APPENDIX H:

Public Participation for the EIA Phase

PART 3

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CONTENTS

APPENDIX H.7: COMMENTS AND RESPONSES TRAIL

App. H.7/…

PART A: COMMENTS AND RESPONSES TRAIL FOR COMMENTS RECEIVED FOLLOWING THE SUBMISSION OF THE FINAL SCOPING REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION AND PRIOR TO THE RELEASE OF THE DRAFT EIA REPORT

An integrated Public Participation Process was undertaken for the proposed projects, which include the 12 Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Facilities, as well as associated infrastructure and Electrical Grid Infrastructure (EGI). The EGI projects (i.e. Projects 13 to 26) will be undertaken at a later stage, and the current focus and subject of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Reports are the Solar PV projects (Projects 1 to 12).

The tables below include the comments and/or issues raised by stakeholders and Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) following the submission of the Final Scoping Reports for consideration and prior to the release of the Draft EIA Report for a 30-day comment period, together with the responses from the project team. The original comments received (emails and letters) are included in Appendix H.1 of this EIA Report. **Please note that the comments are verbatim as provided by the stakeholders and I&APs.**

The comments included in this appendix only apply to the Kudu Solar Facility 2 project (hereafter referred to as the proposed project in the responses provided), however in some cases, comments relating to the other PV Facilities have been included for context or background purposes (where necessary). Comments and responses for the remaining Kudu Solar Facilities are included in the respective EIA Reports. The comments received have been grouped per organisation, based on the structure recommended by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE).

1. Comments Received from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)

1.1 The DFFE Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisation

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1.	13/02/2023 Email Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the	**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE FINAL SCOPING REPORT AND AMENDED APPLICATION FORM FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) FACILITY (KUDU SOLAR FACILITY 2) AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR DE AAR, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE.**	**CSIR:** The acknowledgement of receipt of the Amended Application Form for Environmental Authorisation (EA) and Final Scoping Report (FSR) is noted with thanks. The timeframes in Regulation 21 (1) of the 2014 National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998, as amended) (NEMA) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations (as amended) were adhered to in the submission of

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	Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Lydia Kutu)	The Department confirms having received the Final Scoping Report and Amended Application Form for the abovementioned project on 13 February 2023. You have submitted these documents to comply with the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended. You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.	the FSR. The FSR complied with all the requirements in terms of the content of Scoping Reports in accordance with Appendix 2 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). The Applicant is aware of Section 24F of the NEMA.
2.	28/03/2023 Email Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Lydia Kutu)	Please find herein the attached letter for the above mentioned. Please do not respond to this mailbox with any queries related to the decision been issued. All queries on the attached decision must be directed to official whose contact details is listed as enquiries. I hope you find all in order. Thank you.	**CSIR**: Thank you for the comments received on the acceptance of the FSR for the proposed project.
3.	28/03/2023 Letter (received via email on 28/03/2023; dated 27/03/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Ms Olivia Letlalo; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	**ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINAL SCOPING REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED KUDU SOLAR FACILITY 2 AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE ON THE REMAINING EXTENT OF THE FARM BAS BERG NO. 88 AND REMAINING EXTENT OF PORTION 3 OF THE FARM BAS BERG NO. 88, NORTH-EAST OF THE TOWN OF DE AAR WITHIN THE RENOSTERBERG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY AND PIXLEY KA SEME DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY IN THE NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE.** The final Scoping Report (FSR) and the Plan of Study for Environmental Impact Assessment (PoSEIA) dated February 2023 and received by the Competent Authority (CA) on 13 February 2023, refer. The CA has evaluated the submitted FSR and the PoSEIA dated February 2023 and is satisfied that the documents comply with the minimum requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended. The FSR	**CSIR**: The letter of Acceptance of the FSR for the proposed Kudu Solar Facility was well received. Responses are provided below to each comment raised.

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		is hereby accepted by the Department in terms of Regulation 22(1)(a) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended. You may proceed with the environmental impact assessment process in accordance with the tasks contemplated in the PoSEIA as required in terms of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended. <u>In addition, the following amendments and additional information are required for the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR):</u>	
	28/03/2023 Letter (received via email on 28/03/2023; dated 27/03/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Ms Olivia Letlalo; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	**a) <u>Listed Activities</u>** • It is noted that certain listed activities applied for will be confirmed during the EIA Phase. Please ensure that only listed activities that are triggered by the proposed development are applied for, in the amended application form and draft EIAr for the proposed development.	**CSIR**: Refer to Section 4.3 of Chapter 4 of the EIA Report for additional information. At the Scoping Phase there were some project aspects that still needed to be confirmed during the EIA Phase, and it was necessary to follow the maximum development scenario or precautionary approach at the time. In this regard, concerted efforts were made during the EIA Phase to confirm the applicability of the listed activities and provide clarification, as well as more succinct information in the applicability discussion of each listed activity. An Amended Application for EA was accordingly submitted to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) with the Draft EIA Report. In the Final EIA Report more clarification has been provided and only listed activities that are triggered by the proposed development are applied for. In addition, certain listed activities have been removed from the Application for EA as they are no longer applicable. As such, an Amended Application for EA has been submitted to the DFFE with the Final EIA Report. Refer to Chapter 4 of the Final EIA Report for additional information.
		• The CA has further noted that words such as "**may, likely and could**" have been used in the description of activity 56 of Listing Notice (LN) 1 and 18 and 23 of LN 3. Please refrain from using such word/s, since it creates an uncertainty regarding the applicability of the listed activity applied for, for the proposed development. In addition, please note that the project description and listed activities are not based on a precautionary approach.	**CSIR:** Refer to the response provided above regarding the precautionary approach towards the listed activities and project description, as well as the efforts made to provide more clarity and certainty on the applicability of the listed activities. Specifically with regards to road widening and lengthening listed activities, as noted in the Traffic Impact Assessment (Chapter 14 of the EIA Report), various Access Route Options are available for the proposed project. The existing main roads, divisional roads and unnamed farm gravel roads may need to be upgraded for access to the proposed Kudu Solar cluster, depending on which route is used. The roads leading to the study area are of a sufficient width to accommodate truck

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			movement, however widening by more than 4 m or more than 6 m may be required at localised positions (i.e. intersections) as required. However, exact specifications of the intersection widening, upgrading and lengthening will require further engineering analysis. Therefore, these listed activities (i.e. Activity 56 of Listing Notice 1; and Activity 18 (g) (ii) (ee) (ii) of Listing Notice 3) were removed from the Application for EA (at the Draft EIA Report stage), and will be considered through a separate process once more details become available. It is possible to align such with the separate EGI Projects 13 to 26. Information regarding the access routes have been detailed in the EIA Report for background purposes. Also listed activities from Listing Notice 3 have also been removed from the Application for EA in this Final EIA Report. An amended Application Form has been submitted to the DFFE with the Final EIA Report. Additional information is provided in Section 1.1. of Part B of this Comments and Responses Report.
		• In addition, it has been noted that for activity 4 of LN3, the internal roads are estimated to have a width ranging between 4m and 5m. Please be reminded that the EIA Regulations listing notice indicate that the road must be wider than 4m. As such, you are requested to indicate the exact width of the road to be widened to determine the applicability of the aforesaid activity.	**CSIR**: This was clarified in Chapter 4 of the Draft EIA Report, and in the Amended Application for EA that was submitted to the DFFE with the Draft EIA Report. This clarification has been retained in the Final EIA Report. Overall, internal roads will be constructed within the fenced off area of the Solar PV Facility (with a width of up to 5 m); and between the solar facility and the closest existing road to gain access (with a width of up to 8 m). This listed activity is applicable as the roads will be wider than 4 m.
		• For activity 56 of LN1, the road upgrading will include the lengthening of less than 1km. However, the road will be widened by more than 4m or more than 6m. Please be reminded that the EIA Regulations listing notice indicate that the road widening must be wider than 6m or the length must be more than 1km. As such, you requested to indicate the exact width and length of the road to be widened.	**CSIR**: Activity 56 of Listing Notice 1 was removed from the Application for EA at the Draft EIA Report stage, as described above.
		• The EIAR must provide an assessment of the impacts and mitigation measures for each of the listed activities applied for.	**CSIR**: The EIA Report provides an assessment of the impacts and mitigation measures for each of the listed activities applied for. Refer to the specialist assessments in Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report for all the impacts identified and assessed, and mitigation measures recommended. Chapter 20 of the EIA Report provides a summary of the key impacts identified and assessed, as well as corresponding mitigation measures.
		• It has been noted that switching station and collector substation does not form part of the proposed development, therefore, you are advised to ensure the	**CSIR**: Note that listed activities included and described in the Amended Application for EA that was submitted to the DFFE with the Draft EIA Report; as well as Chapter

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		switching station and collector substation are not part of the components for the proposed development.	4 of the Draft EIA Report, did not include any specific mention of the switching station and collector station. However, Chapter 2 of the Draft EIA Report and the general project description provided in the Amended Application for EA that was submitted to the DFFE with the Draft EIA Report stated the following for background and contextual purposes: ▪ "*Components of the on-site substation complex:* o *On-site Independent Power Producer (IPP) or Facility Substation (~1 ha). As confirmed with the DFFE, the on-site IPP substation* can be included within this current Application for EA. This has been noted in the Listed Activities section of this form. o *Solid State Lithium Ion Battery Energy Storage System. Refer to the details below.* o *Switching Station and Collector Station (~2 ha).* ***This forms part of Projects 13 – 24 and will be assessed as part of separate processes****".* It does state that the switching station and collector station will form part of separate processes. However, as requested by the DFFE, it has been removed from the general description of the project in the Amended Application Form for EA (Section 5 of the form) and has been kept in Chapter 2 of the Final EIA Report for contextualisation (however more explanatory notes have been included to explain it will be assessed separately).
		• Please ensure that all relevant listed activities are applied for, are specific and can be linked to the development activity or infrastructure as described in the project description. In addition, the onus is thus on the applicant and the environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) to ensure that all the applicable listed activities are included in the application. Failure to do so may result in unnecessary delays in the processing of the application.	**CSIR**: Section 4.3 of Chapter 4 of the Draft EIA Report was updated, where possible, to ensure that the applicability of the listed activities is more specific and to describe how the listed activities applied for are linked to the project description. In addition, all relevant listed activities triggered by the proposed project have been applied for. This was retained in the Final EIA Report; however, an Amended Application Form has been submitted as certain listed activities are no longer applicable (as described above and below in Part B of this Comments and Responses Report). Refer to the response provided above regarding the precautionary approach towards the listed activities and project description, as well as the efforts made to provide more clarity and certainty on the applicability of the listed activities.

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		• If the activities applied for in the application form differ from those mentioned in the final EIAr, an amended application form must be submitted. Please note that the Department's application form template has been amended and can be downloaded from the following link https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms.	**CSIR**: An Amended EA Application Form has been submitted to the Competent Authority with the Final EIA Report, as certain listed activities are no longer applicable. The latest available Application Form template was downloaded from the DFFE website.
	28/03/2023 Letter (received via email on 28/03/2023; dated 27/03/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Ms Olivia Letlalo; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	**b) <u>Public Participation</u>** • Please ensure that comments from all relevant stakeholders are submitted to the Department with the EIAR. This includes but is not limited to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE): Protected Areas Planning and Management Effectiveness Directorate, **Biodiversity Planning and Conservation** (BCAdmin@environment.gov.za); Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform, Telkom, South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), South African Civil Aviation Authority(SACAA), Endangered Wildlife Trust, Birdlife South Africa, Department of Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation, South African National Defence Force, Local interest groups, for example: Councillors and Rate Payers associations; Surrounding landowners, Farmer Organisations, Environmental Groups and NGOs; and Grassroots communities and structures as well as the affected district and local municipalities.	**CSIR**: Prior to the commencement of the Scoping and EIA Processes (and advertising the EA Processes in the local print media), an initial database of potential I&APs (including key relevant stakeholders and Organs of State) was developed based on research and interaction with the DFFE and ABO Wind. A detailed copy of the I&AP database was included in Appendix E of the Draft EIA Report that had been released for a 30-day public comment period, extending from 02 June 2023 to 03 July 2023, excluding public holidays. This has been retained and updated as relevant in Appendix E of this Final EIA Report. The database includes the names of the registered I&APs, as well as an indication of the interaction with registered I&APs, as well as all potential I&APs that have been added to the project database based on requests, submission of comments or based on research. This complies with Regulation 42 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). These relevant I&APs and Stakeholders were included on the initial I&AP Database and have been retained. Reminder emails were sent to all I&APs, including these stakeholders listed by the DFFE, during the 30-day review of the Draft Scoping Report (DSR) and Draft EIA Report, in order to seek comments. Correspondence and proof of correspondence that was sent to stakeholders for the DSR release are included in Appendix F.8 of this Final EIA Report; and such correspondence sent for the Draft EIA Report release is included in Appendix H.4 of this Final EIA Report. Reminder text messages were also sent to these stakeholders, where cell phone numbers are available, and proof of such is included in Appendix H.4 of this Final Report. The equivalent information for the Scoping Phase is included in Appendix F.8. Also refer to Chapter 4 and Appendix H.4 of this Final EIA Report for additional information on follow ups and communication undertaken with the key stakeholders. Copies of all comments received from various stakeholders during the 30-day comment period of the Draft EIA Report have been captured in Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report; as well as Appendix H.7 (i.e. Part B of this Comments and

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			Responses Report). All issues raised and comments received during the review of the Draft EIA Report have been adequately addressed in this Comments and Responses Report, and the Final EIA Report, where applicable and necessary.
		• Please ensure that all issues raised, and comments received during the circulation of the FSR and draft EIAr from registered I&APs and organs of state which have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are adequately addressed in the final EIAr. **It is noted that several objections were received from the adjacent landowners with regards to, inter-alia, the extent of the development, impacts on groundwater, water usage and groundwater implications, sustainability of groundwater usage, agricultural sustainability and visual impacts**. Please ensure that these concerns and objections are addressed and adequately responded to. Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders must be included in the final EIAr. Should you be unable to obtain comments, proof should be submitted to the Department of the attempts that were made to obtain comments.	**CSIR:** It must be noted that comments received from the adjacent, nearby or surrounding landowners with regards to the extent of the development, impacts on groundwater, water usage and groundwater implications, sustainability of groundwater usage, agricultural sustainability and visual impacts were addressed thoroughly in the FSR at the Scoping Phase, and where supplementary information was needed, this was stated to be provided in the EIA Phase. Refer to Appendix F.11 of this Final EIA Report for the Comments and Responses Trail that includes comments received during the 30-day review of the DSR. In addition, these comments were also considered by the specialists in the Draft EIA Report and detailed responses were also provided in the Draft EIA Report, specifically Chapters 6 to 17, as relevant. This information has been retained and supplemented, where required, in the Final EIA Report. Copies of all comments received from the adjacent, nearby or surrounding landowners, as well as various stakeholders, during the 30-day comment period of the Draft EIA Report have been captured in Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report; as well as Appendix H.7 (i.e. Part B of this Comments and Responses Report). All issues raised and comments received during the review of the Draft EIA Report have been adequately addressed in this Comments and Responses Report, and the Final EIA Report, where applicable and necessary. Also refer to Chapter 4 and Appendix H.4 of this Final EIA Report for additional information on comprehensive follow ups and communication undertaken with the key stakeholders, including the adjacent landowners that commented during the DSR phase. Where comments were not able to be obtained, proof of follow up is included in Appendix H.4.
		• A Comments and Response trail report (CRR) must be submitted with the final EIAr. The CRR must incorporate all comments for this development. The CRR must be a separate document from the main report and the format must be in the table format as indicated in Annexure 1 of this comments letter in chronological order. Please refrain from summarising comments made by	**CSIR:** A detailed CRR (i.e., this Report) is included separately with this EIA Report. This CRR currently includes all comments received following the submission of the Final Scoping Report to the DFFE for consideration on 11 February 2023; and prior to the release of the Draft EIA Report on 02 June 2023 (i.e. Part A). Part B of this CRR includes all comments received during the 30-day comment period on the Draft

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		I&APs. All comments from I&APs must be copied verbatim and responded to clearly. Please note that a response such as "noted" is not regarded as an adequate response to I&AP's comments.	EIA Report, extending from 02 June 2023 to 03 July 2023. Such comments have been duly considered, responded to in this document, and addressed in the Final EIA Report, where applicable and necessary. The Comments and Responses Report is a separate document from the main Final EIA Report document i.e. it serves as Appendix H.7, and the format used is as per the recommended format prescribed by the DFFE. All comments received from potential and registered I&APs were copied verbatim, and translated where necessary, and responded to clearly and in detail. The comments made by I&APs have not been summarised in any way.
		• The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations,2014, as amended.	**CSIR:** Refer to Chapter 4 of this Final EIA Report, for background on the Public Participation Process, including feedback on compliance with the regulations relating to Public Participation.
	28/03/2023 Letter (received via email on 28/03/2023; dated 27/03/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Ms Olivia Letlalo; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	**c) <u>Alternatives</u>** • The final SR indicates that both technologies, i.e., Lithium-Ion BESS or Redox Flow BESS are being considered and that "it will be motivated in the EIA Phase that both options be considered for approval in the EA". Please note the EAP is required to present a preferred technology in terms of BESS. The CA does not grant authorisation for both technologies i.e., one technology for BESS must be chosen in the final EIAR. You are required to further provide clear motivation and reasons as to why the preferred alternative proves to be the preferred compared to other alternatives. This applies to all other alternatives assessed.	**CSIR**: This comment was adequately addressed in detail in the Draft EIA Report. Both Solid State Lithium Ion Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Redox Flow BESS have been considered in the Scoping and EIA Process and deemed acceptable by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) and specialists. However, the DFFE requested that preferred technology be selected. Therefore, Solid State Lithium Ion BESS was selected as the preferred technology for authorisation. However, should the need to change the technology arise in future, it is understood that an EA amendment process can be followed as both technologies have been assessed as part of the EIA Phase. Each relevant specialist study included in Chapters 6 to 17 of the Draft EIA Report included an assessment on both BESS technologies, and provided an overall statement of the findings. Chapter 20 of the Draft EIA Report included detailed feedback on the assessment and findings of the assessment of the BESS, as well as a motivation for the confirmed the preferred technology, i.e. Solid State Lithium Ion BESS. This information has been retained in the Final EIA Report.
		• You are advised to provide details of the all the alternatives considered for this development and indicate the preferred alternatives as per Appendix 2 (2) (1) (g) (i) (v) (vi) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended in the final report.	**CSIR**: In terms of the content of a *Scoping Report*, the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) state that a full description of the process followed to reach the proposed preferred activity, site and location of the development footprint within the site, including (i) details of all the alternatives considered must be provided. Chapter 5 of the FSR included the details regarding all the alternatives, including the process

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			followed to reach the preferred activity, site and location of the development footprint within the site. In the FSR, it was noted that technology alternatives (i.e. BESS) and the no-go alternatives were to be assessed further in the EIA Phase. Refer to Chapter 5 of this Final EIA Report for additional information on the alternatives considered in the EIA Phase as per the requirements of Appendix 3 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). Chapter 20 of this Final EIA Report also includes a concluding statement summary of the alternatives considered, as well as a summary of the findings of the BESS and no-go alternatives that were considered by the specialists.
	28/03/2023 Letter (received via email on 28/03/2023; dated 27/03/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Ms Olivia Letlalo; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	**d) <u>Layout & Sensitivity Maps</u>** • Please provide a layout map which indicates the following: ▪ The PV development area. ▪ Position of all infrastructure e.g., panels, BESS, on-site substations, grid connection etc. ▪ Permanent laydown area footprint. ▪ All supporting onsite infrastructure e.g., roads (existing and proposed). ▪ Substation(s) and/or transformer(s) sites including their entire footprint. ▪ All existing infrastructure on the site. ▪ The location of sensitive environmental features on site e.g., CBAs, heritage sites, wetlands, drainage lines etc. that will be affected. ▪ Buffer areas; and ▪ All “no-go” areas.	**CSIR**: Chapter 20, as well as the specialist assessments (where relevant), Appendix C and the EMPrs (Appendix I and J) of the Draft and Final EIA Reports include a project layout map showing the detailed infrastructure, buildable area and development footprints. All efforts have been made by ABO Wind to provide as much detail as possible for the layout maps during the EIA Phase i.e. buildable area, development footprint, PV modules, inverters, on-site substation complex, IPP Substation or Facility Substation, BESS, Operations and Maintenance Building, laydown area, fence line, access roads, and internal roads. Other layout features will be identified during the detailed design/engineering phase. Refer to Chapters 6 to 20 of the EIA Report which includes relevant feature and sensitivity maps, as well as combined layout and sensitivity maps, which include the locations of all identified sensitive environmental features on-site as well as buffers and “no-go” areas.
		• The above map must be overlain with a sensitivity map and a cumulative map which shows neighbouring renewable energy developments and existing grid infrastructure. All available biodiversity information must be used in the finalisation of the map and infrastructure must not encroach on highly sensitive areas as far as possible.	**CSIR:** Chapter 20 of the EIA Report includes the following maps: ▪ Combined environmental feature map for the proposed project study area based on specialist inputs; ▪ Combined environmental sensitivity map for the proposed project study area based on specialist inputs; ▪ Project Layout Map showing the detailed infrastructure, buildable area and development footprints; ▪ Combined Project Layout and Sensitivity Map; and ▪ Combined Environmental Sensitivity and Cumulative Impact Map.

