposed project. Criteria used to determine the VAC of the affected area are defined in Table 5-1. The VAC of an area is increased by:







1. Topography and vegetation that is able to provide screening and increase the VAC of a landscape;
2. The degree of urbanisation compared to open space. A highly urbanised landscape is better able to absorb the visual impacts of similar developments, whereas an undeveloped rural landscape will have a lower VAC; and
3. The scale and density of surrounding development.

These factors frequently apply at different scales, by influencing the VAC in the foreground (e.g. dense bush, existing roads and bridges, small structures), middleground and background (e.g. tall forests, hills, cityscapes).

The VAC of the Stilfontein Cluster project area is increased by undulating topography and - to a far more limited extent - by grassland and low trees, providing screening to the projects. The low vertical profile of the PV panels is anticipated to increase the screening potential of the vegetation and topography. However, vegetation is not able to provide screening to the associated infrastructure such as the on-site substations, MTS and pylons (associated with the powerlines). The undulating topography will marginally absorb the associated infrastructure.

Urban development can help to increase VAC, but is some distance from the project site, reducing this effect. In addition, the vast 2 114 ha footprint of the combined Stilfontein Cluster also reduces the VAC.

Table 5-1: Visual absorption capacity criteria

High	Moderate	Low
<p>The area is able to absorb the visual impact as it has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Undulating topography and relief ■ Good screening vegetation (high and dense) ■ Is highly urbanised in character (existing development is of a scale and density to absorb the visual impact). 	<p>The area is moderately able to absorb the visual impact, as it has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Moderately undulating topography and relief ■ Some or partial screening vegetation ■ A relatively urbanised character (existing development is of a scale and density to absorb the visual impact to some extent). 	<p>The area is not able to absorb the visual impact as it has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Flat topography ■ Low growing or sparse vegetation ■ Is not urbanised (existing development is not of a scale and density to absorb the visual impact to some extent.)
		
<p>http://www.franschhoek.co.za</p>	<p>http://wikipedia.org</p>	<p>http://www.butbn.cas.cz</p>
		
<p>http://commons.wikimedia.org</p>	<p>http://blogs.agu.org</p>	<p>http://fortheinterim.com</p>

5.3 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Receptors are important insofar as they inform visual sensitivity. The sensitivity of viewers is determined by the number and nature of viewers.

Viewers can be deemed to have:

1. High sensitivity if they view the project from e.g. residential areas, nature reserves and scenic routes or trails;
2. Moderate sensitivity if they view the project from e.g. sporting or recreational areas or places of work; and
3. Low sensitivity if they view the project from or within e.g. industrial, mining or degraded areas, or are transient viewers on roads.

The sensitivity of potential viewers identified in Section 4.4 is described below:

- **Residents:** The residential areas of Stilfontein, Khuma and farmsteads surrounding the site area are considered to have sensitivities ranging from low to high depending on proximity to the project site. Residents located further away will experience the site in the background, whereas those in close proximity (less than 1 km) will experience the project in the foreground (Figure 5-3).
- **Recreational:** The Frontier Shooting Range, Camp Louico and Khora Lion Park are located to the west of the site. Patrons at Frontier Shooting Range and Khora Lion Park are considered to have moderate sensitivity, whereas receptors at Camp Louico are considered to have high sensitivity. These recreational receptors are located between 1 km and 4 km from the project site so would view the project in the middleground to background depending on their distance from the project site.

- **Motorists:** Three roads are located in close proximity to the project site. The N12, a national highway, extends ~6 km along the southern boundary of the project site. Vermaasdrift Road, extending northwards from the N12 is located to the west of the project site and largely provides access to the agricultural areas to the west and north of the project site, Camp Louico, Khora Lion Park and Frontier Shooting Range. To the east of the project site, a road (Road East) extends north from the intersection with the N12 and provides access to agricultural areas and Matlwang Village.

Motorists are considered to have relatively low sensitivity as their view of the project is transient and temporary.

5.4 Viewing Distance and Visibility

The distance of a viewer from an object is an important determinant of the magnitude of the visual impact. This is because the visual impact of an object diminishes / attenuates as the distance between the viewer and the object increases. Thus, the visual impact at 1 000 m would, nominally, be 25% of the impact as viewed from 500 m. At 2 000 m it would be 10% of the impact at 500 m (Hull and Bishop, 1988 in (Young, 2000)).

Three basic distance categories can be defined for a project of this scale (as discussed and represented in Table 5-2): foreground, middleground and background.

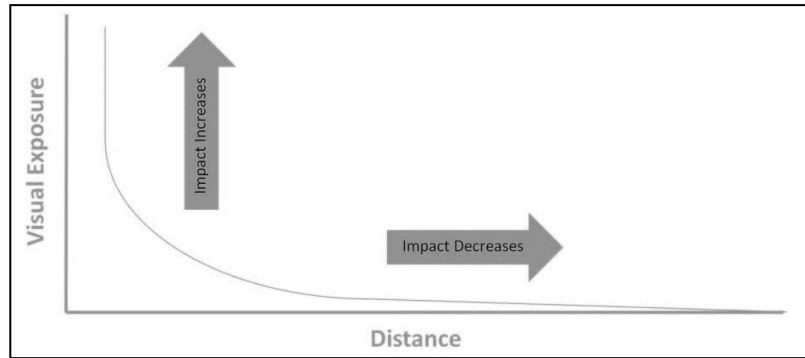


Figure 5-3: Visual exposure vis-à-vis distance

Sources: Adapted from Hull and Bishop, 2998 in (Young, 2000)

A number of viewpoints were selected to indicate locations from where receptors may view the PV Projects and / or associated infrastructure. The viewpoints are shown in Figure 5-4 and listed in Table 5-4. Current views from these points are shown in Appendix D.

The predicted visibility of portions of the project area from each viewpoint is described in Table 5-4, based on the visibility categories in Table 5-3.

Note that unlike visual exposure (Section 5.1) which describes areas from which the project may be visible without taking local screening into account (i.e. the viewshed), visibility describes predicted, actual visibility.

Table 5-2: Distance categories

FOREGROUND (0 – 1 km)	The zone where the proposed project will dominate the frame of view. The project will be <i>highly visible</i> unless obscured.
MIDDLEGROUND (1 - 2 km)	The zone where colour and line are still readily discernible. The project will be <i>moderately visible</i> but will still be easily recognisable.
BACKGROUND (2 -5 km)	This zone stretches from 2 km to 5 km. Objects in this zone can be classified as <i>marginally visible</i> to <i>not visible</i> .

The visibility of the project can be summarised as follows:

- The project will be highly visible in the foreground and middleground to motorists on the N12 (VP5, VP17 and VP18);
- The project will largely be screened by topography and vegetation, and, therefore, will be marginally visible to receptors located to the south (VP14, VP15) and to the west (VP6); and
- The project will not be visible from the north (VP11 – VP13), east (VP1, VP2, VP3), south (VP4, VP14, VP16) and west (VP7- VP10) due to topography.

Overall, the visibility of the project is **moderate** due to its high visibility to transient motorists on the N12, and marginal visibility to highly sensitive receptors (e.g. residents).

Table 5-3: Visibility criteria




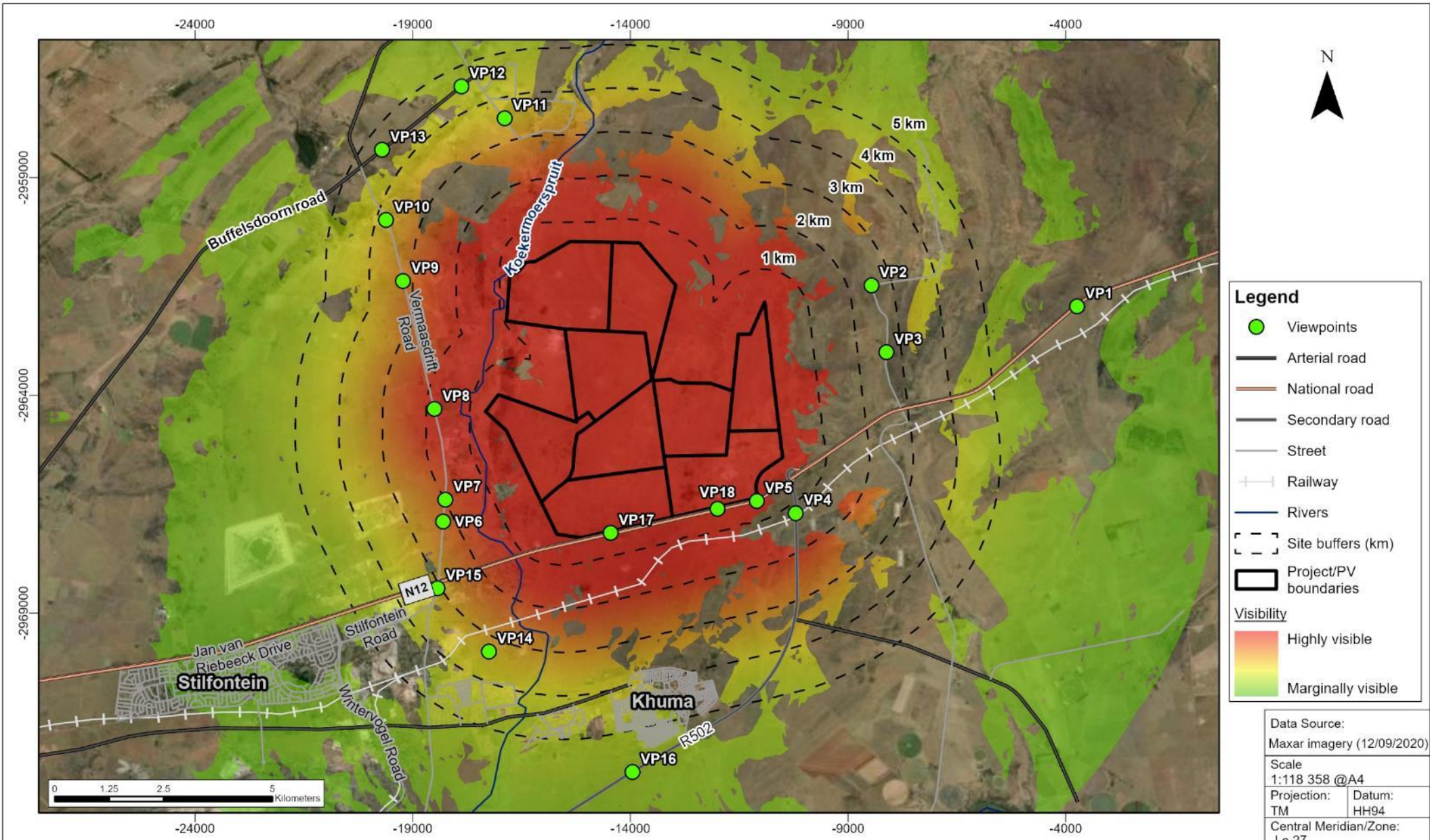
<p>NOT VISIBLE</p>	<p>Project cannot be seen</p>	
<p>MARGINALLY VISIBLE</p>	<p>Project is only just visible / partially visible (usually in the background zone)</p>	
<p>VISIBLE</p>	<p>Project is visible although parts may be partially obscured (usually in middleground zone)</p>	
<p>HIGHLY VISIBLE</p>	<p>Project is clearly visible (usually in foreground or middleground zone)</p>	

Table 5-4: Visibility from viewpoints

Viewpoint #	Location	Co-ordinates	Direction of view	Potential Receptors	Visibility
VP1	N12 (East)	26° 45' 50.16" S 26° 54' 53.63" E	Looking west	Motorists travelling on N12	Not Visible Sparrow PV will not be visible to motorists travelling west on the N12. The associated infrastructure will not be visible from this viewpoint.
VP2	Unnamed Road East	26° 45' 50.16" S 26° 54' 53.63" E	Looking west	Farmsteads and motorists travelling to and from Matlwang.	Not Visible The Sparrow PV will not be visible from this viewpoint. The associated infrastructure may be visible from this viewpoint.
VP3	Unnamed Road East	26° 46' 40.13" S 26° 55' 6.00" E	Looking west	Farmsteads and motorists travelling along the unnamed road.	Not Visible The Sparrow PV will not be visible from this viewpoint. The associated infrastructure may be visible from this viewpoint.
VP4	R502 Bridge	26° 48' 40.04" S 26° 53' 50.47" E	Looking north-west	Motorists and train	Not Visible The Sparrow PV will not be visible to the motorists on the R502 and trains. The associated infrastructure will not be visible from this viewpoint.
VP5	N12	26° 48' 30.99" S 26° 53' 18.10" E	Looking north / north-west	N12 Motorists	Highly Visible The Sparrow PV will be highly visible to the motorists travelling on the N12.
VP6	Vermaasdrift Road Farmstead	26° 48' 45.86" S 26° 48' 57.42" E	Looking east	Farmsteads and motorists travelling along the Vermaasdrift Road.	Marginally Visible The Sparrow PV and associated infrastructure may be marginally visible to the motorists and residents on Vermaasdrift Road.
VP7	Vermaasdrift Road North 1	26° 48' 29.67" S 26° 48' 59.19" E	Looking east	Farmsteads and motorists on Vermaasdrift Road.	Not Visible The Sparrow PV and associated infrastructure will not be visible to the motorists and residents on Vermaasdrift Road.
VP8	Vermaasdrift Road Frontier Shooting Range	26° 47' 22.07" S 26° 48' 50.08" E	Looking east	Shooting Range patrons and motorists on Vermaasdrift Road	Not Visible The Sparrow PV and associated infrastructure will not be visible to the motorists and Shooting Range patrons on Vermaasdrift Road.
VP9	Vermaasdrift Road Camp Louico	26° 45' 46.47" S 26° 48' 24.35" E	Looking east / south-east	Campers and motorists on Vermaasdrift Road	Not Visible The Sparrow PV and associated infrastructure will not be visible from this viewpoint. The associated infrastructure may be visible from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint #	Location	Co-ordinates	Direction of view	Potential Receptors	Visibility
VP10	Khora Lion Park	26° 45' 01.11"S 26° 48' 10.16"E	Looking east / south-east	Patrons of the Lion Park and surrounding farmsteads	Not Visible The Sparrow PV and associated infrastructure will not be visible from this viewpoint.
VP11	Northern Farmsteads	26° 43' 45.12"S 26° 49' 48.81"E	Looking south	Farmsteads	Not Visible The Sparrow PV and associated infrastructure will not be visible from this viewpoint.
VP12	Northern Farmsteads	26° 43' 21.35"S 26° 49' 13.01"E	Looking south	Farmsteads	Not Visible The Sparrow PV and associated infrastructure will not be visible from this viewpoint.
VP13	Northern Farmsteads	26° 44' 08.68"S 26° 48' 07.00"E	Looking south	Farmsteads	Not Visible The Sparrow PV and associated infrastructure will not be visible from this viewpoint.
VP14	Khuma Residential Area	26° 50' 23.01"S 26° 49' 35.30"E	Looking north	Residents of Khuma settlement	Marginally Visible The Sparrow PV and associated infrastructure will be marginally visible in the background from this viewpoint, though will be screened by vegetation.
VP15	Intersection of Vermaasdrift and N12	26° 49' 35.85"S 26° 48' 52.61"E	Looking north-east	Motorists on Vermaasdrift Road and N12	Marginally Visible The Sparrow PV and associated infrastructure will be marginally visible in the background from this viewpoint, though will be screened by vegetation.
VP16	R502	26° 51' 53.19"S 26° 51' 34.63"E	Looking north	Motorists on the R502	Not Visible The Sparrow PV and associated infrastructure will not be visible from this viewpoint.
VP17	N12	26° 48' 54.74"S 26° 51' 16.57"E	Looking north	Motorists on the N12	Highly Visible The Sparrow PV will be highly visible from the motorists travelling on the N12. The associated infrastructure will not be visible from this viewpoint.
VP18	N12	26° 48' 36.88"S 26° 52' 45.47"E	Looking north	Motorists on the N12	Highly Visible The Sparrow PV will be highly visible from the motorists travelling on the N12. The associated infrastructure will not be visible from this viewpoint.



Legend

- Viewpoints
- Arterial road
- National road
- Secondary road
- Street
- Railway
- Rivers
- Site buffers (km)
- Project/PV boundaries

Visibility

- Highly visible
- Marginally visible

Data Source:	
Maxar imagery (12/09/2020)	
Scale	
1:118 358 @A4	
Projection:	Datum:
TM	HH94
Central Meridian/Zone:	
Lo 27	
Date:	Compiled by:
28/03/2022	BRCH
Project No.	Fig No.
581877	5-4



STILFONTEIN PV CLUSTER VIA COMBINED VIEWSHED WITH VIEWPOINTS

5.5 Compatibility with Landscape Integrity

Landscape (or townscape) integrity refers to the compatibility of the development / visual intrusion with the existing landscape. The landscape integrity of the project is rated based on the relevant criteria listed in Table 5-5.

Table 5-5: Landscape integrity criteria

Criterion	Landscape integrity		
	High	Moderate	Low
The project is:			
Consistency with existing land use of the area	Consistent	Moderately consistent	Not consistent / very different
Sensitivity to natural environment	Highly sensitive	Moderately sensitive	Not sensitive
Consistency with urban texture and layout	Consistent	Moderately consistent	Not consistent / very different
Congruence of Buildings / structures with / sensitivity to existing architecture / buildings	Congruent / sensitive	Moderately congruent / sensitive	Not congruent / sensitive
Scale and size relative to nearby existing development	Similar	Moderately similar	Different

The proposed Stilfontein Cluster will be located in a peri-urban landscape that includes both anthropogenic and natural landscape elements, creating a mixed texture of land use patterns. The Stilfontein Cluster is moderately consistent with the patterned land use of the surrounding area (e.g. townscapes, industry and mining infrastructure/tailings dams). However, the layout, texture, scale and

size of the Stilfontein Cluster are of low compatibility and considered incongruent with the existing landscape as the PV Facilities will comprise uniform, highly reflective and geometric, man-made structures across very large areas (~200 ha – 350 ha).

The BESS, on-site substations and the MTS will have development footprints of 10 ha, 4 ha and 36 ha respectively. While the form and use of these project components may be moderately consistent with the surrounding infrastructure (e.g. the two 400 kV Hermes/Pluto transmission lines traversing the site), the size and scale is considered different.

The powerlines (11-33 kV, 132 kV and 400 kV) will be moderately consistent and congruent with the use, texture, size and scale of the development in the surrounding areas.

The Stilfontein Cluster is deemed to have **low** integrity with the surrounding landscape, whereas the associated infrastructure is considered to have **moderate** integrity with the surrounding landscape.

5.6 Solar Reflection

The suite of visual receptors that may be impacted by glint and glare caused by any new development may include:

- Residents;
- Motorists;
- Train drivers; and
- Pilots and air traffic controllers.

Visual receptors potentially exposed to solar reflection by this project are residents, train users and motorists (see Section 5.3).