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			Therefore, a combined layout and sensitivity map has been provided in the EIA Report. Maps are also included in Appendix C of the EIA Report. Please note that the fine scale sensitivities mapped by the specialists within the study area, and the fine scale project layout cannot be easily seen when combined with a 30 km radius cumulative map. Scale needs to be considered in terms of the 30 km radius cumulative map. Nevertheless, a combined sensitivity and cumulative impact map was also provided in the EIA Report. Relevant available biodiversity information has been used by the specialists and the CSIR and thus in the mapping. None of the proposed development footprints / Buildable Areas intersect with any of the no-go or very high sensitivity areas identified by the specialists. All the relevant specialists have confirmed, as documented in their Specialist Assessments or Inputs (Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report) that the development footprints / Buildable Areas are acceptable.
		• Ensure that similar colours are not used to differentiate between infrastructure. i.e., items must be easily distinguishable in the Legend.	**CSIR:** The feature, sensitivity and layout maps compiled by the CSIR in Chapters 20 and Appendix C of this Final EIA Report have taken this into consideration.
		• Google maps will not be accepted for decision-making purposes.	**CSIR:** Maps compiled by the CSIR in the Draft EIA Report and Final EIA Report are not produced using Google Maps. Maps are included throughout the EIA Report, and in Appendix C.
	28/03/2023 Letter (received via email on 28/03/2023; dated 27/03/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director:	**e) <u>Specialist assessments</u>** • The following Specialist Assessments will form part of the EIAr: ▪ Agriculture and Soils Compliance Statement. ▪ Terrestrial Biodiversity, Terrestrial Plant Species, and Terrestrial Animal Species Assessment. ▪ Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment. ▪ Avifauna Impact Assessment. ▪ Visual Impact Assessment. ▪ Heritage Impact Assessment (Archaeology and Cultural Landscape). ▪ Socio-Economic Impact Assessment. ▪ Traffic Impact Assessment.	**CSIR**: These specialist assessments and technical studies were undertaken during the Scoping and EIA Process; and are included in Chapters 6 to 17 of this EIA Report.

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	Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Ms Olivia Letlalo; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	▪ Battery Storage High Level Safety, Health and Environment Risk Assessment. ▪ Geohydrology Assessment; and ▪ Geotechnical Assessment.	
		• The EAP must ensure that the terms of reference for all the identified specialist studies include the following: ▪ A detailed description of the study's methodology; indication of the locations and descriptions of the development footprint, and all other associated infrastructures that they have assessed and are recommending for authorisations. You are advised to provide a table listing all the specialist studies undertaken with the recommendation for the proposed development. ▪ Provide a detailed description of all limitations to the studies. All specialist studies must be conducted in the right season and providing that as a limitation will not be allowed. ▪ Please note that the Department considers a 'no-go' area, as an area where no development of any infrastructure is allowed; therefore, no development of associated infrastructure including access roads is allowed in the 'no-go' areas. ▪ Should the specialist definition of 'no-go' area differ from the Departments definition; this must be clearly indicated. The specialist must also indicate the 'no-go' area's buffer. ▪ All specialist studies must be final, and provide detailed/practical mitigation measures for the preferred alternatives and recommendations, and must not recommend further studies to be completed post EA. ▪ Should a specialist recommend specific mitigation measures, these must be clearly indicated. ▪ Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations, the EAP must clearly indicate the most reasonable recommendation and substantiate this with defendable reasons; and were necessary, include further expertise advice. ▪ It is brought to your attention that Procedures for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting on identified Environmental Themes in terms of Sections 24(5)(a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental	**CSIR:** These comments have been duly noted and addressed below. ▪ The specialist assessments and technical studies undertaken during the Scoping and EIA Process are included in Chapters 6 to 17 of this EIA Report. These studies include a detailed description of the methodology adopted; an indication of the location and description of the study area, buildable area and development footprint, and all associated infrastructure that has been assessed as part of the project description. A table was included in Chapter 20 of the Draft EIA Report that lists all the specialist studies undertaken, as well as the reasoned opinions as to whether the proposed project should go ahead or not. Chapter 20 also includes a table showing the key impacts and associated mitigation measures for each specialist and technical study undertaken. This has been retained in the Final EIA Report. ▪ The specialist assessments (Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report) include Site Sensitivity Verifications, where relevant and required, as per the requirements of the Assessment Protocols published in March 2020 (GN 320) and October 2020 (GN 1150). They also include a detailed description of the limitations of their studies, as well as feedback on the season that the field work and Site Sensitivity Verifications were undertaken. The relevant specialists have complied with the protocols in terms of the undertaking of the field surveys in the correct season. Details on the suitability of the season for fieldwork has also been provided, where relevant. ▪ The DFFE's consideration of a no-go area is noted, however in some cases the specialists have noted that certain associated infrastructure may be allowed in no-go areas. Such has been explained in the relevant specialist studies and highlighted in Chapter 20 of the EIA Report. Additional responses are provided below. However, all 'no-go' areas have been avoided by the main infrastructure proposed.

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		Management Act, 1998, when applying for Environmental Authorisation, which were promulgated in Government Notice No. 320 of 20 March 2020 (i.e., "the Protocols"), and in Government Notice No.1150 of 30 October 2020, have come into effect. Please note that specialist assessments (for all environmental themes identified by screening tool) must be conducted in accordance with these protocols unless proof is provided to demonstrate that the specialist assessments were commissioned prior to 50 days after the promulgation of GN 320 and after promulgation of GN1150 (30 October 2020). ▪ It is the responsibility of the EAP to confirm the list of specialist assessments and to motivate in the assessment report, the reason for not including any of the identified specialist studies including the provision of photographic evidence of the site situation. The site sensitivity verification for each of the recommended studies, as per the protocols, must be compiled and attached. ▪ Additionally, the protocols specify that an assessment must be prepared by a specialist who is an expert in the field and is SACNASP registered for e.g.an aquatic assessment must be prepared by a specialist registered with SACNASP, with expertise in the field of aquatics sciences. ▪ Please include a table that shows the proposed studies and the relevant specialists carrying out the study. In addition, a summary should be included of the specialist's recommendations in terms of the alternatives that are preferred based on the findings of their study. ▪ All specialist studies must be final, and provide detailed/practical mitigation measures for the preferred alternative and recommendations, and must not recommend further studies to be completed post EA.	▪ Overall sensitivity maps are included in Chapter 20, Appendix C and the EMPrs (Appendix I and Appendix J) of this EIA Report. It must be noted that specialist's interpretation of a "no-go" and buffer area differ depending on the nature of each specialist's assessment criteria and sensitivity ratings i.e., "no-go" areas and buffers differ for different components of the proposed development. For example, the Aquatic specialist notes that for road crossings, the sensitivities are not regarded as no-go; and on the other hand, the Terrestrial Biodiversity specialist notes that linear infrastructure such as roads and overhead powerlines should not cross the Koppies, and pylons should not be constructed in this habitat. ▪ All specialist assessments are final and include detailed and practical mitigation measures for the preferred alternative and recommendations and are included in Chapters 6 to 17 of this EIA Report. The recommended mitigation measures have also been added to the EMPrs in Appendix I and Appendix J of this EIA Report. The specialist assessments do not recommend further studies (that would influence the findings of the EIA) to be undertaken post EA (should EA be granted). However further monitoring programmes (such as pre-construction floral and heritage walk throughs) have been recommended for the construction, operational and decommissioning phases, where relevant. ▪ Where the specialists have recommended specific mitigation measures, these have been clearly indicated. ▪ None of the appointed specialists specified any contradicting recommendations in their assessments during the EIA Phase. ▪ The specialist studies undertaken during the EIA Phase, where relevant, have complied with Appendix 6 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) and/or the Assessment Protocols published in March 2020 (GN 320) and October 2020 (GN 1150). Specifically, Agriculture, Terrestrial Biodiversity, and Aquatic Biodiversity comply with GN 320. The Visual; Heritage (Archaeology and Cultural Heritage); Palaeontology; Socio-Economic; Traffic; Geohydrology; and Geotechnical Assessments comply with Appendix 6 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended), and where relevant, Part A of GN 320 which

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			contains site sensitivity verification requirements where a Specialist Assessment is required but no specific assessment protocol has been prescribed. However, in some instances there are no themes on the Screening Tool that relate to some of these studies and as such sensitivities cannot be verified against the Screening Tool. The Terrestrial Biodiversity and Species, and Avifauna specialist assessments comply with the Assessment Protocols published in GN R1150 on 30 October 2020. The Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) High Level Safety, Health and Environment Risk Assessment serves as a technical report, and the aforementioned legislation is thus not applicable. The specialist studies conducted during the EIA Phase therefore comply with the relevant legislation. ▪ Chapter 4 of the Draft EIA Report included a table listing the specialist studies required by the Screening Tool, whether the study has been undertaken in the Scoping and EIA Process, the type of assessment undertaken, as well as feedback or motivation as to why a certain study has not been commissioned, and a reference to where the study can be found in the EIA Reports. This has been retained in the Final EIA Report. As indicated in Chapter 4 of the Final EIA Report, all studies recommended by the Screening Tool have been undertaken in the EIA Phase, except for the Radio Frequency Interference (RFI) Study. A clear motivation is included in the aforementioned table, as well as Section 4.4.2 of the chapter. To ensure all relevant project related environmental impacts are addressed, four additional studies that were not listed or required by the Screening Tool were commissioned and detailed during the EIA Phase. These include an Avifauna Assessment, Traffic Impact Assessment, Geohydrology Assessment and BESS High-Level Safety, Health and Environment Risk Assessment. In addition, the Site Verification Reports were included in the Draft EIA Report (and retained in the Final EIA Report) as required by the relevant Assessment Protocols and environmental themes. Refer to the various appendices of the specialist assessments included in Chapters 6 to 17, where relevant. ▪ Cognizance has been taken of the specific professional registration (SACNASP) requirements of specialists undertaking work in terms of the Assessment Protocols, and this has been complied with, as indicated in the

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			Specialist Declaration of Interest in each specialist study. Registration has also been verified on the SACNASP database website. ▪ A table that shows the specialist assessments and technical studies that were commissioned during the Scoping and EIA Process, as well as the relevant specialists carrying out the study was included in the Draft EIA Report, for example in Chapter 1 and in the EMPr. A summary was included in Chapter 20 of the Draft EIA Report (and retained in the Final EIA Report) that details the specialist recommendations in terms of the preferred alternatives, specifically in terms of the no-go assessment and the assessment of the BESS technologies. ▪ Refer to the response provided above regarding the final nature of the specialist studies.
	28/03/2023 Letter (received via email on 28/03/2023; dated 27/03/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Ms Olivia Letlalo; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	**f) <u>Cumulative Impact Assessment</u>** • If there are other similar projects or renewable projects within a 30km radius of the proposed development site, therefore, the cumulative impact assessment for all identified and assessed impacts must be refined to indicate the following: ▪ Assess the cumulative impacts of the proposed (not yet authorised), authorised (not yet constructed) and existing solar energy facilities. ▪ Detailed process flow and proof must be provided, to indicate how the specialist's recommendations, mitigation measures and conclusions from the various similar developments in the area were taken into consideration in the assessment of cumulative impacts and when the conclusion and mitigation measures were drafted for this project. ▪ The cumulative impacts significance rating must also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development. ▪ A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed.	**CSIR**: This comment was addressed and considered when compiling the Draft EIA Report and Final EIA Report. Refer to the specific responses below: ▪ The cumulative impact assessment undertaken in the EIA Phase included the impact of the Kudu Solar Facilities and other renewable energy projects (i.e. Wind and Solar PV) and EGI projects within a 30 km radius of the proposed projects that are in different stages of planning and/or development. At the time of submission of the FSR to the DFFE for consideration, the various renewable energy projects that were to be considered in the cumulative impact assessment had either received an EA, the Environmental Assessment was in progress, or the project had been constructed. Under some instances, usually only authorised projects are considered in the cumulative assessment. However, for this project various project statuses were considered based on the comments received during the pre-application meeting with the DFFE. In addition, other existing and planned Eskom power lines have also been taken into consideration. The information has been sourced from the National DFFE Renewable Energy EIA Application (REEA) database; as well as from the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS) and the Eskom Generation Connection Capacity Assessment (GCCA) (2022). Refer to Section 4.9.2 of the Chapter 4 of the Final EIA Report for additional information on the cumulative impact assessment approach. The specialist studies have

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			assessed cumulative impacts in detail, as described in Chapters 6 to 17 of the Final EIA Report. ▪ Section 4.9.2 of Chapter 4 of the EIA Report includes a summary of the general process flow followed in the cumulative impact assessment. As a first step, a list of Renewable Energy and EGI projects within a 30 km radius was identified based on research, SAHRIS, REEA and the Eskom 2022 GCCA. The cumulative impacts were then clearly defined, and where possible the size of the identified impact was quantified and indicated. In most cases the actual development footprint of the nearby Renewable Energy developments could not be easily quantified or accessed spatially. For example, the REEA database contains land parcels, and not the footprints. Hence the land parcels were considered, which took into account the worst case. This typically allowed the determination of the following aspects (or similar aspects) in the relevant specialist assessments: o The total affected land parcel area taken up by the other renewable energy projects and EGI within the 30 km radius. o The total affected land parcel area of the 12 Kudu Solar Facilities. o Combined land parcel area affected by the renewable energy developments within the 30 km radius. o The total area within the 30 km radius around the proposed projects of similar habitat. o The total combined size of the land parcels affected by renewable energy and EGI projects as a percentage of the available habitat in the 30 km radius. Therefore, the assessment of cumulative impacts was based on the specialist and EAP's knowledge of similar approved Renewable Energy and EGI projects in the 30 km radius. The specialists assessed such impacts based on their expertise and knowledge of similar projects and management actions. However, there are important points that need to be considered in terms of the cumulative impact assessment, as described in Chapter 4.

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			▪ The cumulative impact significance ratings have also informed the need and desirability of the proposed project, as described in Chapter 1 of this Final EIA Report. ▪ Each specialist assessment has taken into consideration and has assessed the potential cumulative impacts of this proposed project. Refer to Chapters 6 to 17 of this EIA Report where the potential cumulative impacts are discussed for this project. Note that no residual cumulative impacts of very high significance were rated by the specialists, and no fatal flaws are present. Chapter 20 of this EIA Report includes a detailed cumulative environmental impact statement, as well as an overall EAP recommendation and conditions for inclusion in the EA (should it be granted).
	28/03/2023 Letter (received via email on 28/03/2023; dated 27/03/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Ms Olivia Letlalo; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	**g) <u>Environmental Management Programme (EMPr)</u>** • Considering that the on-site substation forms part of the infrastructure for the proposed development, you are advised to submit with the final report the generic EMPr that complies with the GN 435 of March 2022. • Furthermore, the EMPr that complies with Appendix 4 of the EIA Regulations, as amended, for the facility must be submitted with the final report.	**CSIR**: An EMPr for the proposed Kudu Solar Facility and associated infrastructure, in compliance with Appendix 4 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) was compiled and included as Appendix I of the Draft EIA Report, and retained as such in the Final EIA Report. In addition, a Generic EMPr for the on-site substation complex (specifically the IPP substation), in compliance with the Generic EMPr for the development and expansion of substation infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity (GN 435 published in March 2019), was compiled and included as Appendix J of the Draft EIA Report, and retained as such in the Final EIA Report.
	28/03/2023 Letter (received via email on 28/03/2023; dated 27/03/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief	**h) <u>General</u>** • The EIAr must provide the technical details for the proposed facility in a table format as well as their description and/or dimensions. A sample for the minimum information required is listed under Annexure 2 below.	**CSIR**: Chapter 2 and the Executive Summary of the Draft EIA Report included the technical details of the proposed project in a table format as prescribed by the DFFE, as well as a description and/or dimensions. This information has been retained in the Final EIA Report. The reminder regarding failure to meet any timeframes stipulated in Regulation 45 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) is noted.

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
	Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Ms Olivia Letlalo; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	The applicant is hereby reminded to comply with the requirements of Regulation 45 of GN R982 of 04 December 2014, as amendment, regarding the time allowed for complying with the requirements of the Regulations. You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an environmental authorisation being granted by the Department.	The Applicant is aware of Section 24F of the NEMA.

2. Comments received from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	08/05/2023 Email Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development and (DALRRD) (Annette Geertsema)	Your e-mail dated 2023-05-03 refers. Can you please inform as to whether you have received a reference number for these applications yet? It not, please send the property descriptions to enable the Department to consider.	**CSIR**: This comment is noted and the CSIR sent an email response to the follow up email sent by this stakeholder. Refer to the response below.
2.	24/05/2023 Email DALRRD (Annette Geertsema)	Can you please inform as to whether you have responded to this e-mail?	**CSIR**: This comment is noted, and an email response was sent to this stakeholder. The CSIR had confirmed that a DALRRD reference number for the proposed projects was not issued yet. The CSIR had also provided the property descriptions as requested.
3.	25/05/2023 Email DALRRD (Annette Geertsema)	It seems that we don't have the applications. Can you please send the title deeds, lay-out maps indicating the footprints of the proposed development and motivation to enable the Department to consider the applications.	**CSIR**: The CSIR sent a response to this stakeholder explaining that the title deeds will be sourced and provided to the DALRRD, along with the requested documents. The DALRRD was informed that the Draft EIA Reports were planned for release by 2 June 2023, and as a stakeholder on the database, the DALRRD will receive all communication regarding the proposed projects; and that the Draft EIA Reports will also include layout maps and motivations.

3. Comments received from the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	04/05/2023 Email South African Civil Aviation Authority (Lizell Stroh)	Could you kindly find the SACAA procedure if not already followed for your information. SACAA – South African Civil Aviation Authority Obstacles – SACAA **Obstacle Notice 1/2022 – Appointment of New Windfarm and Solar Obstacle Application Service Provider** Kindly be advised, Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS) has been appointed as the Obstacle application Service Provider for Windfarms on 1 May 2021. They will be also responsible for Solar Obstacle Applications from the 1'st of February 2022. All new Solar applications must be lodged to obstacles@atns.co.za or contact Graham Mondzinger (Obstacle Evaluator) at 062 002 1621. Their responsibility would pertain to the assessments, maintenance, and all other related matters in respect to Windfarms and Solar assessments.	**CSIR**: This comment is noted. The email address provided (obstacles@atns.co.za) was included on the pre-identified I&AP project database at the outset of the Scoping and EIA Process and has been retained on the database for receipt of future project related correspondence. In addition, the email with notification of the release of the DSR for comment, the submission of the FSR to the DFFE for consideration, the acceptance of the FSR, the release of the Draft EIA Report for comment, and various reminder emails were sent to various representatives from the ATNS as well. Refer to Appendix E of the EIA Report for a copy of the I&AP database. Correspondence and proof of correspondence that was sent to stakeholders for the DSR release are included in Appendix F.8 of this Final EIA Report; and such correspondence sent for the Draft EIA Report release is included in Appendix H.4 of this Final EIA Report. Also refer to Chapter 4 and Appendix H.4 of this Final EIA Report for additional information on follow ups and communication undertaken with the key stakeholders. Note that the Applicant has submitted an application with the Obstacle Evaluator in 2023 (outside of this EIA Process).

4. Comments received from Telkom

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	08/05/2023 Email Mvelaphande Trading, Telkom	Hereby do we acknowledge your proposed project. For future reference please quote CPLT0272-23.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted with thanks.