5.6.1 Glare Thresholds

The ocular (or visual) impact of glare has been categorised into the following three categories (Ho, Ghanbari, & Diver, 2011):

- Green: low potential to cause after-image;
- Yellow: potential to cause temporary after-image; and
- Red: potential to cause retinal burn (permanent eye damage)⁶.

The Glare Hazard Plot (Figure 5-5) illustrates the ocular (or visual) impact of solar glare as a function of the intensity of the glare source on the retina (retinal irradiance) and the portion of a viewer’s field of vision that the glare occupies (subtended source angle).

Although there are no South African thresholds to determine the significance of glare, recommended thresholds have been published by Pager Power (2018). Pager Power (2018) considers glare significant, and mitigation is required, when glare is anticipated to persist for longer than 60 minutes per day for three or more months per year within a residential area (Pager Power, 2018).

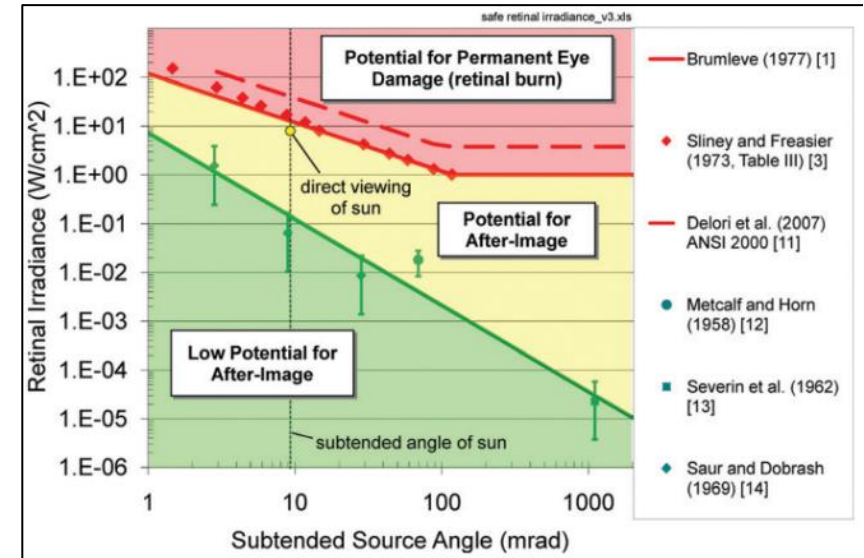


Figure 5-5: Potential impacts of retinal irradiance as a function of subtended source angle

Sources: (Ho, Ghanbari, & Diver, 2011)

Based on the two categories of glare applicable to PV Facilities (Green glare and Yellow glare) in the Glare Hazard Plot (Ho, Ghanbari, & Diver, 2011) and Pager Power (2018), SRK framework for assessing the magnitude of glare is presented in Table 5-6 below.

⁶ Retinal burn is typically not possible from PV glare as the PV panels do not focus the reflected sunlight.

Table 5-6: Magnitude of glare impacts for PV Facilities

Impact	Category of Glare ⁷	Duration of Glare
High	Yellow	> 60 minutes per day for ≥ 3 months
Medium	Yellow	≥ 30 minutes per day, but ≤ 60 minutes per day for any duration of months
Low	Yellow or Green	< 30 minutes per day for any duration of months

The impact of glint and glare originating from PV Facilities also depends on the sensitivity of the affected receptors. Generally, motorists are more sensitive to glint and/or glare than immobile receptors due to the potential consequences of momentary blindness, *viz.* increased risk of accidents.

5.6.2 Modelling Glare

Glare modelling was conducted for the proposed layout of the PV array using ForgeSolar’s GlareGauge. The parameter inputs used to model glare for the proposed project are included in Table 5-7 and the GlareGauge report included in Appendix E.

Table 5-7: Solar reflection model parameters

Parameter	Input
Panel height (centroid)	1.53 m
Axis Tracking	Single (horizontal)
Tracking axis orientation	0°

⁷ Category of glare in terms of the Glare Hazard Plot; Red Glare, Yellow Glare and Green Glare (Ho, Ghanbari, & Diver, 2011).

⁸ Maximum rotation (tracking) angle of PV modules in either direction relative to the mid-position on the torque tube.

Parameter	Input
Tracking axis tilt	0°
Tracking axis panel offset	0°
Maximum tracking angle ⁸	60°
Resting angle	0°
Panel material	Smooth glass ⁹
Receptor height – Residents ¹⁰	1.5 m
Receptor height – Motorists	1 m

Thirty-three (33) Observation Points (OP) representative of the ‘stationary’ receptors such as the residential areas of Khuma, Stilfontein, farmsteads, Louico Camp, Khora Lion Park (Figure 5-6) were modelled to ascertain whether glare would be experienced by receptors at these points.

Glare experienced by motorists on the N12, Unnamed Road East and Vermaasdrift Road was modelled in both directions (two-way roads) (Figure 5-6).

The Klerksdorp Airport aircraft flight path was also modelled (Figure 5-6).

Based on the input parameters (Table 5-7) the glare analysis demonstrated that glare from the PV Facilities, will be experienced by visual receptors (residents, train users and motorists). However, none of the receptors will experience > 60 minutes of glare per day for three months or more.

Notable findings from the modelling of the glare are summarised below:

⁹ Conservative assumption that the PV modules will not have anti-glare coating.

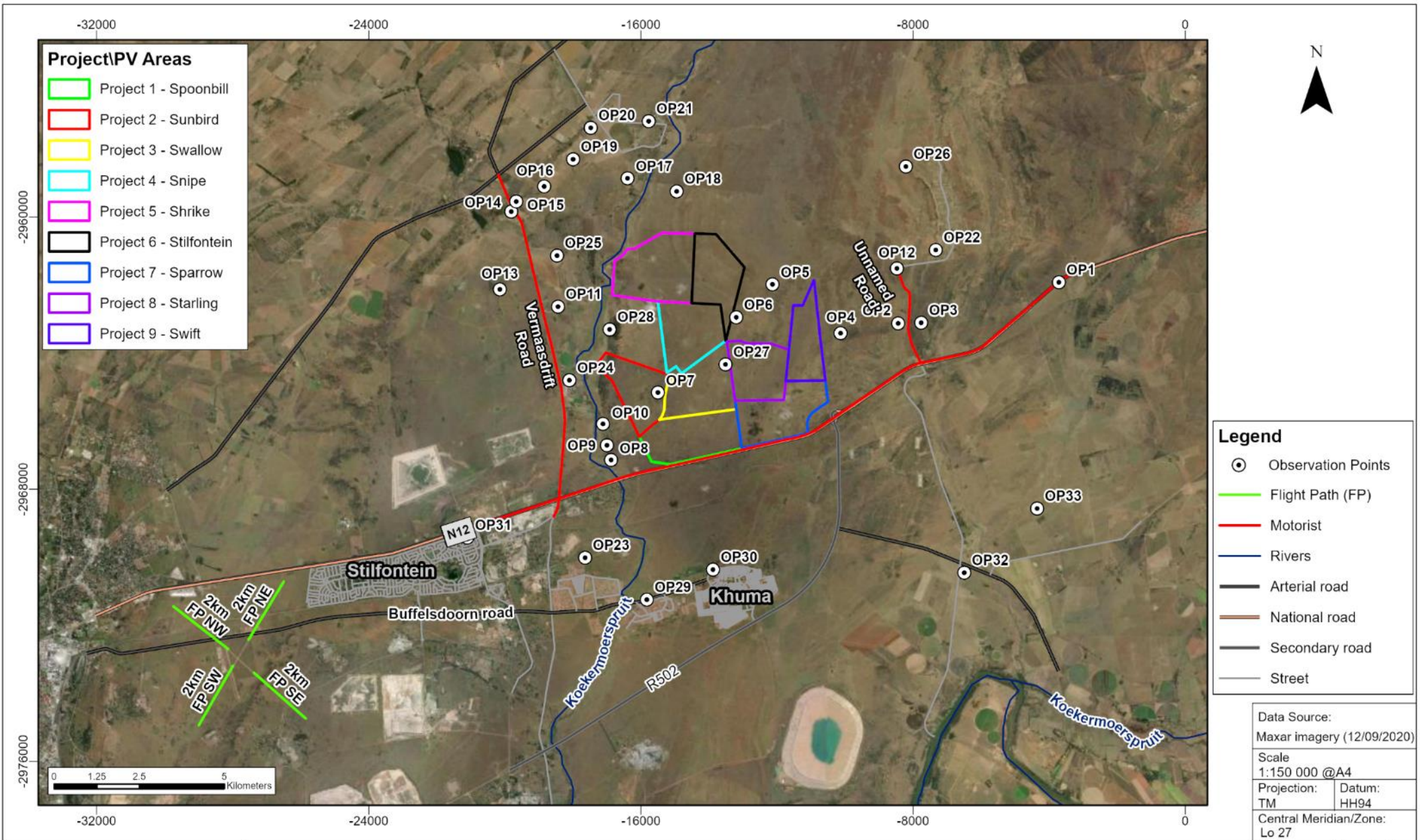
¹⁰ Assumption that average eye level standing is 1.5m.

- Points to the north and south of the PV Facilities (OP 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 29, 30 and 32) will not experience glare (Figure 5-5). This is expected as the panel support structures are aligned on a north-south axis;

Glint is not modelled. However, if the PV panels are visible to moving receptors, then glint and a pulse of after-image may be experienced.

Glare results relating to Sparrow PV Facility are provided in Appendix G.

No receptors will be exposed to < 30 minutes per day, as such the glare modelled is anticipated to be ***low***.



5.7 Magnitude of the Overall Visual Impact

Based on the above criteria, the magnitude or intensity of the overall visual impact that is expected to result from the project has been rated. Table 5-8 provides a summary of the criteria, a descriptor summarising the status of the criteria and projected impact magnitude ratings.

The overall magnitude of the visual impact that is expected to result from the entire Stilfontein Cluster is rated as **high**. The high visual exposure and visibility of the project by a high number of visual receptors, and the low VAC is only moderated by the low visual sensitivity of many of these viewers (i.e. motorists). No areas to be avoided were identified.

Table 5-8: Magnitude of overall visual impact

Criteria	Rating	Comments
Visual Exposure (Viewshed)	High	The project will largely be highly visible from within the project area and to receptors immediately south of the project area beyond the N12, as well as those immediately southwest and northwest of the project sites.
Visual Absorption Capacity	Low	The VAC of the project site is increased by the undulating topography and – to a far more limited extent - by grassland and low trees providing screening of the project area. The vegetation does not screen associated infrastructure such as the on-site substation, MTS and pylons (associated with the powerlines). The undulating topography will marginally absorb the associated infrastructure.
Viewer Sensitivity (Receptors)	Moderate	Visual receptors exposed to the project (motorists, recreational and residents) have varied visual sensitivity. Motorists have transient exposure to PV Facilities

Criteria	Rating	Comments
		and associated infrastructure, while the residents surrounding the project area will have a high sensitivity. The receptors at the recreational areas such as Louico Camp, Khora Lion Park and the Frontier Shooting Range are considered to have a moderate sensitivity.
Viewing Distance and Visibility	Moderate	The project area is highly visible to transient motorists on the N12 and anticipated to be marginally visible for highly sensitive receptors (e.g. residents).
Landscape Integrity	Low (PV Facilities and Moderate (associated infrastructure))	The PV Facilities are moderately consistent with the patterned land use of the surrounding area; however, the layout, texture, scale and size of the PV Facilities is of low compatibility and considered incongruent with the existing landscape. The project (all nine PV Facilities) will be very different and incongruent with the land use, layout, texture, scale and size of the surrounding landscape. The associated infrastructure will be moderately consistent and congruent with the use, texture, size and scale of the development in the surrounding areas.
Solar Reflection	Low	The glare analysis indicates that glare caused by the project be low as receptors will experience < 30 minutes of glare per day for varying periods throughout the year. Glint is not modelled; but may be experienced by moving receptors that have line of sight of the PV panels.

6 Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures

The following section describes the visual impacts anticipated during the construction and operations phases of the entire Stilfontein Cluster.

Possible measures to avoid, mitigate or compensate visual impacts will be considered and recommended, depending on the severity of impacts and the feasibility of measures. The mitigation hierarchy and sample measures are provided below (DEA&DP, 2005):

- Avoid, e.g. by re-examining the need for the proposed project, relocating the project or re-designing the project;
- Mitigate (reduce), e.g. through adjustments to the siting and design of the project, careful selection of finishes and colours, use of earthworks (such as berms) and planting to provide visual screening and dust control where required;
- Rehabilitate and restore, e.g. through on-site and off-site landscape rehabilitation of areas affected by the project, which may include re-instating landforms and natural vegetation, provision of landscaped open space etc.;
- Compensate and offset, where avoidance or mitigation cannot achieve the desired effect; and
- Enhance, where the proposed project is located in run-down areas or degraded landscapes.

The Sparrow PV Facility relates to a greenfield development.

Direct visual and aesthetic impacts are likely to result from the Sparrow PV Facility include the following:

- Earthworks and construction activities (including clearing of vegetation and associated generation of dust);

- Altered sense of place caused by the project;
- Glint and glare originating from the PV array causing visual discomfort and impairing visibility to receptors;
- Visual intrusion diminishing vistas across the project area; and
- Increased light pollution.

Potential visual impacts of the project are described and assessed in Appendix F, utilising the impact rating methodology presented in Appendix C.

In this VIA, most impacts (are taken to) manifest in the operational phase.

6.1 The No-Go Alternative

The No Go alternative entails no change to the status quo, in other words, the Stilfontein PV Cluster will not be developed (see Section 3.3).

Forgoing the development of the Stilfontein PV Cluster will mean that the sense of place will not be altered, no visual intrusion, glint or glare or light pollution will be experienced, i.e. the visual impacts of this project would not be realised. However, it would also mean that no renewable energy will be generated by this project.

6.2 Cumulative Impacts

6.2.1 Introduction

For the purposes of this report, cumulative impacts are defined as ‘direct and indirect impacts that act together with existing or future potential impacts of other activities or proposed activities in the area / region that affect the same resources and / or receptors’.

For the most part, cumulative effects or aspects thereof are too uncertain to be quantifiable, due mainly to a lack of data availability and accuracy. This is particularly true of cumulative effects arising from potential or future projects, the design or details of which may not be finalised or available and the direct and indirect impacts of which have not yet been assessed.

For practical reasons, the identification and management of cumulative impacts are limited to those effects generally recognised as important on the basis of scientific concerns and/or concerns of affected communities.

Figure 6-1 presents the matrix used to evaluate the cumulative visual impacts of the project on the sense of place of the study area. This matrix presents the relationship between two quantities; severity of impacts (importance and magnitude) and extent of impact (geographic size).

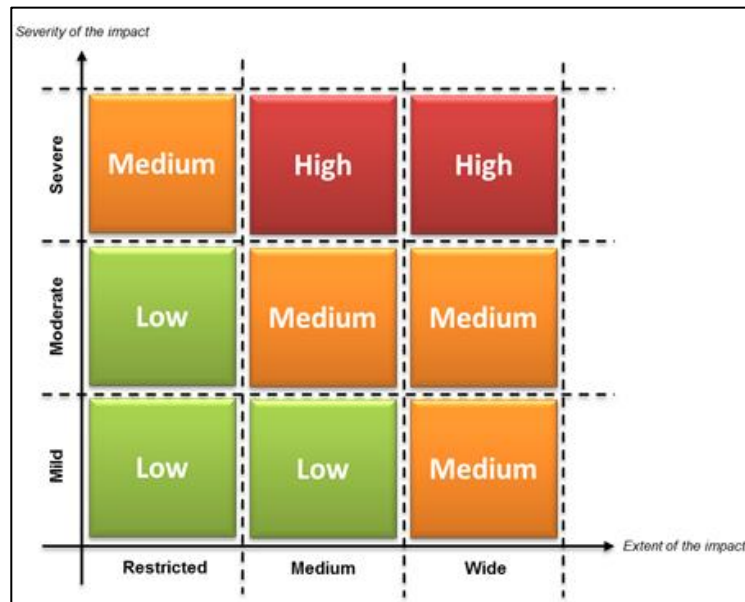


Figure 6-1: Cumulative impact evaluation matrix

The cumulative impact assessment considers the:

- Proposed nine PV facilities and associated on-site substations and infrastructure in the Stilfontein Cluster; and
- Other PV projects approved (but not yet constructed) or under consideration within a 30 km radius of the project area as listed on the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) South African Renewable Energy EIA Application Database (DFFE, 2022) (see Table 6-1).

Table 6-1: Approved projects within 30 km radius of the project site

Project	DFFE Reference	EA Status	Capacity
Kabi Vaalkop PV Facility	12/12/20/2513/4/AM1	Approved	N/A
Kabi Vaalkop PV Facility	12/12/20/2513/4	Approved	75 MW
Buffels Solar PV 1	14/12/16/3/3/2/777	Approved	75 MW
Buffels Solar PV 2	14/12/16/3/3/2/778	Approved	100 MW
YMS Mineral Resources PV Plant	12/12/20/2629/AM1	Approved	20 MW
Witkop Solar PV II	12/12/20/2507/2	In process	61 MW
Siyanda PV Facility	14/12/16/3/3/2/1/2369	Approved	150 MW

6.2.2 Cumulative Impact Assessment

Altered Sense of Place and Visual Intrusion caused by Proposed and Approved PV Facilities

The Stilfontein PV Cluster will introduce unique infrastructure into the visual landscape, comprising over 2 700 ha of PV panels, nine 4 ha on-site substations, a 36 ha MTS and various 11-33 kV, 132 kV and 400 kV powerlines. This infrastructure will be different in form, scale, size and

texture to the surrounding infrastructure and will contrast with the largely rural and natural landscape of the surrounding area. As such, the project will alter the sense of place and diminish the scenic value of the project site and surrounding area.

As discussed in Section 5, the project will range in visibility to the residential, recreational and transient receptors in the area surrounding the project site. The man-made artefacts visible to receptors will present as a visual intrusion in the either in the foreground to motorists or middleground or background to residential and recreational receptors.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that each of the PV Facilities will require lighting along the perimeter or at the BESS and on-site substations. Consequently, the project will add to existing nightglow from surrounding residential areas. The extensive scale of the project will increase light pollution in the area, which will alter the sense of place.

The other approved PV projects listed in Table 6-1 are largely located to the southwest of the project area, adjacent to existing mines (Figure 6-2). As such, these proposed projects are likely to be less incongruent with land use, form and size than the Stilfontein PV Cluster which is some distance from mines in the area. Despite the comparatively small scale of those projects, they will also create visual impacts such as altered sense of place, visual intrusion and light pollution.