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
	(Chris Schutte)		
2.	19/05/2023 Email and Cover Letter Mvelaphande Trading, Telkom (Chris Schutte)	**Kudu Solar Facility 2 (Telkom Reference Number: CPLT0272-23)** **Email and Cover Letter**[1] With reference to your above- mentioned application, I hereby confirm that the proposed work installation is approved in terms of Section 29 of the Electronic Communications Act No. 36 of 2005 as amended. No infrastructure of our Client (Openserve) will be affected by this proposal. We did our utmost to ensure that we indicate our route as accurate as possible and should you discover any of our cables that is not on the sketch please stop and contact us immediately to arrange a site meeting. In the event that our cables are exposed and damaged/stolen by a third party the damages will be repaired at the customer's account. Please make use of pilot holes in order not to damage our infrastructure. Therefore any damages occurred during construction of work will be repaired at the customer's account. Although we are not affected by this proposal, Mr Vivian Groenewald must be contacted at telephone number [redacted] from our Network Field Services. Two (2) weeks prior to commencement of proposed work. Approval of the proposed route is valid for six months. If construction has not yet commenced within this period, then the file must be resubmitted for approval. Any changes / deviations from the original planning during or prior to construction must immediately be communicated to this office. On completion of this project, please certify that all requirements as stipulated in this letter have been met. Please note that should any of our Client (Openserve) infrastructure has to be relocated or altered as a result of your activities the cost for	**CSIR:** This approval in terms of Section 29 of the Electronic Communications Act (Act 36 of 2005, as amended) is noted with thanks. Mr Vivian Groenewald will be contacted by the relevant parties prior to the commencement of the proposed project, should Environmental Authorisation be granted.

[1] The first four paragraphs of the letter were also copied into the covering email. To avoid duplication, it has not been repeated here. Refer to Appendix H.1 for a copy of the email and letter in this regard.

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		such alteration or relocation will be for your account in terms of section 25 of the Electronic Communication Act. Mr Vivian Groenewald must be contacted at telephone number [redacted]. Two (2) weeks prior to commencement of proposed work. It's important that all services are shown on site before construction starts. Approval of the proposed route is valid for six months. If construction has not yet commenced within this period, then the file must be resubmitted for approval. Any changes / deviations from the original planning during or prior to construction must immediately be communicated to this office. Please notify this office and forward an as built plan, within 30 days of completion of construction. Mr Vivian Groenewald must be contacted at telephone number [redacted]. Two (2) weeks prior to commencement of proposed work. It's important that all services are shown on site before construction starts.	

5. Comments received from General Stakeholders and I&APS

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	08/03/2023 Email Africoast ([redacted])	I, [redacted], am writing this mail to register as an I&AP for the projects of: KUDU SOLAR FACILITIES, ELECTRICITY GRID INFASTRUCTURE AND VARIOUS ASSOCIATED INFASTRUCTURE, NEAR DE AAR, NORTHERN CAPE as well as the proposed MTS site of ABO. Please let me know if you require any further information from me in this regard and kindly acknowledge receipt of email.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted. This I&AP was subsequently added to the I&AP database. Refer to Appendix E of this EIA Report for a copy of this database.
2.	15/03/2023 Email	Thanks for the prompt response and the KML files. It is appreciated.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted. This I&AP was subsequently added to the I&AP database. Refer to Appendix E of this EIA Report for a copy of this database.

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	Solagroup ([redacted])	Can the CSIR add us an I&AP on all RE projects across the country? We are continuously developing sites across various Provinces so it would be great to have sight of other projects that we can include in our own stakeholder databases for our projects, as well as take into consideration from a technical perspective. I look forward to hearing from you.	

PART B: COMMENTS AND RESPONSES TRAIL FOR COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE 30 DAY REVIEW OF THE DRAFT EIA REPORT

The tables below include the comments and/or issues raised by stakeholders and I&APs following the submission of the release of the Draft EIA Reports for a 30-day comment period, extending from 02 June 2023 to 03 July 2023 (excluding public holidays), together with the responses from the project team. The original comments received (emails and letters) are included in Appendix H.6 of this EIA Report. **Please note that the comments are verbatim as provided by the stakeholders and I&APs.**

The comments included in this appendix only apply to the Kudu Solar Facility 2 project (hereafter referred to as the proposed project in the responses provided), however in some cases, comments relating to the other PV Facilities have been included for context or background purposes (where necessary). Comments and responses for the remaining Kudu Solar Facilities are included in the respective EIA Reports. The comments received have been grouped per organisation, based on the structure recommended by the DFFE.

1. Comments Received from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)

1.1 The DFFE Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisation

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	06/06/2023 Email Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations: Coordination, Strategic Planning and Support (Lydia Kutu)	**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT AND AMENDED APPLICATION FORM FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) FACILITY (KUDU SOLAR FACILITY 2) AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR DE AAR, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE.** The Department confirms having received the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Amended Application Form for the abovementioned project on 02 June 2023. You have submitted these documents to comply with the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended.	**CSIR**: The acknowledgement of receipt of the Amended EA Application Form and Draft EIA Report is noted. The subsequent comments are noted, as responded to below. ▪ The Draft EIA Report and Amended Application for EA were submitted to the DFFE on 2 June 2023. Refer to Appendix H.5 of this Final EIA Report, which includes correspondence related to the proof of submission of the Draft EIA Report and Amended Application Form to the DFFE. ▪ The potential and registered I&APs were provided with an opportunity to comment on the Draft EIA Report for a period of 30 days, i.e., from 02 June 2023 to 03 July 2023. The proof of correspondence, such as emails, text messages, letters, and newspapers, as well as the relevant follow-up emails sent in order to remind stakeholders of the comment period closure, in order

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		Please take note of Regulation 40(3) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states that "*Potential or registered interested and affected parties, including the competent authority, may be provided with an opportunity to comment on reports and plans contemplated in subregulation (1) prior to submission of an application but must be provided with an opportunity to comment on such reports once an application has been submitted to the competent authority*." Further note that in terms of Regulation 45 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, this application will lapse if the applicant fails to meet any of the time-frames prescribed in terms of these Regulations, unless an extension has been granted in terms of Regulation 3(7) of these Regulations. You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.	to seek comments is included in Appendix H.4 of this Final EIA Report. This complies with Regulation 40(3) of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). ▪ The reminder regarding failure to meet any timeframes stipulated in Regulation 45 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) is noted. ▪ The Applicant is aware of Section 24F of the NEMA.
2.	29/06/2023 Email Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ephron Maradwa)	Please find herein the attached letter for the above mentioned. **Please do not respond to this mailbox with any queries related to the decision been issued. All queries on the attached decision must be directed to official whose contact details is listed as enquiries.** I hope you find all in order.	**CSIR**: The comments raised by the DFFE Integrated EA Directorate on the Draft EIA Report are noted with thanks, and responded to in detail below.
3.	29/06/2023 Letter (received via email on 29/06/2023; dated 29/06/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations	**COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED 50 MEGAWATTS (MW) KUDU SOLAR 2 FACILITY ON THE REMAINING EXTENT OF THE FARM BAS BERG NO. 88 AND THE REMAINING EXTENT OF PORTION 3 OF THE FARM BAS BERG NO. 88, WITHIN RENOSTERBERG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, PIXLEY KA SEME DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY IN THE NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE**	**CSIR**: The Draft EIA Report and Amended Application for EA were submitted to the DFFE on 2 June 2023. Refer to Appendix H.5 of this Final EIA Report, which includes correspondence related to the proof of submission of the Draft EIA Report and Amended Application Form to the DFFE. The comments raised by the DFFE Integrated EA Directorate on the Draft EIA Report are noted with thanks, and responded to in detail below.

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
	(Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Mr Mahlatse Shubane; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	The application for Environmental Authorisation (EA) and draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAr) received by the Competent Authority (CA) on 02 June 2023, refer. <u>This letter serves to inform you that the following information must be included in the final EIAr:</u>	
	29/06/2023 Letter (received via email on 29/06/2023; dated 29/06/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Mr Mahlatse Shubane; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	**a) <u>Listed Activities</u>** • It has been noted that activity 15 of Listing Notice (LN) 2 has been applied for because 34ha of indigenous vegetation will be cleared. You are requested to indicate in the description of the project, the type of indigenous vegetation that would be cleared for the proposed development.	**CSIR**: Note that this was already addressed in the Terrestrial Biodiversity Specialist Assessment in the Scoping Phase and EIA Phase. Refer to Chapter 7 of the EIA Report for the type of indigenous vegetation that would be cleared. Specifically, according to Mucina & Rutherford (2006, as amended), the proposed projects fall within the following vegetation types: ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 1, Kudu Solar Facility 2, Kudu Solar Facility 7, Kudu Solar Facility 8, Kudu Solar Facility 9, Kudu Solar Facility 10, Kudu Solar Facility 11, and Kudu Solar Facility 12 are located in the Northern Upper Karoo vegetation type. ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 3 and Kudu Solar Facility 5 are located in the Eastern Upper Karoo and Northern Upper Karoo vegetation types. ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 4 is located in the Eastern Upper Karoo vegetation type. ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 6 is located in the Northern Upper Karoo and Besemkaree Koppies Shrubland vegetation types. The description of the portion of the proposed project to which the applicable listed activity relates has been updated to make reference to the type of indigenous vegetation that would be cleared for the proposed project. An updated amended Application for EA has been submitted to the DFFE with the Final EIA Report in this regard.
		• It has been noted that in the description of the project for triggered listed activities under LN 3, it has been indicated that the activities are triggered because the "Northern Cape DAEARDLR confirmed that the Critical Biodiversity Area identified in a systematic biodiversity plan has been adopted by the CA. Therefore, you are requested to include the confirmation letter in the final EIAr and reference it in the description of the project.	**CSIR and Terrestrial Biodiversity Specialist**: Activity 4 (g) (ii) (ee) of Listing Notice 3 has been included in the project. It states the following with regards to Critical Biodiversity Areas: (ee) Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans.

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			Activity 14 (ii) (a) and (c); (g), (ii) (ff) of Listing Notice 3 has been included in the project. It states the following with regards to Critical Biodiversity Areas: (ff) Critical biodiversity areas or ecosystem service areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans. Activity 23 (ii) (a) (g) (ii) (ee) of Listing Notice 3 has been included in the project. It states the following with regards to Critical Biodiversity Areas: (ee) Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans. The Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform (DAEARDLR) already confirmed in writing, i.e. via email, during the Scoping Phase, that the Northern Cape Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA) Map has been accepted by the Department as an environmental tool. Furthermore, DAEARDLR has confirmed that the province currently does not have any bioregional plans. Refer to Appendix F.10 of this Final EIA Report for a copy of this correspondence. This means that the CBAs as identified in bioregional plans do not apply to the above listed activities. However, Listing Notice 3 defines a “systematic biodiversity plan” as a “plan that identifies important areas for biodiversity conservation, taking into account biodiversity patterns (i.e. the principle of representation) and the ecological and evolutionary processes that sustain them (i.e. the principle of persistence). A systematic biodiversity plan must set quantitative targets/thresholds for aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity features in order to conserve a representative sample of biodiversity pattern and ecological processes”. Therefore, it is understood that the Northern Cape CBA Map, a systematic biodiversity plan developed through systematic conservation planning approach, and accepted by the DAEARDLR as an environmental tool, fulfils this definition. A follow up email was sent to the DAEARDLR in this regard during the 30-day review of the DSR (i.e. during the Scoping Phase). The DAEARDLR further confirmed via email that the Northern Cape CBA map was signed off by the Head of Department as an "instrument for informing decisions and priorities on biodiversity". Refer to Appendix F.10 of this Final EIA Report for a copy of this correspondence. Furthermore, based on the above definition of a systematic biodiversity plan, the CBA map meets both the criteria as important biodiversity areas were identified and targets for both terrestrial and freshwater systems were

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			determined (Holness & Oosthuysen, 2016). Thus, the relevant triggers regarding CBAs based on systematic biodiversity plans still apply. However, the entire study area (i.e., preferred site), which contains the Buildable Areas and development footprints, fall within an Ecological Support Area (ESA) according to the Northern Cape CBA Map (2016). Based on the comment from the DFFE, this was discussed with the Northern Cape DAEARDLR and they have confirmed that ESAs are not listed under Listing Notice 3 for the Northern Cape (unlike other provinces such as Gauteng), and ESAs have been separately mapped in the 2016 Northern Cape CBA map (which consist of CBA 1, CBA 2, ESAs and Other Natural Areas). Only Gauteng, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal distinguish between CBA and ESA in Listing Notice 3. According to the gazette guideline regarding the determination of bioregions and the preparation of and publication of bioregional plans (published on 16 March 2009), critical ESA are considered a separate term and a bioregional plan may include it. Accordingly, if not specified in Listing Notice 3 or in the bioregional plan (which is not existing for the Northern Cape), ESAs should technically not be included in the definition of CBA here. Based on the above, as well as the comment from the DFFE (on Kudu Solar Facility 1), the aforementioned listed activities (i.e. Activity 4 (g) (ii) (ee); Activity 14 (ii) (a) and (c); (g), (ii) (ff); and Activity 23 (ii) (a) (g) (ii) (ee) of Listing Notice 3) are no longer applicable to the proposed project as they only relate to CBAs. Therefore, these listed activities have been removed from the Application for EA; and an updated amended Application for EA has been submitted to the DFFE with the Final EIA Report. Refer to Appendix H.6 of this EIA Report for the correspondence from the Northern Cape DAEARDLR in this regard. It would have been preferred to still include such listed activities in the Application for EA from a precautionary perspective, however based on the comments received from the DFFE thus far regarding the need for certainty, these have been removed. However, the impact on the ESA has still been considered in this EIA Process. Refer to Appendix F.10 of this EIA Report for a copy of the email correspondence from the Northern Cape DAEARDLR, which was received at the Scoping Phase regarding the status of the CBAs in the province.

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		• In the letter dated 27 March 2023, the CA requested that information related to the switching station and collector substation must not form part of this application component, as this will be assessed as part of separate processes, however, the details still reflect in this application. You are advised not to include components that does not form part of the proposed development.	**CSIR**: Note that listed activities included and described in the Amended Application for EA that was submitted to the DFFE with the Draft EIA Report; as well as Chapter 4 of the Draft EIA Report, did not include any specific mention of the switching station and collector station. However, Chapter 2 of the Draft EIA Report and the general project description provided in the Amended Application for EA that was submitted to the DFFE with the Draft EIA Report stated the following for background and contextual purposes: ▪ "*Components of the on-site substation complex:* o *On-site Independent Power Producer (IPP) or Facility Substation (~1 ha). As confirmed with the DFFE, the on-site IPP substation* can be included within this current Application for EA. This has been noted in the Listed Activities section of this form. o *Solid State Lithium Ion Battery Energy Storage System. Refer to the details below.* o *Switching Station and Collector Station (~2 ha).* ***This forms part of Projects 13 – 24 and will be assessed as part of separate processes****".* It does state that the switching station and collector station will form part of separate processes. However, as requested by the DFFE, it has been removed from the general description of the project in the Amended Application Form for EA (Section 5 of the EIA Report) and has been kept in Chapter 2 of the Final EIA Report for contextualisation (however more explanatory notes have been included to explain it will be assessed separately).
		• Please ensure that all relevant listed activities are applied for, are specific and can be linked to the development activity or infrastructure as described in the project description. Only activities applicable to the development must be applied for and assessed.	**CSIR**: Section 4.3 of Chapter 4 of the Draft EIA Report was updated, where possible, to ensure that the applicability of the listed activities is more specific and to describe how the listed activities applied for are linked to the project description. In addition, all relevant listed activities triggered by the proposed project have been applied for. Efforts were made in the Draft EIA Report to provide more clarity and certainty on the applicability of the listed activities. This was retained in the Final EIA Report; however, an Amended Application Form has been submitted as certain listed activities are no longer applicable, as discussed above.

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		• If the activities applied for in the application form differ from those mentioned in the final EIAr, an amended application form must be submitted. Please note that the Department's application form template has been amended and can be downloaded from the following linkhttps://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms.	**CSIR**: An Amended EA Application Form has been submitted to the Competent Authority with the Final EIA Report, as certain listed activities are no longer applicable, and to include information on the indigenous vegetation type and to remove reference to the switching station and collector station. The latest available Application Form template was downloaded from the DFFE website provided.
	29/06/2023 Letter (received via email on 29/06/2023; dated 29/06/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Mr Mahlatse Shubane; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	**b) <u>Alternatives</u>** • The CA acknowledged that it has been indicated that Lithium-ion is the preferred BESS technology to form part of the proposed development. You are advised to clearly indicate in the final EIAr, the details of the preferred BESS technology and the risk assessment for review and decision making.	**CSIR**: This comment was adequately addressed in detail in the Draft EIA Report. Both Solid State Lithium Ion Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Redox Flow BESS have been considered in the Scoping and EIA Process and deemed acceptable by the EAP and specialists. However, the DFFE requested that preferred technology be selected. Therefore, Solid State Lithium Ion BESS was selected as the preferred technology for authorisation. However, should the need to change the technology arise in future, it is understood that an EA amendment process can be followed as both technologies have been assessed as part of the EIA Phase. Each relevant specialist study included in Chapters 6 to 17 of the Draft EIA Report included an assessment on both BESS technologies, and provided an overall statement of the findings. Chapter 20 of the Draft EIA Report included detailed feedback on the assessment and findings of the assessment of the BESS, as well as a motivation for the confirmed the preferred technology, i.e. Solid State Lithium Ion BESS. This information has been retained in the Final EIA Report. Also refer to Chapter 2 of the Final EIA Report which includes a detailed description of the Solid State Lithium Ion BESS, as well as Chapter 15 of the Final EIA Report for the High Level Safety, Health and Environment Risk Assessment for the BESS. This information was provided in the Draft EIA Report.
		• You are advised to indicate the preferred alternatives as per the requirements of Appendix 2 (2) (1) (g) (i) (v) (vi) of the NEMA EIA Regulations 2014, as amended in the final report.	**CSIR**: In terms of the content of a *Scoping Report*, the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) state that a full description of the process followed to reach the proposed preferred activity, site and location of the development footprint within the site, including (i) details of all the alternatives considered must be provided. Chapter 5 of the FSR included the details regarding all the alternatives, including the process followed to reach the preferred activity, site and location of the development footprint within the site. In the FSR, it was noted that

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			technology alternatives (i.e. BESS) and the no-go alternatives were to be assessed further in the EIA Phase. Refer to Chapter 5 of this Final EIA Report for additional information on the alternatives considered in the EIA Phase as per the requirements of Appendix 3 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). Chapter 20 of this Final EIA Report also includes a concluding statement summary of the alternatives considered, as well as a summary of the findings of the BESS and no-go alternatives that were considered by the specialists.
	29/06/2023 Letter (received via email on 29/06/2023; dated 29/06/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Mr Mahlatse Shubane; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	**c) <u>Specialist Assessments</u>** • During the review of the draft EIAr, it has been noted that the specialists refer to the study area and not specific site development, therefore, you are requested to ensure the following is considered and be incorporated in the final report: ▪ Considering that the specialists were undertaken for the whole study area (for cluster projects), you are requested to provide a summary in a table format of each specialist, indicating sensitive features to be affected on a specific site development layout plan and the recommendation for the proposed development. ▪ Further to the above, you are requested to provide in the final report a development layout plan that shows the sensitive features in relation to the proposed development.	**CSIR**: The study area or preferred site for all 12 of the Kudu Solar Facilities constitutes the full extent of eight affected farm portions. This approach was followed so that the Project Applicant can have the flexibility to shift any of the individual projects within the large study area if needed post EA (should such be granted), provided that the relevant amendment processes are undertaken and provided that the no-go sensitivities are avoided. This approach was not followed because of the cluster of projects. In addition, the relevant specialist assessments included in the Draft EIA Report clearly included a description of the study area, as well as a project specific description. For example, Refer to Section 4.3 (Project Specific Environmental Description) and Section 4.4.2 (Specialist Sensitivity Analysis and Verification) of the Aquatic Biodiversity Specialist Assessment (Chapter 8 of the Final EIA Report). Therefore, even though the assessment was undertaken for the entire preferred site (study area), project specific information was provided in the specialist assessments in Draft EIA Report. Furthermore, a summary table of all sensitivities identified in the study area and tailored to each specific Kudu Solar Facility was already included in Chapter 20 of the Draft EIA Report (Table 20-1: Key Environmental Features and Sensitivities identified by the Specialists). To make this clearer additional information has been provided in Chapter 20 to supplement this table from a project specific perspective. In addition, Chapter 20 of the Draft EIA Report already included a detailed table showing the opinions and reasoned statements of each specialist study (i.e. Summary of the Reasoned Opinions from the Specialists).