Visual Discomfort and Impaired Visibility caused by Glint and Glare

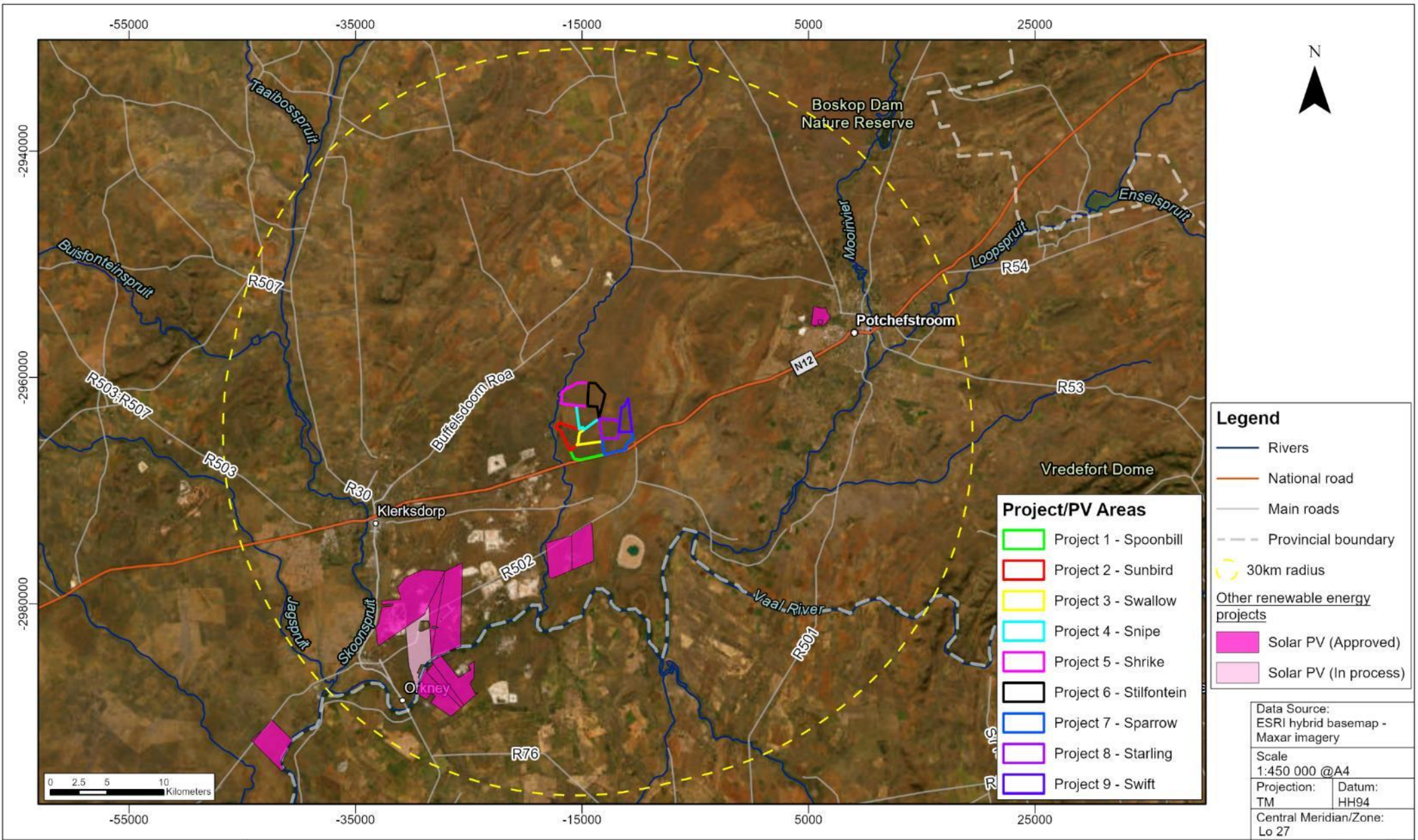
The introduction of a vast array of reflective surfaces will generate glare which is expected to impact surrounding receptors, mainly to the east and west, and motorists along the N12, Unnamed Road East and Vermaasdrift Road during certain times of the day in select periods of the year. Cumulatively, exposure to glare from the Stilfontein Cluster does not exceed 30 minutes per day at any one receptor, and as such

is not considered to be high or a fatal flaw; however, is likely to be a nuisance to some receptors.

Cumulatively, the additional approved projects listed in Table 6-1 and the Stilfontein PV Cluster are expected to alter the sense of place, adding to anthropogenic transformation in the rural / peri-urban landscape environment. Cumulative light pollution is also expected to increase as this impact has a larger zone of influence than direct visual intrusion, for example.

It is relevant to note that, while the cumulative visual impact is considered significant, these projects fall within the Klerksdorp REDZ, a designated area where such projects are encouraged, *inter alia*, by streamlining of EA processes.

The *severity* of the cumulative visual impact of the project on the sense of place and visual intrusion is broadly rated as moderate and is assessed to be of a wide *extent*. The cumulative impact is thus assessed to be of **medium** significance.



Legend

- Rivers
- National road
- Main roads
- Provincial boundary
- 30km radius

Other renewable energy projects

- Solar PV (Approved)
- Solar PV (In process)

Project/PV Areas

- Project 1 - Spoonbill
- Project 2 - Sunbird
- Project 3 - Swallow
- Project 4 - Snipe
- Project 5 - Shrike
- Project 6 - Stilfontein
- Project 7 - Sparrow
- Project 8 - Starling
- Project 9 - Swift

Data Source: ESRI hybrid basemap - Maxar imagery	
Scale 1:450 000 @A4	
Projection: TM	Datum: HH94
Central Meridian/Zone: Lo 27	
Date: 04/01/2022	Compiled by: BRCH
Project No. 581877	Fig No. 6-3



STILFONTEIN PV CLUSTER VIA CUMULATIVE PROJECTS

7 Findings and Recommendations

The VIA describes and interprets the visual context or affected environment in which the project is located: this provides a visual baseline or template, and aims to ascertain the aesthetic uniqueness of the project area. To better understand the magnitude or intensity of visual and sense of place impacts, the capacity of the project area and receptors to accommodate, attenuate and absorb impacts was analysed in considerable detail. To assess impact significance, the project was “introduced” into the baseline, taking account of the attenuating capacity of the project area.

Findings and recommendations for the Sparrow PV Facility are provided in Appendix F.

7.1 Findings

The following findings are pertinent:

- The basis for the visual character of the region is provided by the geology / topography, vegetation and land use of the area, which is predominantly a rural / peri-urban environment. The project area falls within the western portion of the highveld. The highveld terrain is generally devoid of mountains, consists primarily of rolling plains and experiences a temperate highveld climate. The project site lies in a uniform environment, at an elevation of ~1 380 m amsl.
- Vegetation types in the project area are Vaal Reefs Dolomite Sinkhole Woodland and Carlton Dolomite Grassland. The Dry Highland Grassland Biome occurs on undulating topography with small outcropping mountains and river valleys. The vegetation on the site comprises grasses and low shrubby vegetation with small clusters of trees and bushes, reminiscent of African savannah landscape.
- The landscape quality and the visual quality of the project area is largely determined by the land use of the project area and surrounds. It is situated within an expansive and somewhat unspectacular landscape that is further characterised by tailings dams and overburden stockpiles from mining activities in the surrounding area. The area surrounding the site is predominantly characterised by agricultural and mining activities, urban development, infrastructure (roads and rail) and natural highveld grassland. Mines and mining towns are located to the south and southwest, while agriculture (mainly crop and cattle farming) is the predominant land use to the north, east and west of the project site. Farmsteads are dotted throughout the area. The National N12 Highway lies to the south. Two 400 kV Hermes/Pluto transmission lines traverse the area in a north-south direction. The project area can be defined as a modified rural landscape.
- The visual quality of the area is largely experienced through rolling views of the undulating landscape, especially from and across the site. The study area is defined by the fabric of developed settlements and infrastructure surrounded by agricultural and mining activity. Streams and rivers add to the visual quality.
- The visual exposure of the proposed project area is high due to the vast size of the (Cluster) project area as well as the receptors immediately to the south of the project site beyond the N12, as well as those to the immediate southwest and northwest of the (Cluster) site. The project will be marginally visible in the background to the receptors approximately 3 – 5 km from the project site. The overall visibility of the project is moderated by the distance of the receptors from the project site and the undulating topography. The visual exposure of the project is deemed moderate.
- The visual absorption capacity of the project area is increased by the undulating topography and – to a far more limited extent – by

grassland and low trees, providing partial screening to the project. The project area has a low VAC for the project.

- The project area has a large number of transient receptors that will be less sensitive to visual impacts. Residential and recreational receptors are considered to have a higher sensitivity. Potentially highly sensitive receptors are generally located at least 1 km away from the project.
- The visibility of the project is moderate due to its high visibility to transient motorists on the N12 and train passengers, and marginal visibility to the highly sensitivity receptors surrounding the site.
- Construction activities generate visual impacts related to stripping of vegetation, bulk earthworks (which can generate dust) and from construction infrastructure, plant, and materials on site (e.g. site camp, cranes, and stockpiles). Dust generated during construction will be visually unappealing and may detract from the visual quality (sense of place) of the area. The construction activities will be discordant with the landscape and surrounding land uses and therefore will be a temporary visual intrusion to surrounding receptors.
- The project is anticipated to be incongruent and incompatible with the current landscape and infrastructure and will result in a permanent change to the landscape, scenic value and sense of place.
- The project will involve various project components being developed on the project site. These project components are generally incongruent with the surrounding area and will be visible to receptors to varying degrees. As such, this project will result in visual intrusion.
- Lighting will be installed along the perimeter of the facilities to improve security. Introducing lighting into the vast project area is anticipated to result in a deterioration of visual quality.

- In addition to the nine PV facilities and nine substations and one Main Transmission Substation (MTS) comprising the Stilfontein Cluster, six approved PV projects are located within a 30 km radius of the project site and one PV project application in progress. While these projects are of a smaller scale in comparison to the Stilfontein PV Cluster, they are expected to impact on the sense of place and result in visual intrusion. The cumulative impact is assessed to be of **medium** significance.
- This project is located within the Klerksdorp REDZ, an area intentionally designated as suitable for renewable energy projects.

7.2 Conclusion

This project will be largely different and incongruent with the existing infrastructure and the natural landscape. As such, visual impacts include altered sense of place, visual intrusion, and light pollution. This VIA demonstrates that the project will generally result in a significant visual impact.

Potentially highly sensitive receptors are generally located more than 1 km from the project sites and, where the project is visible, it will be mostly visible in the middleground and background. Transient receptors, however, will experience visual intrusion in the foreground in some locations.

The project is somewhat consistent with the mixed land use patterns of the surrounding area, which already includes powerlines.

Construction and operation phase visual impacts are deemed to be acceptable on the assumption that the mitigation measures listed in Appendix F are implemented and noting the location of the project in a designated REDZ. Based on the assessment and the assumption that the mitigation measures will be implemented, the specialist is of the

opinion that the visual impacts of the project are acceptable, and, from a visual perspective, there is no reason not to authorise the project.

Signatures

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

This report, Visual Impact Assessment for the Sparrow PV Facility within the Stilfontein PV Cluster, Stilfontein, North West Province, was prepared and reviewed by the SRK personnel presented below.

Prepared by

SRK Consulting - Certified Electronic Signature

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Kelly Armstrong, Environmental Consultant

Project Partner

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Chris Dalgliesh, Partner

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Appendix A Specialist CV

Appendix B Specialist Declaration of Independence



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DETAILS OF THE SPECIALIST, DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND UNDERTAKING UNDER OATH

	(For official use only)
File Reference Number:	
NEAS Reference Number:	DEA/EIA/
Date Received:	

Application for authorisation in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended (the Regulations)

PROJECT TITLE

Proposed development the Stilfontein Cluster, North West Province, with separate EA applications for:

- Nine Photovoltaic (PV) facilities and associated infrastructure: Spoonbill, Sunbird, Swallow, Snipe, Shrike, Stilfontein, Sparrow, Starling and Swift;
- Three collector substations and associated infrastructure: Voelnessie A, Voelnessie B, Voelnessie C; and
- One Main Transmission Substation and associated infrastructure.

Kindly note the following:

1. This form must always be used for applications that must be subjected to Basic Assessment or Scoping & Environmental Impact Reporting where this Department is the Competent Authority.
2. This form is current as of 01 September 2018. It is the responsibility of the Applicant / Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to ascertain whether subsequent versions of the form have been published or produced by the Competent Authority. The latest available Departmental templates are available at <https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms>.
3. A copy of this form containing original signatures must be appended to all Draft and Final Reports submitted to the department for consideration.
4. All documentation delivered to the physical address contained in this form must be delivered during the official Departmental Officer Hours which is visible on the Departmental gate.
5. All EIA related documents (includes application forms, reports or any EIA related submissions) that are faxed; emailed; delivered to Security or placed in the Departmental Tender Box will not be accepted, only hardcopy submissions are accepted.

Departmental Details

Postal address:

Department of Environmental Affairs
Attention: Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations
Private Bag X447
Pretoria
0001

Physical address:

Department of Environmental Affairs
Attention: Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations
Environment House
473 Steve Biko Road
Arcadia

Queries must be directed to the Directorate: Coordination, Strategic Planning and Support at:
Email: EIAdmin@environment.gov.za

Appendix C Impact Assessment Methodology

Impact Rating Methodology

The assessment of impacts will be based on specialists' expertise, SRK's professional judgement, field observations and desk-top analysis.

The significance of potential impacts that may result from the proposed project will be determined in order to assist decision-makers (typically by a designated authority or state agency, but in some instances, the proponent).

The **significance** of an impact is defined as a combination of the **consequence** of the impact occurring and the **probability** that the impact will occur.

The criteria used to determine impact consequence are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Criteria used to determine the consequence of the impact

Rating	Definition of Rating	Score
A. Extent – the area over which the impact will be experienced		
Local	Confined to project or study area or part thereof (e.g. project areas)	1
Regional	The region, which may be defined in various ways, e.g. cadastral, catchment, topographic	2
(Inter) national	Nationally or beyond	3
B. Intensity – the magnitude of the impact in relation to the sensitivity of the receiving environment, taking into account the degree to which the impact may cause irreplaceable loss of resources		
Low	Site-specific and wider natural and/or social functions and processes are negligibly altered	1
Medium	Site-specific and wider natural and/or social functions and processes continue albeit in a modified way	2
High	Site-specific and wider natural and/or social functions or processes are severely altered	3
C. Duration – the timeframe over which the impact will be experienced and its reversibility		
Short-term	Up to 2 years	1
Medium-term	2 to 15 years	2
Long-term	More than 15 years	3

The combined score of these three criteria corresponds to a **Consequence Rating**, as follows:

Table 2: Method used to determine the consequence score

Combined Score (A+B+C)	3 – 4	5	6	7	8
Consequence Rating	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High

Once the consequence will be derived, the probability of the impact occurring will be considered, using the probability classifications presented in the table below.

Table 3: Probability classification

Probability – the likelihood of the impact occurring	
Improbable	<40% chance of occurring
Possible	40% - 70% chance of occurring
Probable	>70% - 90% chance of occurring
Definite	>90% chance of occurring

The overall **significance** of impacts will be determined by considering consequence and probability using the rating system prescribed in the table below.

Table 4: Impact significance ratings

		Probability			
		Improbable	Possible	Probable	Definite
Consequence	Very Low	INSIGNIFICANT	INSIGNIFICANT	VERY LOW	VERY LOW
	Low	VERY LOW	VERY LOW	LOW	LOW
	Medium	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	High	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH
	Very High	HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH	VERY HIGH

Finally, the impacts will be also considered in terms of their status (positive or negative impact) and the confidence in the ascribed impact significance rating. The prescribed system for considering impacts status and confidence (in assessment) is laid out in the table below.

Table 5: Impact status and confidence classification

Status of impact	
Indication whether the impact is adverse (negative) or beneficial (positive).	+ ve (positive – a ‘benefit’) - ve (negative – a ‘cost’)
Confidence of assessment	
The degree of confidence in predictions based on available information, SRK’s judgement and/or specialist knowledge.	Low Medium High

The impact significance rating should be considered by authorities in their decision-making process based on the implications of ratings ascribed below:

- **INSIGNIFICANT:** the potential impact is negligible and **will not** have an influence on the decision regarding the proposed activity/development.
- **VERY LOW:** the potential impact is very small and **should not** have any meaningful influence on the decision regarding the proposed activity/development.
- **LOW:** the potential impact **may not** have any meaningful influence on the decision regarding the proposed activity/development.
- **MEDIUM:** the potential impact **should** influence the decision regarding the proposed activity/development.
- **HIGH:** the potential impact **will** affect the decision regarding the proposed activity/development.
- **VERY HIGH:** The proposed activity should only be approved under special circumstances.

In the VIA, practicable mitigation and optimisation measures will be recommended and impacts will be rated in the prescribed way both without and with the assumed effective implementation of mitigation and optimisation measures. Mitigation and optimisation measures will either be:

- **Essential:** best practice measures which must be implemented and are non-negotiable; and
- **Best Practice:** recommended to comply with best practice, with adoption dependent on the proponent’s risk profile and commitment to adhere to best practice, and which must be shown to have been considered and sound reasons provided by the proponent if not implemented.

Negative impacts (with mitigation) rated high or very high will be shaded in red, while positive impacts (with optimisation) rated high or very high will be shaded green.

Appendix D Viewpoint Photographs



Viewpoint 1 (N12 East) looking west towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster in the background



Viewpoint 2 (Unnamed Road East) looking west towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster (not visible)

Note: The white line indicates the approximate location of the Stilfontein PV Cluster.



Viewpoint 3 (Unnamed Road East) looking west towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster (not visible)



Viewpoint 4 (R502 Bridge) looking north-west towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster in the background



Viewpoint 5 (N12) looking north towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster in the middleground



Viewpoint 6 (Vermaasdrift Road Farmstead) looking east towards Stilfontein PV Cluster in the background



Viewpoint 7 (Vermaasdrift Road North 1) looking east towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster (not visible)



Viewpoint 8 (Vermaasdrift Road Frontier Shooting Range) looking east towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster (not visible)

Source: Google Earth Street View, verified by SRK site visit.



Viewpoint 9 (Vermaasdrift Road Camp Louico) looking south-east towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster in the background



Viewpoint 10 (Khora Lion Park) looking south-east towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster in the background



Viewpoint 11 (Northern Farmsteads) looking southeast towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster in the background



Viewpoint 12 (Northern Farmsteads) looking south towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster in the background



Viewpoint 13 (Northern Farmsteads) looking south towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster in the background



Viewpoint 14 (Khuma Residential Area) looking north towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster (not visible)



Viewpoint 15 (Intersection of Vermaasdrift and N12) looking north east towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster in the background



Viewpoint 16 (R502) looking north east towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster in the background



Viewpoint 17 (N12) looking northeast towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster in the middleground



Viewpoint 18 (N12) looking north towards the Stilfontein PV Cluster in the middleground

Appendix E Glare Report

Appendix F Sparrow PV Facility Baseline and Impact Assessment

1 Sparrow PV Visual Context (Affected Environment)

The Sparrow PV Facility is located on the southern boundary of the Cluster and occupies an area of 330 ha on the Doornplaat RE3/410.