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			In addition, each relevant specialist study already included a combined layout plan and sensitivity map on a project specific basis showing the sensitive features in relation to the proposed project. These maps are listed below: ▪ Chapter 6: Agriculture Compliance Statement: Figure 2. ▪ Chapter 7: Terrestrial Biodiversity: Figure 4-11. ▪ Chapter 8: Aquatic: Figure 10. ▪ Chapter 9: Avifauna: Figure 9.9 and Figure 9.10. ▪ Chapter 10: Visual: Map 9 and Map 10. ▪ Chapter 11: Heritage: Figure 3 and maps in Appendix 3 of this chapter. ▪ Chapter 12: Project specific information presented in the executive summary of this chapter (Tabulated summary of conclusions regarding palaeontological heritage for each of the Kudu Solar PV Facilities). For the remaining studies, sensitivities do not significantly influence the layout, however project specific information and maps were provided in these studies, as relevant. Also note that Chapter 20 of the Draft EIA Report already included a project specific combined project layout and sensitivity map (i.e. Figure 20.4).
		• According to the Terrestrial specialist, "koppies, wetlands and main river courses are considered as high sensitivity and these features need to be excluded from the development". However, the following has been noted in the PPP report and you are requested to provide clarity in the final report: ▪ Even though watercourse habitats are indicated as high from a Site Ecological Importance perspective, it can be considered as medium and low sensitivity as per the feedback provided in the separate Aquatic Biodiversity Scoping Level Assessment. Please clarify how can an area identified as high or very high sensitive by a specialist be considered as medium and low sensitive by another specialist? ▪ The abovementioned sensitivities are not necessarily no-go areas as they have been assigned low and medium sensitivity by the	**CSIR and Terrestrial Biodiversity Specialist**: The Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment (Chapter 7 of the Final EIA Report) states that the Site Ecological Importance (SEI) for watercourse habitats are indicated as High (pre-mitigation), but after mitigation measures have been incorporated all habitats can be considered as medium or moderate sensitivity, taking the following into account: ▪ After avoidance of infrastructure and additional mitigation measures, the Watercourse habitat can be considered as medium sensitivity (refer to the separate Aquatic Assessment in Chapter 8 of the EIA Report). The high SEI for the watercourse can be considered medium sensitivity after the necessary mitigation measures have been taken into consideration, including avoidance where no infrastructure is located within the watercourse. The high SEI

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		Aquatic Specialist and no-go areas are regarded as very high sensitivity. Please explain how sensitive area cannot be considered or regarded a no-go area. ▪ No buffers need to be applied to these features, must be avoided and has been taken into consideration in the project footprint. According to figure 20-4 on page 20-11 of Chapter 20 in the draft EIAr and the layout referred to in the final Scoping Report (figure 7-4 on page 7-51 of the FSR), the development footprint overlaps the high sensitive area. Please ensure the final layout to be submitted in the final report shows the location of sensitive features and its buffers in relation to the proposed development	(before mitigation) indicates that the area needs to be avoided based on ecosystem functioning and need for protection, which has been achieved as no infrastructure (except for roads) intersect the watercourse habitat, where relevant (as explained in the Aquatic Biodiversity Assessment), and additional mitigation measures are proposed. After the avoidance mitigation was achieved, the sensitivity in relation to the proposed development is considered to be medium from a watercourse perspective. It was further indicated that the Terrestrial Biodiversity theme is considered Medium sensitivity. In addition, as per Figure 4-11 of the Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment, no habitats are considered highly sensitive which must be avoided. Note that the area of high sensitivity to the southern end of the development footprint / buildable area is due to a 50 m buffer from a drainage course from a **visual perspective** as per the Visual Impact Assessment (Chapter 10 of this Final EIA Report), however this is not a no-go area, as confirmed by the specialist, and the layout as currently proposed succeeds in avoiding visually sensitive areas. Therefore, this high sensitivity is from a visual perspective, not from a terrestrial or aquatic perspective. Note that all aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity sensitive areas have also been considered in the layout planning; and accepted by the respective specialists. All the relevant specialists have confirmed, as documented in their Specialist Assessments or Inputs (Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report) that the development footprints / Buildable Areas are acceptable. High sensitive areas are not a synonym for no-go areas. In addition, as per the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) (2020) Species Environmental Assessment Guideline[2], high sensitivity is considered as "avoidance mitigation wherever possible. Minimisation mitigation – changes to project infrastructure design to limit the amount of habitat impacted". It is only with

[2] South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). 2020. Species Environmental Assessment Guideline. Guidelines for the implementation of the Terrestrial Fauna and Terrestrial Flora Species Protocols for environmental impact assessments in South Africa. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria. Version 3.1. 2022.

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			Very High sensitivity that no destructive development activities should be considered. The watercourse habitat has been identified as other important biodiversity features owing to ecological functioning / infrastructure and are not species specific or listed as part of an endangered or vulnerable ecosystem. The same sensitivity identified by the aquatic specialist was incorporated for the Terrestrial theme. The methodology used, including sensitivity rating, is not the same between specialist assessments. The aquatic specialist did not undertake the SEI as it is species specific and could be utlised for the terrestrial biodiversity theme as well. Since no published guideline exist for the aquatic biodiversity theme, sensitivities cannot be compared. From a terrestrial biodiversity perspective, the ecosystem services generated from the Watercourse is important and needs to be protected. Even if the sensitivity map is updated to indicate high sensitivity, development is still excluded from these areas as the areas recommended for avoidance by all the specialists have been avoided. Accordingly, avoidance was implemented, and the mitigation measures indicated by both the Terrestrial and Aquatic biodiversity specialists are considered sufficient.
		• In the letter dated 20 January 2023, comments were made regarding the location or habitat area of Hippotragus niger (Sable Antelope), which is Provincially Protected and vulnerable noted on site. The CA submits that the reason that the "species does not occur naturally in the area, and it was introduced to the country, therefore occurs outside its area of historical distribution, is possibly ranched or farmed or free roaming" is hereby acknowledged. However, considering that it was indicated that the species is Provincially Protected and vulnerable, you are requested to provide comments from the relevant Biodiversity section of the Provincial Department responsible for biodiversity issues regarding the species located on site and the mitigation measures proposed. Please ensure Provincial comments or response is attached and referenced in the CRR.	**Terrestrial Biodiversity Specialist**: It must be made clear that the species is not located on site but comes from the adjacent game ranch / breeding facility adjacent to the proposed development property. The species was mentioned as it escaped its enclosure so it was recorded on site and to ensure that the necessary measures are taken to prevent it from accessing the property should the development be approved. As per Parrini et al (2016)[3]: *Additionally, there are three subpopulations on privately protected areas in the Northern Cape Province that are growing, but are kept isolated from predators and receive supplementary feeding on a daily basis (D. MacFadyen and C. Kraft pers. comm. 2015). These subpopulations therefor do not comply with the criteria for inclusion in the assessment (IUCN Standards and Petitions Subcomittee 2014). Overall, total Sable Antelope numbers are increasing due to new entrants in the Sable Antelope game ranching business but these subpopulations do not necessarily add conservation value.*

[3] Parrini F, Koen J, Dalton D, Eksteen J. 2016. A conservation assessment of *Hippotragus niger niger.* In Child MF, Roxburgh L, Do Linh San E, Raimondo D, Davies-Mostert HT, editors. The Red List of Mammals of South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho. South African National Biodiversity Institute and Endangered Wildlife Trust, South Africa.

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			The National status of Vulnerable is based on the species natural distribution range, the largest of which is located in the KNP. Since this species is kept in captivity, the landowner must already have the necessary permits in place. The developer will not undertake anything that requires a permit application for the species at is the responsibility of the adjacent landowner. Accordingly, all legal obligations with regards to the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act (Act 9 of 2009) and National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004) (NEMBA) are not applicable to this application. **CSIR:** Note that the Northern Cape DAEARDLR Environmental Research and Development (ERD) provided comment on the Draft Scoping Report, which included all the details on this species in the Animal Compliance Statement, however it was not raised as a concern or commented on specifically. Refer to Appendix F.10 of this Final EIA Report for a copy of this correspondence.
		• The CA acknowledged that specialist studies are undertaken and form part of the draft EIAR, however, you are advised to address the comments raised in the letter dated 27 March 2023 in the final report.	**CSIR**: Refer to Section 1.1 of Part A of this CRR for a full detailed response as to how the comments regarding specialist studies, and the comments raised by the DFFE in the acceptance of the FSR correspondence have been addressed. Note that these comments were addressed in the Draft EIA Report, and have been retained in the Final EIA Report.
	29/06/2023 Letter (received via email on 29/06/2023; dated 29/06/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated	**d) <u>Cumulative Assessment and EMPr</u>** ▪ Please note that comments dated 27 March 2023 are still valid and must be addressed accordingly in the final report.	**CSIR**: Refer to Section 1.1 of Part A of this CRR for a full detailed response as to how the comments regarding cumulative assessment, EMPr, and the comments raised by the DFFE in the acceptance of the FSR correspondence have been addressed. Note that these comments were addressed in the Draft EIA Report, and have been retained in the Final EIA Report.

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	Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Mr Mahlatse Shubane; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)		
	29/06/2023 Letter (received via email on 29/06/2023; dated 29/06/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Mr Mahlatse Shubane; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	**e) <u>Layout & Sensitivity Maps</u>** ▪ It has been indicated in Appendix F that the "detailed layout plan does not intersect with very high sensitivity (drainage courses), however, intersect with high sensitivity area (50m of drainage courses) and this is not a development constraint". The CA submits that according to figure 20-4 on page 20-11 of Chapter 20 in the draft EIAr and the layout referred to in the final Scoping Report (figure 7-4), the proposed development still overlaps high sensitive areas. Therefore, you are advised to relocate infrastructures from high sensitive areas.	**CSIR**: As explained above, the area of high sensitivity to the southern end of the development footprint / buildable area is due to a 50 m buffer from a drainage course as per the Visual Impact Assessment (Chapter 10 of this Final EIA Report). Table 6 of the Visual Impact Assessment notes the following with regards to visual sensitivity categories: ▪ Very high sensitivity: Areas or features considered of such sensitivity or importance that any adverse effects upon them may be regarded as a fatal flaw. ▪ High sensitivity: <u>Development to be limited and remain within acceptable limits of change determined by the specialist, and comply with restrictions or mitigation measures identified by the specialist</u>. ▪ Medium sensitivity: Areas considered to be developable, but to remain within acceptable limits of change as determined by the specialist, and comply with restrictions or mitigation measures identified by the specialist. ▪ Low sensitivity: Low sensitivity areas that are considered to be developable. However, specialists may still wish to define acceptable limits of change where necessary. **Therefore, the high sensitivity area that is encroached by the proposed project is not a no-go area, as confirmed by the specialist and explained above. High sensitivity is not a synonym for a no-go area.** To corroborate the above, the Visual Impact Assessment also notes the following: ▪ *The layout of the Kudu PV 1 facility has been subject to revisions, based on the various specialist findings, including the mapping of scenic resources and sensitive receptors. The currently proposed layout succeeds in avoiding visually sensitive areas as indicated on the visual sensitivity map (Map 10)*. Furthermore, the Visual Impact Assessment also notes that provided the recommended mitigation measures and EMPr are implemented, the proposed

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			project would not present a potential fatal flaw in visual terms and should be authorised. Therefore, the layout does not need to be amended.
		▪ Please provide a layout map which indicates the following: ▪ The PV development area. ▪ Position of all infrastructure e.g., panels, BESS, on-site substations, grid connection etc. ▪ Permanent laydown area footprint. ▪ All supporting onsite infrastructure e.g., roads (existing and proposed). ▪ Substation(s) and/or transformer(s) sites including their entire footprint. ▪ All existing infrastructure on the site. ▪ The location of sensitive environmental features on site e.g., CBAs, *Hippotragus niger* (Sable Antelope), Eagle nest, heritage sites, visual sites as indicated on page 20-5 of Chapter 20, wetlands, drainage lines, koppies, river courses, etc. that will be affected. ▪ Buffer areas; and ▪ All "no-go" areas.	**CSIR and Terrestrial Biodiversity Specialist**: Chapter 20, as well as the specialist assessments (where relevant), Appendix C and the EMPrs (Appendix I and J) of the Draft and Final EIA Reports include a project layout map showing the detailed infrastructure, buildable area and development footprints. All efforts have been made by ABO Wind to provide as much detail as possible for the layout maps during the EIA Phase i.e. buildable area, development footprint, PV modules, inverters, on-site substation complex, IPP Substation or Facility Substation, BESS, Operations and Maintenance Building, laydown area, fence line, access roads, and internal roads. Other layout features will be identified during the detailed design/engineering phase. Refer to Chapters 6 to 20 of the EIA Report which includes relevant feature and sensitivity maps, as well as combined layout and sensitivity maps, which include the locations of all identified sensitive environmental features on-site as well as buffers and "no-go" areas. In terms of visual sensitivities, as explained in Table 5 of the Visual Impact Assessment, and Table 20.1 of Chapter 20 of the EIA Report, the following features are assigned Very High sensitivity (i.e. no-go) and need to be avoided for the proposed solar PV Facility itself (i.e. not for associated infrastructure such as substations, BESS, internal power lines and access roads; which would have minor buffers): ▪ Scenic Resources: o Topographic features: Feature. o Steep slopes: Slopes > 1:4. o Drainage courses: Feature. o Cultural landscapes within 250 m. ▪ Protected Landscapes / Sensitive Receptors: o Nature reserves / game farms within 500 m. o Farmsteads outside study area within 500 m. o Farmsteads inside study area within 250 m. o Arterial routes within 250 m (not applicable).

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			○ District roads within 50 m. The Draft EIA Report already included a layout map showing the proposed Kudu Solar Facility with relevant sensitive features. Refer specifically to Figure 20.4 (Combined Project Layout and Sensitivity Map). In terms of the visual no-go areas, only the actual feature of the drainage courses is relevant in Figure 20.4 and has been avoided. Also refer to Map 10 of the Visual Impact Assessment (Chapter 10 of the EIA Report) that already included a detailed sensitivity map with all relevant features at a wider scale. It must be noted that not all sensitive features identified in the study area apply to the individual project specific sites. For example, the Verreaux's Eagle nest lies approximately more than 2 km from the Kudu Solar Facility 2 site, therefore it is not shown on zoomed in project specific maps. Therefore, feature and sensitivity maps for the wider study area were already included in the Draft EIA Report (Chapter 20, Figures 20.1. and 20.2), as well as more zoomed in project specific layout and sensitivity maps (Chapter 20, Figures 20.3 and 20.4), and have been retained in the Final EIA Report. The study area maps show all the relevant features that DFFE has noted at a relevant scale. This cannot be shown on the zoomed in project specific maps, as then the layouts will not be visible and not enough detail can be shown. Appropriate scale has been used for the relevant maps. In terms of the Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment, the maps include the layout of the proposed project, and no infrastructure is located within any high sensitivity areas. **Sable antelope is covered, and no mapping is required for this**. As per the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) (2020) Species Environmental Assessment Guideline[4], "re-introduced, within area of historical distribution, ranched or farmed, possibly semi-free roaming but not fully functioning as part of PAOI ecosystem. May persist in artificially inflated numbers in modified habitat (i.e. intensive fencing) due to supplementation and/or intensive

[4] South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). 2020. Species Environmental Assessment Guideline. Guidelines for the implementation of the Terrestrial Fauna and Terrestrial Flora Species Protocols for environmental impact assessments in South Africa. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria. Version 3.1. 2022.

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			practices and will exhibit altered home range/ ecological behaviour. Potentially relevant but unlikely. Specialist advised to exclude presence of species as part of the impact analysis and SEI evaluation, unless it can be motivated otherwise". As indicated in the Animal Compliance Statement (Appendix E of the Terrestrial Biodiversity Specialist Assessment (Chapter 7 of the EIA Report)), it is an introduced species i.e. it does not occur naturally in the area and it was introduced to the country, therefore occurs outside its area of historical distribution, is possibly ranched or farmed or free roaming. Importantly it does not function as part of the study area ecosystem. It is believed that the individual sited came from an adjacent property, which has high fences. The adjacent property owner is believed to have game on their land. It is suggested that the Applicant come to an agreement with the adjacent landowner to consider appropriate measures for the current bordering fences to prohibit the Sable to move between the two properties. Once this is achieved, there are no further mitigation measures required. As further indicated in the Animal Compliance Statement, even though animals were sighted at specific locations, they can occur across the study area (or site) as they move around to feed. Accordingly, the animals mentioned in the Animal Compliance Statement should not be associated with a specific PV facility and the possible impacts and proposed mitigation measures will be applicable for all PV facilities. However, the only exclusion can be that of the Sable Antelope, which is unlikely to venture of further away from the adjacent property. Based on this, it is not vital or necessary to show the habitat in which it was found in the layout plan. Furthermore, based on the above, a buffer zone is not required.
		• The above map must be overlain with a sensitivity map and a cumulative map which shows neighbouring renewable energy developments and existing grid infrastructure. All available biodiversity information must be used in the finalisation of the map and infrastructure must not encroach on highly sensitive areas as far as possible.	**CSIR:** Chapter 20 of the EIA Report includes the following maps: ▪ Combined environmental feature map for the proposed project study area based on specialist inputs; ▪ Combined environmental sensitivity map for the proposed project study area based on specialist inputs; ▪ Project Layout Map showing the detailed infrastructure, buildable area and development footprints; ▪ Combined Project Layout and Sensitivity Map; and ▪ Combined Environmental Sensitivity and Cumulative Impact Map.

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			Therefore, a combined layout and sensitivity map has been provided in the EIA Report. Maps are also included in Appendix C of the EIA Report. Please note that the fine scale sensitivities mapped by the specialists within the study area, and the fine scale project layout cannot be easily seen when combined with a 30 km radius cumulative map. Scale needs to be considered in terms of the 30 km radius cumulative map. Nevertheless, a combined sensitivity and cumulative impact map was also provided in the EIA Report. Relevant available biodiversity information has been used by the specialists and the CSIR and thus in the mapping. None of the proposed development footprints / Buildable Areas intersect with any of the no-go or very high sensitivity areas identified by the specialists. All the relevant specialists have confirmed, as documented in their Specialist Assessments or Inputs (Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report) that the development footprints / Buildable Areas are acceptable.
		• Ensure that similar colours are not used to differentiate between infrastructure. i.e., items must be easily distinguishable in the Legend.	**CSIR:** The feature, sensitivity and layout maps compiled by the CSIR in Chapters 20 and Appendix C of this Final EIA Report have taken this into consideration.
		• Google maps will not be accepted for decision-making purposes.	**CSIR:** Maps compiled by the CSIR in the Draft EIA Report and Final EIA Report are not produced using Google Maps. Maps are included throughout the EIA Report, and in Appendix C.
	29/06/2023 Letter (received via email on 29/06/2023; dated 29/06/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Mr Mahlatse Shubane; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	**f) <u>Public Participation Process</u>** • You are advised to undertake PPP as per the requirements of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended and ensure comments raised in the letter dated 24 March 2023 are adequately addressed.	**CSIR**: Refer to Section 1.1 of Part A of this CRR for a full detailed response as to how the comments regarding public participation, and the comments raised by the DFFE in the acceptance of the FSR correspondence have been addressed. Note that these comments were addressed in the Draft EIA Report, and have been retained in the Final EIA Report. Refer to Chapter 4 of this Final EIA Report, for background on the Public Participation Process, including feedback on compliance with the regulations relating to Public Participation.

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
	29/06/2023 Letter (received via email on 29/06/2023; dated 29/06/2023) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Chief Directorate: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ms Milicent Solomons; Acting Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations; Letter signed by: Mr Mahlatse Shubane; Enquiries: Ms Olivia Letlalo)	**General** Please also ensure that the final EIAr includes the period for which the Environmental Authorisation is required and the date on which the activity will be concluded as per Appendix 3 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended. You are further reminded to comply with Regulation 23(1)(a) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states that: *"The applicant must within 106 days of the acceptance of the scoping report submit to the competent authority – (a) an environmental impact assessment report inclusive of any specialist reports, an EMPr, a closure plan in the case of a closure activity and where the application is a mining application, the plans, report and calculations contemplated in the Financial Provisioning Regulations, which must have been subjected to a public participation process of at least 30 days and which reflects the incorporation of comments received, including any comments of the competent authority."* Should there be significant changes or new information that has been added to the EIAr or EMPr which changes or information was not contained in the reports or plans consulted on during the initial public participation process, you are required to comply with Regulation 23(1)(b) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states: *"The applicant must within 106 days of the acceptance of the scoping report submit to the competent authority – (b) a notification in writing that the documents contemplated in sub-regulation 1(a) will be submitted within 156 days of acceptance of the scoping report by the competent authority or where regulation 21(2) applies, within 156 days of receipt of the application by the competent authority, as significant changes have been made or significant new information has been added to the documents, which changes or information was not contained in the original documents consulted on during the initial public participation process contemplated in sub-regulation (1)(a), and that the revised documents contemplated in sub-regulation 1(a) will be subjected to another public participation process of at least 30 days".*	**CSIR**: The DFFE's comments on the Draft EIA Report were well received and duly noted. Responses are provided below: ▪ Appendix 3 – (3) (1) (r) of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) notes "where the proposed activity **does not include operational aspects**, the period for which the environmental authorisation is required and the date on which the activity will be concluded and the post construction monitoring requirements finalised" must be provided. Note that this is not applicable, as the proposed activity (i.e. Solar PV facility and associated infrastructure) does include operational aspects and operational type listed activities (e.g. "The development and related operation of facilities or infrastructure, for the storage, or for the storage and handling…"). Nonetheless Chapter 20 of the EIA Report contains the period for which the EA is required (i.e. it is recommended that the EA (should it be granted) be valid for a period of 10 years). It is not possible to estimate or provide the date on which the activity will be concluded and the post construction monitoring requirements to be finalised, because there are various permitting requirements that are applicable and need to be factored in the timing. These are outside of the mandate of the NEMA, such as the REIPPPP or similar process, as well as the signing of a Power Purchase Agreement. It is understood that the information contained in the EIA Report and appendices is sufficient to make a decision in respect of the activity applied for. ▪ In line with Regulation 23(1)(a) of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended), the Final EIA Report needed to be submitted to the DFFE for decision-making within 106 days of the acceptance of the FSR. The timeframes in Regulation 23(1)(a) have been adhered to in the submission of this Final EIA Report. ▪ The reminder to comply with Regulation 23(1)(b) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, should there be significant changes or new information added to the Final EIA Report or EMPr which was not contained in the reports or plans consulted on during the initial public participation process is duly noted. Note that no significant changes or new information have been added to this EIA Report or EMPr.

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		Should you fail to meet any of the timeframes stipulated in Regulation 23 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, your application will lapse. You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.	▪ The reminder regarding failure to meet any timeframes stipulated in Regulation 23 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) is noted. ▪ The Applicant is aware of Section 24F of the NEMA.

1.2 The DFFE Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation

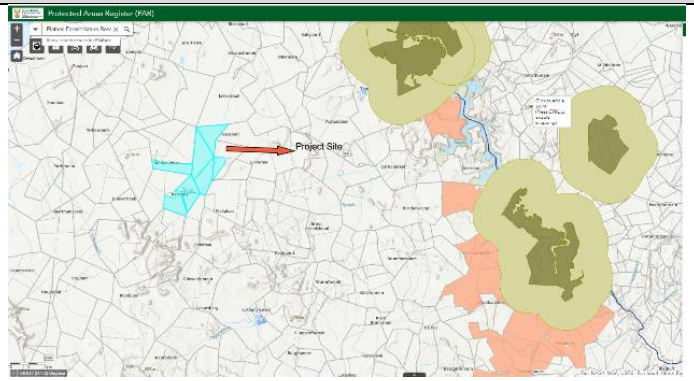
NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	05/06/2023 Email Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Biodiversity Conservation (Kamogelo Mathetja)	DFFE Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation hereby acknowledge receipt of the invitation to review and comment on the project mentioned on the subject line. Kindly note that the project has been allocated to Mrs P Makitla and Ms M Mudau (Both copied on this email). In addition, kindly share the shapefiles of the development footprints/application site with the Case Officers. Please note: All Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA review and any other Biodiversity EIA queries must be submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation at Email: BCAdmin@environment.gov.za for attention of Mr Seoka Lekota.	**CSIR**: This comment is noted. The requested KMZ file of the development footprint relative to the proposed Kudu Solar Facility was shared with this stakeholder on 08 June 2023. This stakeholder (BCAdmin@environment.gov.za) was originally included on the I&AP database. Refer to Appendix E of the EIA Report for a copy of the I&AP database. Refer to Chapter 4 and Appendix H.4 of this Final EIA Report for additional information on comprehensive follow ups and communication undertaken with the key stakeholders.
2.	03/07/2023 Email Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Biodiversity Conservation; B&C: Biodiversity Mainstreaming & EIA	Herewith please find the aforementioned project comments.	**CSIR**: The comments from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: B&C: Biodiversity Mainstreaming & EIA Directorate are noted and responded to below.

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
	(Ms. Mashienyane Portia Makitla)		
3.	03/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 03/07/2023; dated 03/07/2023) Biodiversity Conservation Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (Mr. Seoka Lekota Control Biodiversity Officer Grade B: Biodiversity Conservation; Letter signed by: Ms P Makitla; Enquiries: Ms M Mudau/ T Kgaphola)	The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation reviewed and evaluated the draft report. Based on the information provided in the reports, the entire site and all identified buildable areas and development footprints, are located within the ESA, the ESA is due to the site being in the Platberg-Karoo Conservancy (not formally protected), the vegetation units and important wetland and river features. Five Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) species were recorded during the site surveys, namely Blue Crane, Martial Eagle, Verreaux's Eagle, Cape Vultures and White-backed Vulture. However, it is noted that the recommendations of the Aquatic and Avifauna Specialists have been taken into consideration in the layout planning, and sensitive areas have been avoided accordingly. The protected tree *Boscia albitrunca* occurs in the Shrubby Grassland at the base of a Koppie The overall sensitivity of the site is considered medium, with some landscape features, including the Koppies, as medium sensitivity. Most of the cumulative negative impacts were rated with a low post mitigation impact significance for the construction phase, apart from Terrestrial. A similar trend is applicable to the operational phase, Avifauna impacts being rated as moderate. Based on the above the Directorate Biodiversity Conservation is of the view that with stringent mitigation measures the development impacts can be mitigated to acceptable level. All Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA review and any other Biodiversity EIA queries must be submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation at Email: BCAdmin@environment.gov.za for attention of Mr Seoka Lekota.	**CSIR**: The comments from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: B&C: Biodiversity Mainstreaming & EIA Directorate are noted with thanks. As indicated in the Draft EIA Report, and retained in the Final EIA Report, mitigation measures have been recommended by the specialists, and relevant impact management actions have been included in the EMPR to ensure that potential negative impacts are managed and mitigated to acceptable levels. As indicated in the EIA Report, none of the specialists have identified high significance negative residual impacts (i.e. with the implementation of mitigation measures). All Public Participation Process documents were submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation throughout this Scoping and EIA Process. Refer to the I&AP database in Appendix E of this Final EIA Report for additional information. Comments were also provided by the Directorate during the Scoping Phase and responded to accordingly (as included in Appendix F of this Final EIA Report).

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
4.	03/07/2023 Email Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Biodiversity Conservation; B&C: Biodiversity Mainstreaming & EIA (Ms. Mashienyane Portia Makitla)	The comments applies to all the proposed facilities.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted with thanks, and was sent by the Department in response to a query submitted by the CSIR to confirm that the comments submitted (above) apply to all 12 Kudu Solar Facilities.

1.3 The DFFE Directorate: Protected Areas Planning and Management Effectiveness

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	05/07/2023 Email Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Protected Areas Planning and Management Effectiveness (Lindokuhle Vilakati)	The Directorate: Protected Areas Planning and Management Effectiveness (PAPME), would like to thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft EIA Reports for the proposed 12 Solar Photovoltaic (PV) facilities (i.e. Kudu Solar Facilities) and various associated infrastructure, near De Aar, Northern Cape After conducting the review of the availed documents, we have noted that the proposed developments will not take place within any kind of protected areas recognized in terms of Section 9 of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (NEMPAA), Act No. 57 of 2003 and their buffers. The PAPME directorate provides comments or input on the projects which are affecting the National Protected Areas and National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy (NPAES). Note: The following image was attached to the email:	**CSIR**: The DFFE Directorate: Protected Areas Planning and Management Effectiveness is thanked for the inputs and comments on the proposed project. It is concurred that according to the South African Protected Areas Database (SAPAD), the study area does not include any formally Protected Areas, as defined by the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act 57 of 2003) (NEM: PAA). This is noted in Chapter 3 of the Final EIA Report.

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
			

2. Comments received from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	08/06/2023 Email Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development and (DALRRD) (Annette Geertsema)	The information is appreciated and you will receive an acknowledgement of receipt shortly.	**CSIR**: This comment is noted with thanks. This feedback was received from the DALRRD in response to the submission of the title deeds of the affected farm properties, as well as the link to the Draft EIA Reports which included the requested information i.e. Agricultural Compliance Statement, layout maps indicating the footprints of the proposed development, and the overall motivation for the development.
2.	09/06/2023 Email DALRRD (Annette Geertsema)	The information is appreciated and you will receive an acknowledgement of receipt shortly.	**CSIR**: This comment is noted with thanks. Refer to the response provided to the comment in Row 1 above in this section.
3.	12/06/2023 Email DALRRD	please receive reference number for application Barberg 88 & Grasspan 40 (various farms) & (various portions) (Kudu Solar 1 & 2) Rezoning 2023_06_0057	**CSIR**: This comment is noted with thanks. Refer to the response provided to the comment in Row 1 above in this section.

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
	(Barbara De Lange)	E mail thembin@dalrrd.gov.za	
4.	12/06/2023 Auto-generated Email AgriLand System DALRRD (AgriLand System)	The Department hereby acknowledge receipt of your application for Barberg 88 Graspan 40 Annex Wolvekuil 41 Wolvekuil 43 Wolvekuilen 42 (Kudu Solar 1 & 2) (Various Portions). The reference number for your application is: 2023_06_0057	**CSIR**: This comment is noted. The reference number is acknowledged, and it is understood to be in response to rezoning and approval / an application in terms of the Subdivision of Agricultural Land (Act 70 of 1970).
5.	13/06/2023 Auto-generated Email AgriLand System DALRRD (AgriLand System)	The Department hereby acknowledge receipt of your application for Barberg 88 Graspan 40 Annex Wolvekuil 41 Wolvekuil 43 Wolvekuilen 42 (Kudu Solar 1 & 2) (Various Portions). The reference number for your application is: 2023_06_0057	**CSIR**: This comment is noted with thanks. Refer to the response provided to the comment in Row 4 above in this section.
6.	14/06/2023 Email DALRRD (Thembi Nyoka)	Kindly forward me the hectares of each property that are involved in the project and the total footprint that will be used for the whole project. I am the official working with your application. I need that information so as to process your application further. Do not hesitate to call me for more. I hope you will find this in order	**CSIR**: A list consisting of the hectares of each property and total development footprint was sent to the DALRRD via email as requested.
7.	23/06/2023 Email DALRRD (Thembi Nyoka)	Your application is on step 5 of 8 waiting to be presented in the Delegate of the Minister for the next committee meeting. I hope you will find this in order.	**CSIR**: This comment is noted with thanks, and was received from the DALRRD in response to a follow up query that was sent to the Department by the CSIR to confirm if the requested information (specified in the comment in Row 6 above) was received, and if the reference number issued by the DALRRD applies to all 12 of the Kudu Solar Facilities.
8.	28/06/2023 Email DALRRD (Thembi Nyoka)	Your application is on step 5 of 8 wating for the committee and it included all projects.	**CSIR**: This comment is noted with thanks, and was received from the DALRRD in response to a follow up query that was sent to the Department by the CSIR to request for a cell phone contact number of the case officer in order to confirm if the assigned reference number applies to all 12 Kudu Solar Facilities, the date of the next committee meeting, and to provide a reminder that the comment period on the Draft EIA Report closes on 3 July 2023.

3. Comments received from the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	22/06/2023 Email South African Civil Aviation Authority (Lizell Stroh)	Future sake kindly send all EIA communication to *Obstacles@caa.co.za*. Kindly find the "link" as from the caa website, on information and the process and procedure requires to be follow, towards solar projects proposed. *www.caa.co.za* *www.caa.co.za/industry-information/obstacles/* kindly scroll down on the Notices for the respected information. **Obstacle Notice 1/2022 – Appointment of New Windfarm and Solar Obstacle Application Service Provider** Kindly be advised, Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS) has been appointed as the Obstacle application Service Provider for Windfarms on 1 May 2021. They will be also responsible for Solar Obstacle Applications from the 1'st of February 2022. All new Solar applications must be lodged to *obstacles@atns.co.za* or contact Graham Mondzinger (Obstacle Evaluator) at 062 002 1621. Their responsibility would pertain to the assessments, maintenance, and all other related matters in respect to Windfarms and Solar assessments. Kindly confirm the Transmission line proposed towards the projects, as this would affect Aviation operations. Kindly find information on Development around Airports and extract to the Obstacle Regulations Part 139.01.30 as information.	**CSIR**: This comment is noted. The email address provided (obstacles@caa.co.za) has been included in the I&AP database in Appendix E of this Final EIA Report. The new procedure towards proposed Solar PV Facilities from a Civil Aviation perspective is noted. The Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS) was added to the project database since the commencement of this Scoping and EIA Process. ATNS has not provided any feedback on the proposed project to date. Proof of follow up communication is included in Appendix H.4 of this Final EIA Report. Note that the Applicant has submitted an application with the Obstacle Evaluator in 2023 (outside of this EIA Process). In terms of Civil Aviation features, a Civil Aviation Site Sensitivity Verification (SSV) has been undertaken and included in Chapter 18 of this Final EIA Report. The SSV concluded that the study area is within a low sensitivity area, and there are no civil aviation features and installations within the study area. Furthermore, the proposed project is not located on any extended runway centreline, nor is it located within 3 km of an aerodrome or helistop. The De Aar Aerodrome is located approximately 54 km south-west of the study area; and the Petrusville Aerodrome is located approximately 25 km north-east of the study area. Therefore, a Glint and Glare Assessment is not required. The power lines for the proposed projects are not being assessed in these EIAs for the PV Facilities. Separate Environmental Assessment processes will be undertaken for the power lines in due course, and the CAA will be included as a stakeholder on the project database accordingly.
2.	23/06/2023 Email South African Civil Aviation Authority (Lizell Stroh)	Your information is noted, kindly always consider the SAAF towards proposal/future proposals in not previous considered. Contacts for your information: [redacted] [redacted]	**CSIR**: The key information in the response to the comment in Row 1 above was sent to the stakeholder via email. This comment from the stakeholder is in response to this feedback. The CAA acknowledges and notes the above. The contact details provided for the South African Air Force (SAAF) is noted and will be included on the project databases for future proposals. Note that one of these stakeholders were included in an email from and to the Department of Defence, as included in Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report.

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3	03/07/2023 Email South African Civil Aviation Authority (Simphiwe Masilela)	The SACAA has no objection to the proposed development, however, a formal obstacle assessment must be conducted in order to determine whether the proposed will affect the safety of flights in any way. Kindly note that the SACAA has transferred the assessments for Solar and Wind energy applications to Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS) as published on the SACAA website. Their responsibility would pertain to the assessments, maintenance, and all other related matters in respect to Solar assessments. The contact details for ATNS are: Obstacle Evaluator ATNS Head Office Tel: +2711 6071000 (Ask for Obstacle Evaluators) Email: *Obstacles@atns.co.za* For any other obstacle applications, kindly refer to the current obstacle application procedures and processes to follow, as per the SACAA website: Find attached information for Developments around aerodromes and prescribed in SACAA Regulations, processes, and procedures to follow. More information can be obtained at *http://www.caa.co.za*. Click on information for industry under 'Obstacles'. There is a fee applicable to the said application as well, which is currently R1020 (any changes to this fee will be published on the website). Assessments will commence upon receipt of payment and once the database is updated. Applications must be forwarded to ***obstacles@caa.co.za*** together with the following: ▪ A **kmz/kml (Google Earth) file reflecting the footprint to the proposed development site.** ▪ Provide coordinates (deg, min, sec), Height and Elevation.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted. Refer to the response provided to the comment in Row 1 in this section; as well as the responses provided in Section 3 in Part A above.

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		▪ Also indicate the **highest** structure of the project (to the top) Should you require more information please contact the inspectorate at *obstacles@caa.co.za*	

4. Comments received from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	06/06/2023 Email South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) (Natasha Higgitt)	Thank you for your email. No application fees are required for this case as it was submitted before 1 January 2023. No additional appendices need to be uploaded at this point.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted and was received in response to an enquiry sent to SAHRA whether application fees for SAHRA comments are applicable to the proposed projects; and to inform the SAHRA that the relevant project documents (i.e. Chapters and Appendices of the Draft EIA Report) were uploaded on the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS) for comment.
2.	20/06/2023 Email SAHRA (Natasha Higgitt)	Please note that the earliest I am able to schedule the review of these cases is the 30th June. I am not able to review them earlier than that.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted and was received in response to an enquiry sent to SAHRA on whether comment can be issued by 30 June 2023.
3.	30/06/2023 Email SAHRA (Natasha Higgitt)	Please note that the main EIA reports has not been uploaded to the Kudu cases on SAHRIS. Please upload these documents as soon as possible to each case.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted, and a follow up email was sent to SAHRA explaining that relevant project documents were uploaded on the SAHRIS, and querying which additional documents were required specifically.
4.	30/06/2023 Email SAHRA (Natasha Higgitt)	Please upload the executive summary and appendix C containing the maps.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted, and the executive summary and Appendix C of the Draft EIA Report were uploaded to SAHRIS for each project, and the SAHRA was informed accordingly.
5.	30/06/2023 Email SAHRA (Natasha Higgitt)	Thank you for the update. All appears in order now. I will be issuing the comments by either the end of the day or Monday morning.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted with thanks, and was sent in response to the provision of the above requested documents.