The southern boundary of Sparrow PV Facility will be set back ~ 50 m from, and will be parallel to, the N12.

This appendix addresses the potential visual impact of the Sparrow PV array, on-site substation (IPP-Portion), 11 – 33 kV underground / overhead powerlines, BESS and associated infrastructure.

2 Analysis of the Magnitude of Visual Impact for Sparrow PV

Numerous factors were considered in the main VIA to determine the magnitude or intensity of the overall visual impact of the Cluster. However, this section evaluates the magnitude or intensity of the visual impact of the Sparrow PV Facility, on-site substation (IPP-Portion), 11 – 33 kV underground / overhead powerlines, BESS and associated infrastructure.

2.1 Visual Exposure

The viewshed modelled for the Sparrow PV Facility (Figure 2-1) identifies the areas from which the Sparrow PV Facility *could* be visible; it is a function of topography and the dimensions of the project *only*, but not the location of the visual receptors. The viewshed analysis assumes maximum visibility of the PV Facility, or part thereof, in an environment

stripped bare of vegetation and structures. The viewshed indicates the visibility of the project accounting for reducing visibility as distance from the project increases.

The Sparrow PV Facility will be visible in the following areas:

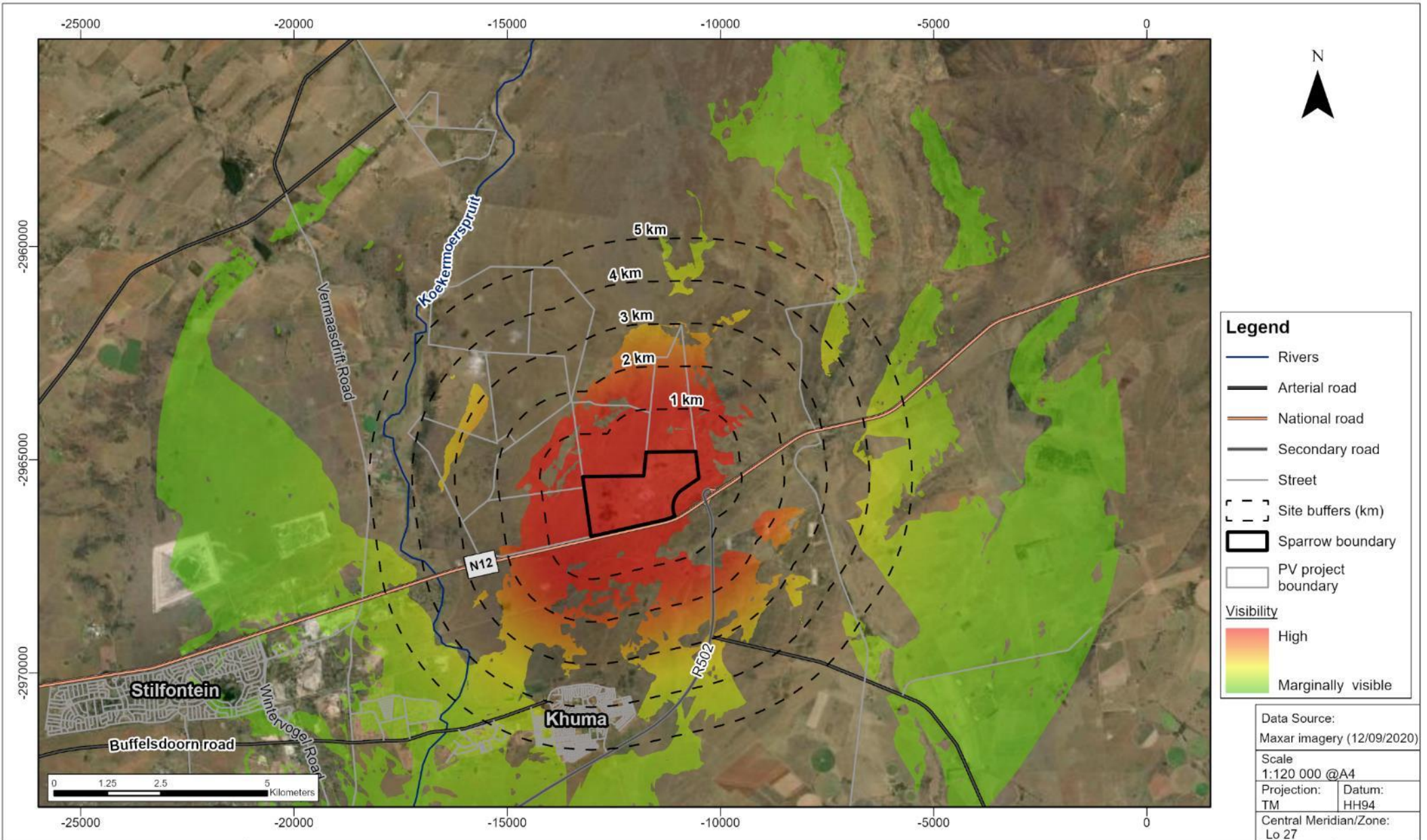
- Farmsteads south of the N12. The viewshed indicates that the Sparrow PV Facility will be visible to only a few farmstead residents located 1 – 2 km south of the Sparrow PV Facility;
- Transient receptors on the N12 and railway located 1 – 2 km to the south of the Sparrow PV Facility;
- Industrial area adjacent to the N12 over 5 km southwest of the Sparrow PV Facility; and
- Eastern portion of Stilfontein residential area over 5 km southwest of the Sparrow PV Facility. These residents, while sensitive receptors, are situated at a distance such that the Facility will be marginally visible in the background.

2.2 Visual Absorption Capacity

The VAC of the project area is as described in Section 5.2 of the VIA.

2.3 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

The sensitivity of the potential viewers is as described in Section 5.3 of the VIA.



Legend

- Rivers
- Arterial road
- National road
- Secondary road
- Street
- Site buffers (km)
- Sparrow boundary
- PV project boundary

Visibility

- High
- Marginally visible

Data Source: Maxar imagery (12/09/2020)	
Scale 1:120 000 @A4	
Projection: TM	Datum: HH94
Central Meridian/Zone: Lo 27	
Date: 22/03/2022	Compiled by: BRCH
Project No. 581877	Fig No. 2-1



STILFONTEIN PV CLUSTER VIA SPARROW VIEWSHED

2.4 Visibility and Viewing Distance

The visibility and viewing distances detailed in Section 5.4 of the VIA is applicable to the Sparrow PV Facility, on-site substation (IPP-Portion), 11 – 33 kV underground / overhead powerlines, BESS and associated infrastructure.

As such, the visibility of the Sparrow PV Facility, on-site substation (IPP-Portion), 11 – 33 kV underground / overhead powerlines, BESS and associated infrastructure is **moderate** due to the high visibility by transient motorists on the N12, and marginal visibility anticipated by highly sensitive receptors (e.g. residents).

2.5 Integrity with the Existing Landscape / Townscape

The integrity with the existing landscape / townscape detailed in section 5.5 of the VIA is applicable to the Sparrow PV Facility, on-site substation (IPP-Portion), 11 – 33 kV underground / overhead powerlines, BESS and associated infrastructure.

As such, the Sparrow PV Facility are deemed to have **low** integrity with the surrounding landscape, whereas the associated infrastructure is considered to have **moderate** integrity with the surrounding landscape.

2.6 Glare Analysis

Based on the input parameters (Table 5-7) the glare analysis demonstrated that glare from Sparrow PV Facility, will be experienced by visual receptors (residents and motorists). However, none of the Observation Points (OPs) will experience > 60 minutes of glare per day for three months or more.

Notable findings from the glare modelling are summarised below:

- OP 4 - OP 6, OP 12, OP 15 – OP 23, OP 26, OP29 – OP 30 and OP 32 - OP 33 will not experience any glare;
- OP 7 will experience < 15 minutes of glare per day between 05h00 and 07h30 between September and March;
- OP 8 will experience < 10 minutes of glare per day between 06h00 and 07h30 between April and early September;
- OP 9 will experience < 10 minutes of glare per day between 06h00 and 07h00 between mid-March to May and August to September;
- OP 24 will experience < 10 minutes of glare per day between 05h00 and 06h30 between mid-January to March and mid- September to November;
- OP 27 will experience < 15 minutes of glare per day between 05h00 and 06h30 between October and February;
- OP 28 will experienced < 10 minutes of glare per day between 05h00 and 06h30 between mid-October to February;
- Motorists on the N12 will experience glare between 16h00 and 19h30 throughout the year, and between 06h00 and 07h30 between mid-April and August. Motorists will be exposed to glare emanating from the Sparrow PV Facility while travelling along the ~ 8 km section of the N12 directly adjacent to the Sparrow PV Facility. The duration of exposure depends on the speed of travel: at 90 km/h a period of ~5 minutes; and
- Motorist on Vermaasdrift Road will experience glare between 05h00 and 07h30 between mid-April and mid-August and between mid-November and mid-January. Motorists will be exposed to glare emanating from the Sparrow PV Facility while travelling through the intersection of the N12 and Vermaasdrift Road. The duration of exposure depends on the speed of travel.

3 Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures

3.1 Construction Phase

3.1.1 Altered Sense of Place and Visual Intrusion caused by Construction Activities

Visual impacts will be generated by construction activities such as stripping of vegetation, bulk earthworks (which can generate dust) and from construction infrastructure, plant, and materials on site (e.g. site camp, cranes, and stockpiles). Dust generated during construction will be visually unappealing and may detract from the visual quality (sense of place) of the area. These impacts are typically limited to the immediate area surrounding the construction site, during the construction period.

The Sparrow PV Facility is highly visible to receptors, albeit transient motorists, and partially visible to residents ~ 2 km to the south. Due to the close proximity of the site to the busy N12, the altered sense of place and visual intrusion caused by the construction activities will be experienced to a greater degree than the residents located to the south of the site. Although, the motorist’s exposure to the visual impact will be brief and only experienced as they pass the site.

The impact is assessed to be of **low** significance and with the implementation of mitigation is reduced to **very low** (Table 3-1).

Table 3-1: Altered sense of place and visual intrusion caused by Sparrow PV construction activities

	Extent	Intensity	Duration	Consequence	Probability	Significance	Status	Confidence
Without mitigation	Local	High	Short-term	Low	Definite	LOW	-ve	High
	1	3	1	5				
Mitigation Measures:								
With mitigation	Local	High	Short-term	Low	Probable	VERY LOW	-ve	High
	1	3	1	4				

3.2 Operational Phase

3.2.1 Altered Sense of Place and Visual Intrusion caused by the Sparrow PV Array

The Sparrow PV array will occupy ~ 330 ha. The development of this Facility will introduce infrastructure that may be perceived as conflicting with the current natural landscapes of grassland and treescapes. While there is evidence of anthropogenic influence within the surrounding area, it is largely confined to an area southeast of the Facility. This individual PV array will be of a different size, scale, texture and layout to that which already exists within the landscape, and as such is anticipated to negatively impact the sense of place of the region.

The PV array will be highly visible in the foreground to middleground to motorists on the N12 and marginally visible in the background to residents in the eastern sections of Stilfontein and Khuma (south of the

site). Where visible, the PV array will present as a visual intrusion to receptors.

The impact is assessed to be of **high** significance and with the implementation of mitigation is reduced to **medium** (Table 3-2).

Table 3-2: Altered sense of place and visual intrusion caused by the Sparrow PV array

	Extent	Intensity	Duration	Consequence	Probability	Significance	Status	Confidence
Without mitigation	Local 1	High 3	Long-term 3	High 7	Definite	HIGH	-ve	High
Mitigation Measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant tall vegetation (that will reach ~5 m in height) along the eastern and southern boundary of the site upon completion of construction, to screen the site but not cast shadow across the PV array. Fence the perimeter of the site with a green or black fencing. 							
With mitigation	Local 1	High 3	Long-term 3	High 7	Possible	MEDIUM	-ve	High

3.2.2 Altered Sense of Place and Visual Intrusion caused by the 11-33 kV Powerlines and Pylons

Two existing 400 kV Hermes/Pluto powerlines traverse the site and have marginally injured receptors to powerlines within the landscape. Nevertheless, it is expected that the development of the 11-33 kV powerline will detract from the scenic value of the project site and surrounding areas, albeit to a limited degree.

The proposed powerline will be set back at least 1 km from the N12 and, therefore, the view of this powerline will be in the middle- to background, with the receptors having limited visibility of the powerline.

The impact is assessed to be of **low** significance with and without the implementation of mitigation (Table 3-3).

Table 3-3: Altered sense of place and visual intrusion caused by the 11-33 kV powerlines and pylons

	Extent	Intensity	Duration	Consequence	Probability	Significance	Status	Confidence
Without mitigation	Local 1	Low 1	Long-term 3	Low 5	Definite	LOW	-ve	High
Mitigation Measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not install or affix lights on pylons. 							
With mitigation	Local 1	Low 1	Long-term 3	Low 5	Probable	LOW	-ve	High

3.2.3 Altered Sense of Place caused by the Sparrow BESS and On-site Substation (IPP-Portion)

The Sparrow BESS and on-site substation (IPP-Portion) will be of a different form to the few farmsteads dotted across the project site. The ~10 ha BESS can be stacked to a maximum height of ~ 15 m. There are few structures within the landscape that have prominent vertical profiles, as such, the BESS may alter the scenic value of the landscape.

The on-site substation (IPP-Portion) will have a footprint of 2 ha¹¹, however the vertical dimensions are unknown at this stage. Two location alternatives are proposed for this on-site substation, but they do not differ significantly.

The height of the BESS and the footprints of the BESS and on-site substation will, diminish the scenic value of the project site, albeit to a lesser degree than the PV arrays.

The proposed BESS and the on-site substation are expected to be visually intrusive, albeit, only partially visible to receptors.

The impact is assessed to be of **medium** significance with and without the implementation of mitigation (Table 3-4) for both on-site substation alternatives.

Table 3-4: Altered sense of place and visual intrusion caused by the Sparrow BESS and on-site substation (IPP-Portion)

	Extent	Intensity	Duration	Consequence	Probability	Significance	Status	Confidence
Without mitigation	Local	Medium	Long-term	Medium	Definite	MEDIUM	-ve	High
	1	2	3	6				
Mitigation Measures:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consolidate the BESS and on-site substation footprint, if possible. ■ Ensure that the on-site substation roof and BESS container colour blends into the landscape. ■ Limit the stacking of containers to a height of 10 m. 								
With mitigation	Local	Medium	Long-term	Medium	Probable	MEDIUM	-ve	High
	1	2	3	6				

¹¹ The on-site substation comprising of the IPP-Portion and the Eskom-Portion will occupy ~ 4 ha in total; with the IPP- and Eskom-Portions each occupying ~2 ha.

3.2.4 Visual Discomfort and Impaired Visibility Resulting from Glint and Glare

Due to the proximity of the PV Facility to residential areas and roads, the potential glare impact was modelled.

The glare analysis indicated that glare (and potentially glint) will be experienced at numerous OPs and on two roads. The OPs expected to experience glare from the Sparrow PV Facility are located to the east and west of the Sparrow PV Facility and are anticipated to experience <20 minutes of glare per day. Less than 20 minutes of glare per day experienced by residential receptors is not considered significant (Section 5.6.1 of the VIA). Motorists on the N12 and Vermaasdrift Road will experience glare. Motorists on N12 will experience glare in the morning and evening, while the Vermaasdrift Road will experience glare in the morning.

The durations of glint experienced by sensitive receptors (motorists) are considered of a level that may cause visual discomfort or impaired visibility to motorists travelling along the N12 which experiences high volumes of traffic. The glare experienced by stationary receptors (OPs) is not considered to be a level that will cause visual discomfort or impair visibility, but may be experienced as a nuisance by the receptors if not mitigated.

The impact is assessed to be of **high** significance and with the implementation of mitigation is reduced to **low** (Table 3-5).

Table 3-5: Visual discomfort and impaired visibility resulting from glint and glare

	Extent	Intensity	Duration	Consequence	Probability	Significance	Status	Confidence
Without mitigation	Local	High	Long-term	High	Definite	HIGH	-ve	Medium
	1	3	3	7				
Mitigation Measures:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant tall vegetation (that will reach ≥ 5 m in height) along the eastern, south-eastern and southern boundary of the site upon completion of construction, to screen the site and shield the road from glare. Fence the perimeter of the site with a green or black fencing. 								
With mitigation	Local	Low	Long-term	Low	Probable	LOW	-ve	Medium
	1	1	3	5				

3.2.5 Altered Visual Quality caused by Light Pollution at Night

It is anticipated that lighting will be installed along the perimeter of the PV Facility and / or around the BESS's and on-site substations to improve safety and security.

The installation of lighting on the site perimeter and / or around the BESS and on-site substation is anticipated to generate nightglow that currently does not emanate from the natural, undeveloped site. As such, the introduction of lighting on the site alters the sense of place and visual quality to surrounding receptors. Nightglow may become more intense to the farmstead receptors currently located some distance from the nightglow emanating from the towns of Stilfontein, Khuma and Klerksdorp.

Lighting is not easily screened by vegetation or topography, and the proposed lighting for the PV Facility is anticipated to contribute to

nightglow in surrounding residential areas, and significantly alter the visual quality of the surrounding area.

The impact is assessed to be of **medium** significance with and without the implementation of mitigation (Table 3-6).

Table 3-6: Altered visual quality caused by light pollution at night

	Extent	Intensity	Duration	Consequence	Probability	Significance	Status	Confidence
Without mitigation	Local	Medium	Long-term	Medium	Definite	MEDIUM	-ve	High
	1	2	3	6				
Mitigation Measures:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the height of lighting masts to a workable minimum. Direct lighting inwards and downwards to limit light pollution. 								
With mitigation	Local	Medium	Long-term	Medium	Probable	MEDIUM	-ve	High
	1	2	3	6				

3.3 The No-Go Alternative

The No Go alternative entails no change to the status quo, in other words, no PV Facility.

Should the application for the Sparrow PV Facility and associated infrastructure be refused, the visual impacts (i.e. sense of place will not be altered, no visual intrusion, glint or glare or light pollution) will not be realised. However, this would also mean that no renewable energy will be generated by this project.

4 Sparrow PV Findings and Recommendations

The construction phase visual impacts are assessed to be *very low* with the implementation of mitigation, and thus is considered to be of an acceptable level. During the operational phase visual impacts such as altered sense of place and visual intrusion, and glare experienced by the surrounding receptors have been assessed to be higher (*high, medium and low*) and with mitigation are reduced to *medium, low or very low* significance.

Based on the assessment and the assumption that the mitigation measures will be implemented, and noting the location of the PV Facility in a designated REDZ, the specialist is of the opinion that the visual impacts of the project are acceptable and, from a visual perspective, there is no reason not to authorise the project.