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6.	30/06/2023 Private message on SAHRIS SAHRA (Natasha Higgitt)	Please note that Final Comments have been issued on SAHRIS Case ID 20336 20337 20338 20339 20340 20341 20342 20343 20344 20345 20346 20347. Please see links to the cases.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted with thanks, and responded to below for the specific Kudu Solar Facility.
7.	30/06/2023 Letter (received via email on 30/06/2023, dated 30/06/2023) SAHRA (Natasha Higgitt)	Final Comment In terms of Section 38(4), 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) Attention: Kudu Solar Facility 2 (Pty) Ltd Kudu Solar Facility 1 (Pty) Ltd to Kudu Solar Facility 12 (Pty) Ltd is proposing to develop 12 Solar Photovoltaic (PV) power generation facilities and associated Electrical Grid Infrastructure (EGI), north-east of the town of De Aar, in the Renosterberg Local Municipality and Pixley Ka Seme District Municipality, in the Northern Cape Province. Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Processes are currently being undertaken for the 12 Solar PV facilities. Separate Basic Assessment (BA) and/or EGI Standard Registration processes will be commissioned separately, once finalised, for the EGI projects. This case is for the proposed Kudu Solar Facility 2, and the Applicant is Kudu Solar Facility 2 (Pty) Ltd. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has been appointed by ABO Wind renewable energies (Pty) Ltd to undertake an Environmental Authorisation Application for the proposed Kudu Solar Facility 2 and associated infrastructure, near De Aar, Northern Cape Province. A Draft Scoping Report (DSR) has been submitted in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA) and the NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. The proposed activities will include the construction of solar panels, auxiliary buildings, inverter/transformer stations, on-site substation complex, battery energy storage system (BESS), underground cables, access roads, internal roads, fencing, storm water	**CSIR:** The interim comments issued by the SAHRA during the Scoping Phase were considered in the preparation of the Palaeontology Site Sensitivity Verification (SSV) and Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) during the EIA Phase, and all requested information was provided. These reports were included in the Draft EIA Reports which were released for a 30-day comment period. During this phase, the HIA, updated Palaeontology SSV (as discussed between SAHRA and the specialist in April 2023), Visual Impact Assessment, PPP for the EIA Phase (Appendix H), EMPr for PV (Appendix I) and Generic EMPr for Substations (Appendix J) were uploaded onto SAHRIS per project and case. The SAHRA has reviewed the above, as well as the Executive Summary and Maps (Appendix C of the EIA Report) and confirmed receipt of the requested information and has now issued final comment in terms of Section 38(4) and 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) (NHRA). With reference to the overall application area, note that this was updated from the Scoping Phase. As indicated in the Executive Summary of the EIA Report, the buildable area for each of the proposed projects are listed below: ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 1 (Pty) Ltd: 34 ha; ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 2 (Pty) Ltd: 51 ha; ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 3 (Pty) Ltd: 70 ha; ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 4 (Pty) Ltd: 70 ha; ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 5 (Pty) Ltd: 537 ha; ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 6 (Pty) Ltd: 265 ha; ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 7 (Pty) Ltd: 557 ha; ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 8 (Pty) Ltd: 542 ha; ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 9 (Pty) Ltd: 285 ha; ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 10 (Pty) Ltd: 120 ha; ▪ Kudu Solar Facility 11 (Pty) Ltd: 506 ha; and

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		channels, panel cleaning and maintenance area, laydown areas with an overall application area of 48 ha. Natura Viva CC and ASHA Consulting (Pty) Ltd were appointed to provide heritage specialist input as part of the EA process as per section 24(4)b(iii) of NEMA and section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA). *Almond, J. E. 2022. Site Sensitivity Verification Report: Proposed Development of the Kudu Solar Photovoltaic Facilities and Associated Infrastructure near Philipstown and De Aar, Pixley Ka Seme District, Northern Cape Province.* A report that combines the assessment of all 12 Kudu Solar Projects has been submitted. The proposed development footprint is underlain by the Waterford Formation, the Tierberg Formation and are overlain by the Late Caenozoic calcrete hardpans, alluvial deposits, surface gravels and soils of low sensitivity. A Chance Finds Procedure is recommended to be implemented. *Orton, J. 2022. Heritage Specialist Scoping Report Inputs: Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process for the Proposed Development of a Solar Photovoltaic Facility (Kudu Solar Facility 2) and associated infrastructure, near De Aar, Northern Cape Province* No heritage resources were identified within the Kudu Solar Facility 2. A Chance Finds Procedure is recommended and the recommendations of the Visual Impact Assessment must be followed. In an Interim Comment issued on the 25/01/2023, SAHRA requested that the HIA be revised and an addendum to the PIA must be submitted with specific results for the Kudu Solar 2 project. Since the issuing of the Interim Comment, an HIA and PIA have been submitted (04/06/2023).	▪ Kudu Solar Facility 12 (Pty) Ltd: 231 ha. Final Comment from SAHRA, dated 30 June 2023, on the Final EIA Report, made as a requirement in terms of section 38(8) of the NHRA in the format provided in section 38(4) of the NHRA, is noted, and has been included in Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report (i.e. Comments Received from Stakeholders during the 30-Day Review of the Draft EIA Report), and responded to here in this Comments and Responses Report (Appendix H.7 of this Final EIA Report). In addition, the EMPr has been updated where relevant and required to address this final comment. Additional feedback is provided below: ▪ The feedback in terms of 38(4)a of the NHRA is noted with thanks, whereby the SAHRA Development Applications Unit (DAU) has no objections to the proposed development. ▪ The feedback in terms of 38(4)b of the NHRA is noted with thanks. Note that the recommendations of the specialists were originally included in the EMPrs in the Draft EIA Report, and have been retained in the EMPrs forming part of the Final EIA Report, and will therefore be adhered to. ▪ The feedback in terms of 38(4)c(i) of the NHRA is noted, and the EMPrs in the Final EIA Report (Appendix I and Appendix J) have been updated to include contact details for the SAHRA DAU to be alerted in certain instances as per section 35(3) of the NHRA. Reference has also been made to offences in terms of Section 51 (1) (e) of the NHRA and Item 5 of the Schedule. ▪ The feedback in terms of 38(4)c(ii) of the NHRA is noted, and the EMPrs in the Final EIA Report (Appendix I and Appendix J) have been updated to include contact details for the SAHRA DAU to be altered if unmarked human burials are uncovered, as per section 36(6) of the NHRA. Reference has also been made to offences in terms of Section 51 (1) (e) of the NHRA and Item 5 of the Schedule. ▪ The feedback in terms of Section 38(4)d of the NHRA is noted, whereby the Applicant has taken note of Section 51 (1) of the NHRA with regards to offences, and reference to this specific section has been included in the EMPrs in Appendix I and Appendix J of the Final EIA Report. ▪ The feedback in terms of Section 38(4)e of the NHRA is noted with regards to the conditions that apply in terms of the appointment of specialists if

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		Almond, J. E. 2023. Site Sensitivity Verification Report (In Terms of Part A of the Assessment Protocols Published in GN 320 on 20 March 2020). Proposed Development of the Kudu Solar Photovoltaic Facilities and Associated Infrastructure near Philipstown and De Aar, Pixley Ka Seme District, Northern Cape Province No fossils were identified within the proposed development area. A Chance Finds Procedure is recommended to be followed. *Orton, J. 2023. Heritage Specialist Study: Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Processes for the Proposed Development of a Solar Photovoltaic Facility (Kudu Solar Facility 2) and associated infrastructure, near De Aar, Northern Cape Province* The report has been revised to include a tracklog of the completed survey. Final Comment The following comments are made as a requirement in terms of section 38(8) of the NHRA in the format provided in section 38(4) of the NHRA and must be included in the Final EIA and EMPr: • 38(4)a – The SAHRA Development Applications Unit has no objections to the proposed development; • 38(4)b – The recommendations of the specialists are supported and must be adhered to. No further additional specific conditions are provided for the development. • 38(4)c(i) – If any evidence of archaeological sites or remains (e.g. remnants of stone-made structures, indigenous ceramics, bones, stone artefacts, ostrich eggshell fragments, charcoal and ash concentrations), fossils or other categories of heritage resources are found during the proposed development, SAHRA DAU (Natasha Higgitt 021 202 8660/ nhiggitt@sahra.org.za) must be alerted as per section 35(3) of the NHRA.	heritage resources are uncovered during the course of the development; and this has been added to the EMPrs in Appendix I and Appendix J of the Final EIA Report. ▪ The Final EIA Report will be uploaded to SAHRIS for record purposes following the submission to the DFFE for decision-making. ▪ The decision regarding the EA application (i.e. EA should it be granted) will be uploaded the SAHRIS for record purposes, once received (should it be granted).

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		Non-compliance with this section of the NHRA is an offense in terms of section 51(1)e of the NHRA and item 5 of the Schedule; • 38(4)c(ii) – If unmarked human burials are uncovered, the SAHRA DAU (Natasha Higgitt 021 202 8660/ nhiggitt@sahra.org.za) must be alerted immediately as per section 36(6) of the NHRA. Non-compliance with section of the NHRA is an offense in terms of section 51(1)e of the NHRA and item 5 of the Schedule; • 38(4)d – See section 51(1) of the NHRA regarding offences; • 38(4)e – The following conditions apply with regards to the appointment of specialists: • i) If heritage resources are uncovered during the course of the development, a professional archaeologist or palaeontologist, depending on the nature of the finds, must be contracted as soon as possible to inspect the heritage resource. If the newly discovered heritage resources prove to be of archaeological or palaeontological significance, a Phase 2 rescue operation may be required subject to permits issued by SAHRA; • The Final EIA must be submitted to the SAHRIS application for record purposes; • The decision regarding the EA application must be submitted to the SAHRIS application for record purposes. Should you have any further queries, please contact the designated official using the case number quoted above in the case header.	

5. Comments received from the Department of Defence

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1.	08/06/2023 Email Department of Defence: Command and Management Information Systems Division (Lieutenant Colonel Francois P Strydom)	Please see attached Screenshot of Folders which require both Application and .KML / .KMZ files. I did not receive any further info, other than the letter received from Log referring to the Applications (Request for comments Batch 3 of 2023) Please provide the required info in order to clear this folder from CMIS Response on Telecom	**CSIR:** The requested KMZ files were sent via email by the CSIR on 8 June 2023, with links to the project website and google drive to access the Draft EIA Reports, as shown in Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report. Further follow up emails were also sent to this stakeholder in order to seek comments, as well as telephonic discussions. Also refer to Chapter 4 and Appendix H.4 of this Final EIA Report for additional information on follow ups and communication undertaken with the key stakeholders.

6. Comments received from the Department of Water and Sanitation

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1.	22/06/2023 Email Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) (Lerato Makhoantle)	The area in question falls within Lower Orange WMA and the colleagues there has this communication, so they will respond accordingly.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted and was received from the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) following the release of a reminder email by the CSIR on 21 June 2023 to request for comments on the Draft EIA Report.
2.	26/06/2023 Email Department of Water and Sanitation: Lower Orange Water Management Area (Melinda Jansen)	Please find attached letters 1 to 6 for the Proposed Development of 12 Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Facilities (I.E. Kudu Solar Facilities) and Various Associated Infrastructure, near De Aar, Northern Cape as requested. The assessor is still busy with Letters 7 to 12. The originals will be sent via registered mail.	**CSIR:** The DWS: Lower Orange Water Management Area is thanked for their comments. The responses to the comments raised in the letter are provided below. Follow up communication was undertaken with the DWS via telephonic follow ups and email correspondence (as shown in Appendix H.4 and Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report) in order to obtain comments on the Kudu Solar Facilities 7 to 12.
3.	26/06/2023	**SCOPING AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV)**	**CSIR:** The Department is thanked for their inputs and no objection to the Draft EIA Report. These comments have been noted and responded to accordingly in this

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	Letter (received via email on 26/06/2023; dated 23/06/2023) Department of Water and Sanitation: Northern Cape Region, Lower Orange Water Management Area (Letter signed by: Provincial Head: Northern Cape Operations; pp S. Cloete, Enquiries: A.A Hlengani)	**FACILITY (KUDU SOLAR FACILITY 2) AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR DE AAR, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE** Reference is made to the above-mentioned report with the cover letter dated June 2023, submitted to Department of Water and Sanitation. This Department has no objection to the proposed amendments of the above-mentioned application and wish to comment as follows:	Comments and Responses Report and included in Appendix H.6 of this EIA Report.
		1. The Report states that the Solid-State Lithium-Ion BESS or Redox Flow BESS with the capacity of Up to 500 MW / 500 MWh. In case of leakages or spillages of hydrocarbons this department must be informed within 24 hours and immediate cleanup procedure must be conducted as stipulated in section 19 of the National Water Act; (Act 36 of 1998), any cleanup of the contaminants must be disposed of in a permitted hazardous landfill site and remediation report for the clean-up measures must be sent to the department for comments before implementation.	**CSIR:** The EMPr included in the Draft EIA Report included various impact management actions related to the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), including the management of potential spills. The EMPr for the PV Facility and associated infrastructure included in Appendix I of this Final EIA Report has been updated to include the recommendations from the DWS in this regard (i.e. Ensure that the DWS Northern Cape Region, Lower Orange Water Management Area office is informed within 24 hours of any leaks or spills associated with the BESS. Ensure that under these circumstances, immediate clean-up procedures are conducted as stipulated in Section 19 of the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998, as amended) (NWA); and that the spilled contaminants are disposed of at a permitted hazardous landfill site. In addition, during these situations, a remediation report for clean-up measures must be sent to this Department for comment before implementation).
		2. All tank and pipe installations must be done according to the applicable SABS standards to minimize the potential for leakage and contamination of water resources	**CSIR:** This comment is noted. The proposed project will be designed and developed in line with relevant national and international standards and specifications.
		3. Ground Water Management and monitoring must form part of risk management plan, please ensure that appropriate borehole monitoring points are sited and used for ground water level and quality monitoring only.	**CSIR**: As indicated in the Draft EIA Report, and retained in the Final EIA Report, the use of existing boreholes to source groundwater (if available and suitable) is only the third most likely water use option. Water sourced from the local municipality is the first option in terms of viability and the second is to source water from a third party, but consideration of other options is vital. Potential environmental impacts pertaining to local groundwater resources have been considered in the EIA, and various management inputs have been recommended to ensure safe and sustainable management of the groundwater resources in the area. However, these impact management actions are not mandatory if water is indeed sourced from the local municipality or via a third party. These recommendations only apply if groundwater will be used for the project. The

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			management inputs are captured in two phases. Phase 1 will be required to determine if the groundwater is of a suitable quality and quantity; and Phase 2 will only be required if the groundwater quality and quantity are determined more accurately and confirmed it is suitable for use. Refer to the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of this Final EIA Report) for additional information regarding the monitoring phases proposed, Phase 2 specifically mentions the following: ▪ Undertake a Phase 2 programme once the groundwater quality and quantity are determined more accurately and confirmed it is suitable for use. The following steps will be required for sustainable management of ground water resources: o Acquire any historical monitoring data for the region. o Determine the volume of groundwater abstracted by farmers annually prior to construction by flow meters. o Ensure water saving techniques are instated and adhered to. o Ensure that proper bunding and secondary containment measures are in place for BESS facilities and are designed by an appropriate competent person. o Ensure that environmentally safe cleaning agents that breakdown naturally and do not cause adverse effects are used. o In the event that the entire Kudu Solar Facility development is constructed simultaneously, adherence to the recommended mitigation measures should be strictly followed to prevent over-abstraction. o Instate an appropriate monitoring program including monitoring of groundwater quality, water levels (ideally by water level loggers and hand readings using a dip meter), and abstracted volumes. These data should be reported on at the least biannually. o Yield test all monitoring boreholes according to SANS 10299-4:2003, Part 4 – Test pumping of water boreholes. This includes a Step Test, Constant Discharge Test and recovery monitoring. Refer to Section 16.9.1 of the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of this Final EIA Report), which details the proposed monitoring programme. It is

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			recommended that at least three boreholes in the vicinity of each cluster of projects be allocated for monitoring purposes. These can either be existing boreholes, or newly drilled monitoring boreholes as this will allow for monitoring of the groundwater quality and groundwater levels across the affected area. The optimum position of the monitoring boreholes should be based on availability of open space surrounding the planned buildable area; however, it is recommended that one borehole be located up-gradient of the affected area to monitor background values and the other two boreholes be down-gradient of the affected area. Three general monitoring sites are presented in this section of the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of the Final EIA Report), however these are in an idealised scenario and any existing boreholes in the vicinity of the proposed sites can be utilised for monitoring purposes. Furthermore, one or more monitoring boreholes should present within 100 meters of notable contamination points (i.e. BESS and refuelling stations) as well as near project specific groundwater abstraction points. The borehole water level (if present) and the groundwater quality should be monitored on a monthly basis during construction phase and then on a quarterly basis during operational phase, so as to determine seasonal fluctuation. It is recommended that groundwater monitoring be undertaken at the proposed site in accordance with guidelines set out in the publication by DWAF (1998). The various aspects of the monitoring are presented in Section 16.9.1 of the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of the Final EIA Report), along with relevant recommendations.
		4. The report indicates that new internal service roads will need to be established in the vicinity of the project area. The applicant must further indicate to this Department the distance between the project area and the said watercourse. No development is to take place within 100 metres from the edge of a watercourse or the riparian habitat without consent from this Department.	**CSIR and Aquatic Biodiversity Specialist:** Chapter 20 of the Draft EIA Report included various maps, specifically Figure 20-3 (Project Layout Map showing the detailed infrastructure, buildable area and development footprints) and Figure 20-4: (Combined Project Layout and Sensitivity Map). These maps show the proposed project infrastructure, such as the internal roads, as well as the sensitivities identified by the specialists. These infrastructure and structures, including associated infrastructure traversing watercourses (such as access roads), will occur within small drainage features, floodplain areas, and 32 m of the watercourses, as indicated in the sensitivity mapping identified by the aquatic specialist. In addition, associated infrastructure traversing watercourses (such as access roads) will result in the accumulated infilling or depositing of more than $10m^3$ of material into watercourse and wide flood plains. In addition, some existing roads leading to site cross watercourses and floodplains. These access roads will

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			be used to access the site up to the point where new roads are constructed. Upgrading of these existing roads may be required depending on construction activities and its impact on the roads. Upgrading may include expanding existing low-level crossings, bridges or culverts. Therefore, the proposed development will take place within 100 metres from the edge of a watercourse or the riparian habitat. The relevant listed activities in terms of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) have been assessed and included in the Application for EA. Hence EA has been applied for in terms of NEMA in terms of development in proximity to water courses. In terms of the NWA, any activities that take place within the outer edge of the 1 in 100 year flood line and /or delineated riparian habitat, whichever is the greatest distance, measured from the middle of the watercourse of a river, spring, natural channel, lake or dam; within a watercourse; within 100 m of the edge of a watercourse; or within 500 m of a delineated wetland boundary, will require a water use authorisation in terms of Section 21 (c) and Section 21 (i) of the NWA (if the proposed activities have these associated water uses). As indicated in the Final EIA Report, it is likely that a General Authorisation or Water Use Licence will be required for the proposed projects. From an aquatic biodiversity perspective, the risk matrix assessment undertaken supports the fact that the potential risks to the aquatic ecosystems associated with the proposed PV development would be low and hence would be within the ambit of the General Authorisation for Section 21(c) and (i) water uses. Applications for General Authorisation or Water Use Licences will be undertaken post EA (should such authorisation be granted), i.e. consent will be applied for from the DWS for development within 100 metres from the edge of a watercourse or the riparian habitat.
		5. The stormwater drainage network system must be kept separate from the wastewater (water containing waste) system. Furthermore, stormwater must be managed in such a manner as to disperse runoff and to prevent the concentration of storm water flow.	**CSIR:** The EMPr included in Appendix I of the Draft EIA Report for the Solar PV Facility and associated infrastructure included many recommendations for stormwater and waste water management. For example, the EMPr notes that an effective system of stormwater run-off control must be implemented, where it is required - that is at any points where run-off water might accumulate. The system must effectively collect and safely disseminate any run-off water from all accumulation points and it must prevent any potential down slope erosion. The EMPr also notes that wastewater must be collected and disposed of at a suitable

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			licenced disposal facility; and that proof of disposal should be retained on file for auditing purposes. Therefore, this was addressed in the EMPr included in the Draft EIA Report, and retained for the Final EIA Report.
		6. It is understood that sewage arising from this development will be treating at an onsite conservancy tank. The applicant should submit a written letter to indicate the capacity of the conservancy tanks. There must be a written agreement between the applicant and the Water Services Authority in the area, for the clearing and disposal of sewer sludge accumulated from the conservancy tanks into an authorized WWTW. Civil designs done by the registered professional engineer for the septic tank and the capacity must be provided to check if it will be needed. The designs must be signed by the registered engineer and his or her professional number must be provided.	**CSIR**: As indicated in Chapter 2 of this Final EIA Report, permanent ablution facilities may be installed during the operational phase. The effluent may be stored on site in watertight structures (conservancy tanks) and thereafter transported to and disposed of at the Local Municipal sewerage treatment works or similar facility by a registered service provider. The details of this will be confirmed during the detailed design/engineering phase (outside of this EIA Process). Once the details of the conservancy tanks are finalised, the Project Applicant will submit a written letter to indicate the capacity of the conservancy tanks; and an agreement will be entered into between the Applicant and the Water Services Authority in the area, for the clearing and disposal of sewer sludge accumulated from the conservancy tanks into an authorized Waste Water Treatment Works. These recommendations have been included in the EMPr in Appendix I of the Final EIA Report for the Solar PV Facility and associated infrastructure, as relevant.
		7. It is note that the source of water is obtained from existing boreholes located on the property, it further highlighted that new borehole's will be drilled to source groundwater. The landowners are reminded to register the boreholes Section 21(a) water uses respectively with this Department and to ensure that the necessary authorisation is obtained.	**CSIR**: This comment is noted. As indicated in the EIA Report, water will be sourced from the following potential sources (in the order of likelihood): Renosterberg Local Municipality; third-party water supplier; existing boreholes or drilled boreholes on site. Should the latter be selected for water use, the boreholes will be subjected to complete geohydrological testing and an assessment, as well as a Water Use Licence Application process. This will be undertaken as a separate process, once more detailed information becomes available, outside of these current EA Application for the proposed project. Therefore, the use of existing boreholes on site to source groundwater (if available and if suitable) is only one of the potential water sources (and it is only the third most likely option, as noted above. Water from the municipality is the first option in terms of viability but consideration of other options is vital). The study area is located mainly within quaternary catchment D33B with small sections within quaternary catchment D62F. Both of these quaternary catchments form part of the Lower Orange Water Management Area in the Northern Cape. The groundwater GA for both of the catchments is 45 m^3/ha/a (published on 2 September 2016, in GG 40243, GN 538 (i.e., Revision of GA for the taking and

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			storing of water)). If groundwater will be used for the proposed project, and if more than this is required for the proposed project, or to source all the water from a single property, then an integrated Water Use Licence Application would be required. However, if the proposed project is timed and planned appropriately with regards to groundwater use, all the water can be obtained from groundwater, with the use being Generally Authorised. Registration of the usage in terms of the GA with the DWS would be required. As indicated in the Final EIA Report, this will be undertaken post EA (should such authorisation be granted).
		8. All tank and pipe installations must be done according to the applicable SABS standards to minimize the potential for leakage and contamination of water resources.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted. The proposed project will be designed and developed in line with relevant national and international standards and specifications.
		9. The applicant shall provide the Department with the disposal method of the waste. the applicant shall note that all domestic waste generated on site and any waste associated with the operation be disposed of at licensed landfill site. A signed copy of service agreement shall be submitted to this Department to demonstrate that indeed provision will be made to render such services.	**CSIR:** The EMPr included in Appendix I of the Draft EIA Report did include a number of impact management actions regarding waste management on site and disposal thereof. Refer to Section 10 of the EMPr for waste management impact management actions. The EMPr in the Final EIA Report has been updated to ensure that provision is made for the Applicant to inform the DWS of the disposal method of the waste prior to the commencement of construction. A signed copy of service agreement between the relevant parties to confirm that such services will be rendered will be submitted by the Applicant to the DWS once such information is confirmed (i.e. during the detailed design/engineering phase). The Applicant has attempted to consult with the Renosterberg Local Municipality in order to confirm the supply of services (in terms of water usage, sewage removal, solid waste removal, and electricity requirements) for the proposed project. The municipality was also consulted with as part of the 30-day public review period of the Draft Scoping Report and 30-day public review period of the Draft EIA Report to seek comment on the general proposed project. No feedback was obtained from the municipality. Telephonic communication with a municipal councillor and follow up reminder email correspondence was sent to the various municipal officials during the 30 day comment period on the Draft EIA Report. Refer to Appendix H.4 for such follow up correspondence. Should the local municipality not have adequate capacity available for the handling of waste, provision of water and sewage handling provisions; then the Project

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			Applicant will make use of private contractors to ensure that these services are provided.
		10. The applicant must note that no activities are allowed within 100m of a water resource or within1:100-year flood line (whichever is the greatest), if the proposed activity fall within these criteria, the applicant need to apply for water use license to ensure that the riparian ecological status of the water resource will not be negatively impacted.	**CSIR and Aquatic Biodiversity Specialist:** In terms of the NWA, any activities that take place within the outer edge of the 1 in 100 year flood line and /or delineated riparian habitat, whichever is the greatest distance, measured from the middle of the watercourse of a river, spring, natural channel, lake or dam; within a watercourse; within 100 m of the edge of a watercourse; or within 500 m of a delineated wetland boundary, will require a water use authorisation in terms of Section 21 (c) and Section 21 (i) of the NWA (if the activities have these associated water uses). As indicated in the Final EIA Report, it is likely that a General Authorisation or Water Use Licence will be required for the proposed projects. This will be undertaken post EA (should such authorisation be granted), i.e. consent will be applied for from the DWS for such development.
		11. Please note that any development within 500m from the boundary of any wetland requires a water use licence according to National Water Act (NWA) 1998 (Act No.36 of 1998).	**CSIR:** This comment is noted. Refer to the response provided above to Comment 10 in this section.
		13. Waste needs to be collected and disposed of at a registered municipal site during and after construction, and written agreement should be provided to this department.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted. Refer to the response provided above to Comment 9 in this section.
		14. Please note that all requirements as stipulated in the national water Act (NWA) 1998 (Act no.36 of 1998) must be adhered to. Please feel free to contact this department, should there be any enquiries.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted. The EMPr (Appendix I and Appendix J of this Final EIA Report), and Chapter 4, Chapter 8 (Aquatic Biodiversity Assessment) and Chapter 16 (Geohydrology Assessment) of the Final EIA Report include relevant information on the requirements of the NWA.
4.	27/06/2023 Email Department of Water and Sanitation: Lower Orange Water Management Area (Melinda Jansen)	Good morning Ms Hlengani Please see below response from EMS with regard to the outstanding letters and the due date. Could you please assist with the query below?	**CSIR:** This email is an internal inquiry in response to the CSIR project team reminding the DWS to kindly send that the comments for the Kudu Solar Facilities 7 to 12 by 3 July 2023 when the commenting period closes. A query was also sent to the DWS on 27 June 2023 to determine the acceptability of applications for Water Use Licences or General Authorisations being undertaken post EA (should it be granted) since the proposed development is a REIPPPP project, and various factors need to be considered, such as confirmation of the selected water source in terms of the various options available; and the fact that the proposed projects still need to be subjected to the competitive REIPPPP. Note that precedent has been set in the sense that EAs for renewable energy

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			projects have been granted positively and are not contingent on the application for Water Use Licence or GA. Nevertheless, the relevant applications will be made by the Applicant post EA once relevant investigations have been completed.
5.	05/07/2023 Email Department of Water and Sanitation (Mosala Ntoi)	The application for a WUL or GA can be lodged after the EA. However, keep in mind of all previous comments drafted to you regarding resources protection.	**CSIR:** This email was received from the DWS in response to the above query sent by the CSIR on 27 June 2023 to determine the acceptability of applications for Water Use Licences or General Authorisations being undertaken post EA (should it be granted). The DWS has therefore confirmed that the application for Water Use Licence or General Authorisation can be submitted post EA (should it be granted). All comments submitted by the DWS on the Draft EIA Report have been noted and responded to herein accordingly.

7. Comments received from Eskom

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	08/06/2023 Email Eskom (John Geeringh)	Please send me the KMZ files of the proposed development areas and grid connection as requested earlier.	**CSIR:** The CSIR had originally sent the requested KMZ files to Eskom on 25 January 2023. This was re-sent, along with updated buildable areas on 8 June 2023.
2.	08/06/2023 Email Eskom (John Geeringh)	I thought I received it but I could not find it anywhere?? Sorry for the trouble	**CSIR:** This comment is noted.
3.	08/06/2023 Email Eskom, Grid Planning & Development: Land Rights Transmission Division (Khululwa Gaongalelwe)	I trust you are good. Kindly share Kmz files so that we may check if our Eskom powerlines are not affected. Thank you.	**CSIR:** A follow up email was sent by this stakeholder confirming that this request does not need to be considered, as described below.
4.	08/06/2023 Email	Please ignore my previous email below.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted.

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	Eskom, Grid Planning & Development: Land Rights Transmission Division (Khululwa Gaongalelwe)	Thank you.	
5.	21/06/2023 Email Eskom (John Geeringh)	Please find attached Eskom requirements for work at or near Eskom servitudes and infrastructure, as well as a setbacks guideline for renewable energy developments if I had not sent it earlier.	**CSIR:** The following specifications provided by Eskom were sent to the Applicant for consideration: ▪ Eskom requirements for work in or near Eskom servitudes; and ▪ Renewable Energy Generation Plant Setbacks to Eskom Infrastructure. The above Eskom requirements are duly noted and will be adhered to by the Applicant during the relevant project stages.

8. Comments received from Northern Cape Heritage Department

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	04/07/2023 Email Northern Cape Heritage Department (Andrew Timothy)	I herewith attach a comment for the above proposed development.	**CSIR:** These comments are noted and responded to in detail below.
2.	04/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 04/07/2023; dated 03/07/2023) Northern Cape Heritage Department (Andrew Timothy and Letter signed by Ratha Timothy)	**COMMENT OF NORTHERN CAPE HERITAGE RESOURCES AUTHORITY ON THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT 12 SOLAR PHOTOVOLTATC (PV) FACILITIES (I.E KUDU SOLAR FACILITIES) AND VARIOUS ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR DE AAR, NORTHERN CAPE** Thank you for your indication that the above development is to take place in the Northern Cape.	**CSIR and Heritage Specialist:** A Heritage Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the EIA Process, as included in Chapter 11 of this Final EIA Report. The Heritage Impact Assessment is required under Section 38 (8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA). As noted above (Part B, Section 4), SAHRA has reviewed the Heritage Impact Assessment and issued a final comment. The feedback provided by the Northern Cape Heritage Department in this comment regarding Sections 30, 31 and 38 of the NHRA are noted. With regards

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		Proposed Development The Project Developer, Kudu Solar Facility 1 (Pty) Ltd is proposing to develop a Solar Photovoltaic (PV) power generation facility and associated Electrical Grid Infrastructure (EGI), north-east of the town of De Aar in the Renosterberg Local Municipality and Pixley Ka Seme District Municipality, in the Northern Cape Province. The proposed projects are located approximately 50km from De Aar and 25 km from Petrusville. A total of 12 Solar PV Facilities are being proposed. Each project will have a specific Project Applicant. The proposed projects are referred to as the "Kudu project". The proposed Solar PV Facilities will make use of PV solar technology to generate electricity from energy derived from the sun. Each solar PV Facility will have a range of associated infrastructure, including, but not limited to, an on-site substation complex, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), and is proposed to connect to the existing Hydra-Perseus 400 kV overhead power line via dedicated proposed 132kV power lines, an independent Main Transmission Substation (MTS), and a 400 kV Loop-In-Loop-Out (LILO) Each of the Solar PV Facilities would be its own project and would require its own, separate EA. The same applies to the EGI projects. The extent of the proposed development falls within the requirements for a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) as required by section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 of 1999. Compliance with section 34 Properties (structures) older than 60 years are generally protected under section 34 of the National Heritage Resources Act. Once identified, each property's heritage significance should be assessed. If the intention is to demolish or alter some of them a heritage permit should be obtained from the Northern Cape Heritage Resources Authority. Compliance with section 30	to the comment made on Section 34 of the NHRA, note that the Heritage Impact Assessment notes that “no buildings occur within 400 m of the PV facilities. Some of the livestock watering points have reservoirs older than 60 years but none of these are considered significant heritage resources”. Although some reservoirs occur within PV footprints, none are within the Kudu Solar Facilities 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11 and 12 study areas. However, one such reservoir occurs within the PV5 study area (waypoint 1013) and will be removed; and one is located in the PV7 study area (waypoint 1005) and will be preserved within the facility; whilst another within PV7 will be removed. In addition, one reservoir is located within the PV8 study area (waypoint 996), which will be removed. One reservoir is located immediately outside the PV9 footprint but within the PV10 study area (waypoint 982) and will be removed. At the time of development, the developer will engage with the Northern Cape Heritage Department to determine the way forward with regards to the reservoirs in terms of permits. The no objection from the Northern Cape Heritage Resources Authority is noted with thanks. The EMPr in Appendix I of this Final EIA Report has been updated to include the management action of ensuring that the Northern Cape Heritage Resources Authority is alerted immediately if any new evidence on structures older than 60 years is found during the construction phase. As indicated in Chapter 4 of this Final EIA Report, as best practice all registered Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) and stakeholders will be informed of the submission of the Final EIA Report to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) for decision-making, and will be provided with access to the Final EIA Report via the project website and Google Drive. The Final EIA Report includes a copy of this communication or “Record of Decision” from the Northern Cape Heritage Department, specifically in Appendix H.6. Furthermore, to date, no members of the public or other parties have expressed a legitimate interest in heritage related matters (hence such a notice is not required). SAHRA has however duly commented and provided final comment on the project, and are aware of the project. Note that local newspaper advertisements were placed at the commencement of the 30-day comment period for the Draft Scoping Report to inform the public of the proposed project (i.e. notice of intent to develop) and the report availability.

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		The Renosterberg Local Municipality Spatial Development Framework does not provide a mechanism for the protection of heritage resources the local authority considers to be conservation worthy in terms of its heritage strategies. Neither does it make provision for the protection of buildings or structures entered on the heritage register maintained by the provincial heritage resources authority. There are no identified, graded and designated heritage resources in the development area. Compliance with section 31 The Gamagara Local Mu Renosterberg Local Municipality does not provide mechanism for the protection of heritage areas/conservation areas. There are no identified, grade and even designated heritage/ conservation areas in the development area. Compliance with section 38 The applicant complied with section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act. An Heritage Impact Assessment was submitted as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment. Case Decision: The applicant should note that all buildings over 60 years of age are generally protected by section 34 of the National Heritage Resources Act no.25 of 1999 to ensure that they have not been accidentally left out of the surveys of heritage resources or in areas where heritage resources surveys have been carried out. The author states that there are structures older than 60 years identified and protected under the National Heritage Resources Act no.25 of 1999. That being the case, the applicant has to obtain a heritage permit for each and every structure from the Northern Cape Heritage Resources Authority before any attempt to alter or demolish any part of the identified generally protected structures. As there is indication that the applicant has complied with section 30, 31,34 and 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act, no.25 of 1999, the Northern	Adverts were placed in the: a) Echo/Midland News; b) Noordkaap Bulletin; and c) Bloemnuus. Refer to Appendix F.7 of this EIA Report for a copy of the newspaper advertisements placed during Scoping. Adverts were also placed in the same newspapers for the 30-day comment period on the EIA Report. Refer to Appendix H.3 of this EIA Report for a copy of the content of, and proof of placement of, the newspaper advertisements.

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		Cape Heritage Resources Authority has no objection to the development (in c, terms of the built environment component of the heritage resources) on condition that, if any new evidence on structures older than 60 years is found during implementation process, the office of Northern Cape Heritage Resources will be alerted immediately. The applicant has to inform the public (people in the surrounding area) or any other party that has expressed a bona fide interest in any heritage related aspect of this Record of Decision. The notice of development should be advertised in the local newspapers and with no deviation from the proposed development work. The issuance of this authority does not stop the applicant from obtaining any other concession from any relevant regulatory body for the work intended. Should you have any further queries, please contact the designated official using the case number quoted above in the case header.	

9. Comments received from Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform (DAEARDLR)

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	08/07/2023 Email Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land	Apologies, my meeting took longer than expected. I read through your email and our documents. I understand how you interpreted it as the technical document for our CBA map has no predefined definitions. However, the final map makes distinction between CBA 1, CBA 2, Ecological Support Areas and Other Natural areas.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted with thanks. Based on the feedback from the Northern Cape DAEARDLR the Listed Activities in Listing Notice 3 have been removed from the Application for EA, and an amended Application has been submitted to the DFFE with the Final EIA Report.

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	Reform (DAEARDLR) (Natalie Uys)	I phoned our conservation planner who developed the map to confirm this with him. As discussed with you over the phone, he indicated that the Ecological Support Areas were not listed under listing notice 3 (as with Gauteng and Westen Cape) due to the size of the Northern Cape Province, the size of our corridors and the levels of development. I hope this clarifies the matter. ***Note from the CSIR: This email was submitted by the Northern Cape DAEARDLR after a specific query was sent by the CSIR in order to address a comment from the DFFE.***	

10. Comments received from General Stakeholders and I&APS

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/ I&AP	COMMENT	RESPONSE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) / APPLICANT / SPECIALIST
1.	03/06/2023 Email Member of NPO from De Aar ([redacted])	I would like to enquire, we are a registered NPO from DE AAR Northern Cape, we assist needy families and young people using drugs and substance abuse. Also train them for entrepreneurship. Also cook and give food parcels. Can the company please assist us with funds, we'd be so glad because it will assist a lot of people. Our contact details are [redacted]	**CSIR:** This comment is noted, and an email response was provided to this stakeholder explaining that the information has been forwarded to the Applicant for potential consideration. Refer to Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report for a copy of the follow up correspondence sent.
2.	12/06/2023 Email Solagroup ([redacted])	The notification is hereby acknowledged. Could you kindly share the KML file of the areas affected by the proposed development? Your feedback will be highly appreciated.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted. The requested KMZ file of the proposed development was shared with this stakeholder on 21 June 2023. Refer to Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report for a copy of the follow up correspondence sent.

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3.	21/06/2023 Email Solagroup ([redacted])	Thanks for sharing.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted with thanks and was received from the stakeholder after the KMZ files were sent.
4.	22/06/2023 Email BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	Many thanks for following up. BirdLife South Africa does not have the capacity to review and comment on the many EIAs for renewable energy underway. If you have any particular bird-related questions or concerns regarding the project please let us know.	**CSIR:** This comment is noted and was received from BirdLife South Africa following the release of a reminder email by the CSIR on 22 June 2023 to request for comments on the Draft EIA Report. The capacity constraints of the organisation are understood. Going forward, the project team will contact BirdLife SA with project specific avifaunal concerns or queries. Another email was also sent to BirdLife South Africa in response to this comment explaining that there are no particular bird related questions and that the sensitivities identified by the avifauna specialist for avoidance have been avoided by the project layout; and the specialist states that overall, the post-mitigation significance is moderate to low; that no fatal flaws were identified; and that the proposed projects are supported with the understanding that mitigation measures will be implemented. Mitigation measures recommended by the specialist have been included in the EMPrs as well. Refer to Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report for a copy of the follow up correspondence sent.
5.	23/06/2023 Email Africoast ([redacted])	To whom it may concern: I trust all is well. I am reaching out to request the date and location of the Public Participation for the ABO KUDU Solar PV projects? Would you also kindly provide the MS Teams Link to the aforementioned. Thanks in advance, your assistance is greatly appreciated.	**CSIR:** A public meeting was not included in the approved Plan of Study for EIA and was not planned for the Kudu Solar PV Project. An email was sent to this stakeholder explaining this, and the stakeholder was also informed that if they needed additional information on the project or if they would like to have a discussion, a telephonic call could be arranged; or alternatively, the stakeholder was reminded to kindly send through comments via email by 3 July 2023. Refer to Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report for a copy of this email correspondence, and Appendix H.4 for proof of receipt of this email by the stakeholder (i.e. read receipt was sent by the stakeholder confirming receipt of this email). Not holding a public meeting is not a flaw in the Scoping and EIA Process, as various measures were undertaken to seek comments and concerns from stakeholders. Telephonic calls were held with various key stakeholders, especially those that expressed concerns during the Scoping Phase, in order to inform them of the availability of the Draft EIA Reports for comment, and to seek comment.

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			Refer to Chapter 4 and Appendix H of this Final EIA Report for feedback on the Public Participation Process undertaken during the EIA Phase.
6.	26/06/2023 Email Adjacent Landowner ([redacted])	Attached my comments as an registered interested and affected party to the proposed Kudu development.	**CSIR:** These comments are noted and responded to in detail below.
7.	26/06/2023. (Letter received via email on 26/06/2023) Adjacent Landowner ([redacted])	INPUT AND OBJECTION TOWARDS THE KUDU DEVELOPEMET I registered as an interested and affected party to the proposed Kudu development in the Philipstown ditrict. Paragraphs 1 to 3 was mentioned in my previous objection. 1. We understand according to documents at our disposal that your development is a massive one proposed on only two farms. As a neighbour who has been farming for my entire life in the Karoo, I want to know what the water use of this project will be. Further, I also request information on measures that you have put in place to test the availability of water resources. 2. According to the layouts of the solar farms, it appears the majority of certain farms will be covered almost entirely under panels. What is your company's viewpoint and understanding of the subdivision of agricultural land act (Act 70 of 1970)? How would the act impact on your proposed developments? 3. What benefits would your development have for the farming community of Philipstown district? **4. I want to emphasize paragraph 3 as you emphasize the positive socio-economic benefits for the farming community in your environmental reports. Your proposed model will in fact have the exact opposite effect. The alternative model where approximately 20 farms get the benefit from solar development will definitely benefit 20 farmers and their farmworkers, while a model that enrich only 2 farmers will**	**CSIR**: The comments received are noted and responded to below. Responses are provided by the CSIR, unless stated otherwise: ▪ **I&AP Registration**: This I&AP was pre-identified and included on the initial project I&AP database during the Project Initiation Phase (i.e. for the release of the Background Information Document), and maintained for the release of the Draft Scoping Report and Draft EIA Report. Refer to Appendix E of this Final EIA Report for a copy of this database. It is also noted that during the Draft Scoping Report comment period, this stakeholder provided comment on a letterhead detailing the "[redacted]". During the Draft EIA Report comment period, this letterhead was not used, but the same postal address was noted in both correspondence, including the same contact person. ▪ **Previous Objection / Comments Submitted During the Scoping Phase**: This I&AP submitted comments, dated 30 January 2023, on the Draft Scoping Report for the proposed Kudu Solar Facilities, which was made available for a 30-day comment period extending from extending from 9 December 2022 to 30 January 2023 (excluding the regulated shutdown period). These comments were included in Appendix E.10 of the Final Scoping Report and addressed in detail in the Comments and Responses Report included in Appendix E.11 of the Final Scoping Report. The Final Scoping Report was then submitted to the DFFE in February 2023 for consideration. In line with best practice, all registered I&APs were informed via email on 14 February 2023 of the submission of the Final Scoping Report to DFFE and were provided with links to the Google Drive and project website where the Final Scoping Report could be accessed. In this correspondence (refer to Appendix F.13 of this Final EIA Report), the registered I&APs were informed that all comments and issues raised as part of the 30-day comment

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		have no positive socioeconomic effects on the greater farming community and will not enhance agricultural sustainability.	period on the Draft Scoping Report were captured and responded to in Comments and Responses Reports included as appendices to the Final Scoping Reports (i.e. Appendix E.11 (Part 3 of Appendix E) of the Final Scoping Reports). Therefore, the comments previously submitted during the Scoping Phase were responded to in the Final Scoping Report, and also responded to in the relevant specialist assessments in the EIA Phase. Also note that for information and record purposes, all comments raised during the Scoping Phase were also included in Appendix F of the Draft EIA Report which was also made available for a 30-day comment period extending from 2 June 2023 to 3 July 2023. This has been retained in the Final EIA Report. ▪ **Interest in the approval or refusal of the proposed Kudu Solar Facility Application**: Research has been undertaken to determine the farm property that is owned / in control by this stakeholder. Based on research undertaken, it is understood that another Solar PV Facility (proposed by another Applicant) is planned on the aforementioned said property (i.e. Phase 3 of the Crossroads Green Energy Cluster of Renewable Energy Facilities, Savannah Environmental, 2023. Scoping Report Tafelkop Solar PV Facility, Northern Cape Province[5]; Savannah Environmental, 2023. EIA Report Tafelkop Solar PV Facility, Northern Cape Province[6]). The Scoping and EIA Process for Phase 3 of the above development has not commenced yet. In line with the above, this stakeholder is reminded of Regulation 43 (1) of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) which states that "*a registered interested and affected party is entitled to comment, in writing, on all reports or plans submitted to such party during the public participation process contemplated in these Regulations and to bring to the attention of the proponent or applicant any issues which that party believes may be of significance to the consideration of the application, provided that the interested and affected party discloses any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which that party may have in the approval or refusal of the application*".

[5] https://savannahsa.com/public-documents/energy-generation/hydra-b-cluster/
[6] https://sahris.sahra.org.za/cases/proposed-tafelkop-solar-pv-facility-near-petrusville-de-aar-phillipstown-northern-cape

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			▪ **<u>Number of Farm Portions Affected</u>**: The Kudu Solar Facility development consists of 12 Solar Facilities and associated infrastructure. Refer to Chapter 2 of the Final EIA Report for a full description of the affected properties per project, as summarised below: ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 1:** ▪ Remaining Extent of the Farm Bas Berg No. 88. ▪ Remaining Extent of Portion 3 of the Farm Bas Berg No. 88. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 2:** ▪ Remaining Extent of the Farm Bas Berg No. 88. ▪ Remaining Extent of Portion 3 of the Farm Bas Berg No. 88. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 3:** ▪ Remaining Extent of Portion 3 of the Farm Bas Berg No. 88. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 4:** ▪ Remaining Extent of Portion 3 of the Farm Bas Berg No. 88. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 5:** ▪ Remaining Extent of Portion 3 of the Farm Bas Berg No. 88. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 6:** ▪ Remaining Extent of Portion 2 (Middel Plaats) (a Portion of Portion 1) of the Farm Grasspan No. 40. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 7:** ▪ Remaining Extent of Portion 2 (Middel Plaats) (a Portion of Portion 1) of the Farm Grasspan No. 40. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 8:** ▪ Remaining Extent of the Farm Annex Wolve Kuil No. 41 ▪ Portion 1 (Wolve Kuil West) of the Farm Annex Wolve Kuil No. 41. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 9:** ▪ Portion 1 (Wolve Kuil West) of the Farm Annex Wolve Kuil No. 41. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 10:**

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			▪ Portion 1 (Wolve Kuil West) of the Farm Annex Wolve Kuil No. 41. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 11:** ▪ Portion 1 (Wolve Kuil West) of the Farm Annex Wolve Kuil No. 41. ▪ Portion 2 of the Farm Wolve Kuil No. 43. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 12:** ▪ Portion 2 of the Farm Wolve Kuil No. 43. Therefore, all twelve Solar PV Facilities are planned to occur on up to six farm properties (**not two farms / properties**). The title deeds for these affected properties have more than two owners. The total development footprint for all twelve Solar PV Facilities is estimated at 3 268 ha. The total extent of the study area assessed is approximately 8 150 ha. Therefore, the proposed estimated development footprint of the proposed projects comprises 40 % of the total extent of the study area assessed. ▪ **Water Usage**: *Response provided by the CSIR and Geohydrology Specialists*: With regards to water usage, the relevant information was provided in Chapter 2 of the DSR, Chapter 2 of the FSR, Chapter 2 of the Draft EIA Report, as well as the Geohydrology Scoping Level Assessment (Scoping Phase) and Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of the Draft EIA Report) and has been retained in the Final EIA Report. Each Kudu Solar Facility will require the following approximate water volumes: ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 1**: 9 000 m^3 of water per year for the construction phase and 1 000 m^3 of water per year for the operational phase. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 2**: 9 000 m^3 of water per year for the construction phase and 1 000 m^3 of water per year for the operational phase. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 3**: 9 000 m^3 of water per year for the construction phase and 1 000 m^3 of water per year for the operational phase.

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			○ **Kudu Solar Facility 4**: 9 000 m^3 of water per year for the construction phase and 1 000 m^3 of water per year for the operational phase. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 5**: 18 000 m^3 of water per year for the construction phase and 2 000 m^3 of water per year for the operational phase. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 6**: 9 000 m^3 of water per year for the construction phase and 1 000 m^3 of water per year for the operational phase. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 7**: 18 000 m^3 of water per year for the construction phase and 2 000 m^3 of water per year for the operational phase. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 8**: 18 000 m^3 of water per year for the construction phase and 2 000 m^3 of water per year for the operational phase. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 9**: 9 000 m^3 of water per year for the construction phase and 1 000 m^3 of water per year for the operational phase. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 10**: 9 000 m^3 of water per year for the construction phase and 1 000 m^3 of water per year for the operational phase. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 11**: 18 000 m^3 of water per year for the construction phase and 2 000 m^3 of water per year for the operational phase. ○ **Kudu Solar Facility 12**: 9 000 m^3 of water per year for the construction phase and 1 000 m^3 of water per year for the operational phase. Although the water requirements for the decommissioning phase for all Kudu Solar Facilities are unknown at this stage, it is expected that the water requirements for the decommissioning phase for each Kudu Solar Facility will not exceed the water requirements of the construction phase.

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			Water required for the construction, operational and decommissioning phases will either be sourced from the following sources (**in order of priority and likelihood**): o Local municipality i.e. most likely trucked in or made available for collection at the Local Municipal Water Treatment Plant via a metered standpipe; o Investigation into a third-party water supplier which may include private services companies. This would most likely be trucked in; o Existing boreholes on site to source groundwater (if available and if suitable); or o New boreholes that will be drilled on site to source groundwater (if available and if suitable), which will be subject to complete geohydrological testing and an assessment, as well as a Water Use Licence Application process, as well as the necessary Environmental Assessment process (if required). This will be undertaken as a separate process, once more detailed information becomes available, outside of the current Application for EA for the Solar PV Facility and associated infrastructure. Therefore, the use of existing boreholes on site to source groundwater (if available and if suitable) is only one of the potential water sources (and it is only the third most likely option, as noted above. Water from the municipality is the first option in terms of viability but consideration of other options is vital). A hydrocensus was undertaken as part of the Geohydrology Assessment in order to visit selected boreholes and landowners to obtain information such as yields and to measure the field chemistry to assess the groundwater quality (pH, total dissolved solids (TDS) and electrical conductivity (EC)). An analysis of the hydrocensus chemistry results was also undertaken in terms of the SANS 241-1: 2015 and the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) (1998) Standards. Based on this, the groundwater quality in the study area is generally of good quality in terms of pH, TDS and EC. It is possible that the groundwater can be used for potable and domestic purposes with only minor treatment however a full laboratory analysis will be

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			required. With regards to the cleaning of panels, salts could be removed from the groundwater by thermal distillation (i.e. boiling since salt has a much higher boiling point than water) or by membrane separation (commonly reverse osmosis). Both of these techniques are possible but financial viability would have to be determined before commissioning as both techniques are costly on a large scale. Water pipelines may need to be constructed to transfer groundwater from existing boreholes or they may be transported by trucks from the boreholes to the site. Groundwater may also need to be stored on site in suitable containers or reservoir tanks during the construction and operational phases. Ground water storage may trigger the need for a Water Use Licence if there is more than 2000 m^3 stored on the site per year in an open container. These responses are expanded on in Section 16.3 and Section 16.6 of the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of this Final EIA Report). ▪ **Water Availability:** *Response provided by the CSIR and Geohydrology Specialists:* With regards to the measures in place to test the availability of water resources, a hydrocensus was conducted as part of the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of the Final EIA Report) in order to visit selected boreholes and landowners to obtain information such as yields and to measure the field chemistry to assess the groundwater quality (pH, TDS and EC). However, no drill records or yield test data exist for production or wind pump boreholes to clarify yields and geological logs. Therefore, estimations for groundwater supply capacity for the area are based on regional datasets. For each PV Facility, the anticipated demands are less than the regional yield potential of the underlying aquifer (0.5 – 2.0 L/s). This is considered appropriate for a study undertaken as part of an EIA Process. The study area is located mainly within quaternary catchment D33B with small sections within quaternary catchment D62F. Both of these quaternary catchments form part of the Lower Orange Water Management Area in the Northern Cape. The groundwater General Authorisation (GA) for both of the catchments is 45 m^3/ha/a (published on 2 September 2016, in GG 40243, GN 538 (i.e. Revision of GA for the taking and storing of water). If the

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			proposed projects are timed and planned appropriately with regards to groundwater use, all the water can be obtained from groundwater, with the use being Generally Authorised. A comprehensive breakdown of the expected water use against the expected available groundwater and Generally Authorised water use volumes for each Kudu Solar Facility is given in Chapter 16 of the Final EIA Report. In the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of the Final EIA Report), the impact of the proposed abstraction on groundwater is predicted to be of low significance, with effective implementation of mitigation actions. These actions include adherence to the borehole's safe yield as well as monitoring of groundwater levels at key points across the affected area throughout the construction and operational phases. This was captured at the Scoping Phase, as well as the EIA Phase (Chapter 16 of the Final EIA Report). As indicated above, and in the Draft EIA Report, and retained in the Final EIA Report, the use of existing boreholes to source groundwater (if available and suitable) is only the third most likely water use option. Potential environmental impacts pertaining to local groundwater resources have been considered in the EIA, and various management inputs have been recommended to ensure safe and sustainable management of the groundwater resources in the area. However, these impact management actions are not mandatory if water is indeed sourced from the local municipality or via a third party. These recommendations only apply if groundwater will be used for the project. The management inputs are captured in two phases. Phase 1 will be required to determine if the groundwater is of a suitable quality and quantity; and Phase 2 will only be required if the groundwater quality and quantity are determined more accurately and confirmed it is suitable for use. Refer to the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of this Final EIA Report) for additional information regarding the monitoring phases proposed, which mention the following: o Undertake a Phase 1 programme to determine if the groundwater is of a suitable quality and quantity for use during construction,

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			operations and decommissioning. The following should be undertaken: ▪ Undertake a full laboratory analysis to confirm that the groundwater can be used for potable and domestic purposes, and determine the treatment required. The Geohydrology Assessment has confirmed that the groundwater is generally of good quality in terms of pH, EC and TDS. ▪ The water quality is not considered suitable for panel washing as it will result in salts precipitating on the panels. The salts could be removed from the groundwater by thermal distillation (i.e. boiling since salt has a much higher boiling point than water) or by membrane separation (commonly reverse osmosis). Confirm what mechanisms could be used to remove the salts from the groundwater for panel cleaning. This will entail undertaking a financial viability investigation / feasibility study. ▪ Undertake necessary tests to confirm if the groundwater is suitable for construction and concrete batching. ▪ Conduct scientific yield tests to determine sustainable abstraction volumes from boreholes that are to be utilised. o Undertake a Phase 2 programme once the groundwater quality and quantity are determined more accurately and confirmed it is suitable for use. The following steps will be required for sustainable management of ground water resources: ▪ Acquire any historical monitoring data for the region. ▪ Determine the volume of groundwater abstracted by farmers annually prior to construction by flow meters. ▪ Ensure water saving techniques are instated and adhered to.

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			▪ Ensure that proper bunding and secondary containment measures are in place for BESS facilities and are designed by an appropriate competent person. ▪ Ensure that environmentally safe cleaning agents that breakdown naturally and do not cause adverse effects are used. ▪ In the event that the entire Kudu Solar Facility development is constructed simultaneously, adherence to the recommended mitigation measures should be strictly followed to prevent over-abstraction. ▪ Instate an appropriate monitoring program including monitoring of groundwater quality, water levels (ideally by water level loggers and hand readings using a dip meter), and abstracted volumes. These data should be reported on at the least biannually. ▪ Yield test all monitoring boreholes according to SANS 10299-4:2003, Part 4 – Test pumping of water boreholes. This includes a Step Test, Constant Discharge Test and recovery monitoring. Refer to Section 16.9.1 of the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of this Final EIA Report), which details the proposed monitoring programme. It is recommended that at least three boreholes in the vicinity of each cluster of projects be allocated for monitoring purposes. These can either be existing boreholes, or newly drilled monitoring boreholes as this will allow for monitoring of the groundwater quality and groundwater levels across the affected area. The optimum position of the monitoring boreholes should be based on availability of open space surrounding the planned buildable area; however, it is recommended that one borehole be located up-gradient of the affected area to monitor background values and the other two boreholes be down-gradient of the affected area. Three general monitoring sites are presented in this section of the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of the Final EIA Report), however these are in an idealised scenario and any existing boreholes in the vicinity of the proposed sites can be utilised for monitoring purposes. Furthermore, one or more monitoring boreholes should

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			present within 100 meters of notable contamination points (i.e. BESS and refuelling stations) as well as near project specific groundwater abstraction points. The borehole water level (if present) and the groundwater quality should be monitored on a monthly basis during construction phase and then on a quarterly basis during operational phase, so as to determine seasonal fluctuation. It is recommended that groundwater monitoring be undertaken at the proposed site in accordance with guidelines set out in the publication by DWAF (1998). The various aspects of the monitoring are presented in Section 16.9.1 of the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of the Final EIA Report), along with relevant recommendations. If ground water is to be used for the proposed project, and if the groundwater quality and quantity are determined more accurately and confirmed it is suitable for use, then adoption of the monitoring program (described above) will rapidly detect if there are any adverse effects to the groundwater levels in the affected area. Refer to Section 16.4, Section 16.6 and Section 16.8 of the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of the Final EIA Report) for additional information. ▪ **Coverage of the Affected Farm Properties**: *Response provided by the CSIR and Agriculture Specialist:* This comment was addressed at the Scoping Phase in the Comments and Responses Report included in Appendix E.11 of the Final Scoping Report; and also addressed in the Agriculture Compliance Statement (Chapter 6 of the Final EIA Report). During the construction phase, one of the main activities will include removal of vegetation for the proposed infrastructure, where necessary, within the approved development footprint to facilitate the construction and/or establishment of infrastructure. Note that vegetation is planned to be trimmed within the PV array area (and not removed completely). Therefore, even though it appears that the majority of certain farms will be covered by Solar PV panels, not all the vegetation will be removed completely. In addition, with regards to the concern about the use of large areas of agricultural land and its impact on farming, the Agricultural Specialist has also noted that in order for South Africa to develop the renewable energy

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			generation that it urgently needs, agriculturally zoned land will need to be used for renewable energy generation. It is far more preferable to incur a cumulative loss of agricultural land that is of limited agricultural potential in a region such as the one assessed, which has no crop production potential, and low grazing capacity, than to lose agricultural land that has a higher potential, and that is much scarcer, to renewable energy development elsewhere in the country. It must also be noted that the initial proposed development footprint, as communicated at the Project Initiation (Background Information Document) Phase, was reduced based on discussions with the landowners and to accommodate the current land use. ▪ **Implications of SALA**: *Response provided by the CSIR and Agriculture Specialist:* An Agricultural Compliance Statement was undertaken during the Scoping and EIA Process in line with the requirements of the Assessment Protocols published in GN 320. The Compliance Statement is included in Chapter 6 of the Final EIA Report. It provides feedback on the relevant legislation and permits required for the proposed project (See Section 6 of the Agriculture Compliance Statement). It states that a renewable energy facility requires approval from the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) if the facility is on agriculturally zoned land. There are two approvals that apply. The first is a No Objection Letter for the change in land use issued by the Deputy Director General (Agricultural Production, Health and Food Safety, Natural Resources and Disaster Management). The second required approval is a consent for long-term lease in terms of the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act (Act 70 of 1970) (SALA). If DALRRD approval for the development has already been obtained in the form of the No Objection letter, then SALA approval should not present any difficulties. Note that SALA approval is not required if the lease is over the entire farm portion. SALA approval (if required) can only be applied for once the Municipal Rezoning Certificate and EA is in hand. The Applicant has taken cognisance of this and will apply for the relevant approval in terms of SALA once the necessary pre-requisite permits are obtained.

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			▪ **Benefits to the Farming Community**: *Response provided by the CSIR, Socio-Economic Specialists and Agriculture Specialist:* In terms of potential benefits that the proposed Kudu Solar Facilities will have on the farming community of Philipstown district, it is acknowledged that the proposed projects (at its closest point) are located about 20 km from Phillpstown. Nevertheless, the Agriculture Compliance Statement (Chapter 6 of the Final EIA Report) has noted that one of the positive impacts of the proposed projects is the improved security against stock theft and other crime due to the presence of security infrastructure and security personnel at the proposed Solar PV Facilities. It is believed that this positive impact will extend to the surround farms also. Furthermore, a Socio-Economic Assessment was also undertaken during the Scoping and EIA Process, which is included in Chapter 13 of the Final EIA Report. The study identified the following positive socio-economic impacts as a result of the proposed projects: o **Construction Phase**: ▪ Creation of employment and business opportunities, and the opportunity for skills development and on-site training. o **Operational Phase:** ▪ The establishment of infrastructure to improve energy security and support the renewable sector. ▪ Creation of employment opportunities. ▪ Benefits to the affected landowners. ▪ Benefits associated with the socio-economic contributions to community development. As noted in the Final EIA Report, the construction phase will create various employment opportunities. Based on the Socio-Economic Assessment, the majority of the employment opportunities, specifically the low and semi-skilled opportunities, are likely to be available to local residents and communities in the area. The majority of the beneficiaries are likely to be historically disadvantaged (HD) members of the community. A percentage of the wage bill will be spent in the local economy which will also create opportunities for local businesses in the local towns in the area. Given relatively high local unemployment levels and limited job opportunities in the

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			area, this will represent a significant, if localised, positive social benefit. In addition, the sector of the local economy that is most likely to benefit from the proposed development is the local service industry, linked to accommodation, catering, cleaning, transport, and security, etc. associated with the construction workers on the site. Also, some of the recommended mitigation measures in the Socio-Economic Assessment (Chapter 13 of the Final EIA Report), are: o Preparation and implementation of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) prior to and during the construction phase. o Preparation and implementation of a Community Health, Safety and Security Plan (CHSSP) prior to and during the construction phase. o The proponent should consider the option of establishing a Monitoring Committee (MC) for the construction phase that include representatives from local landowners, farming associations, and the local municipality. This MC should be established prior to commencement of the construction phase and form part of the SEP. The above will therefore be beneficial to the farming community of the Philipstown region, as it is likely that farming associations will also form part of the representatives on the proposed MC and will therefore be consistently aware of the proposed development progression and activities, and this platform can be used to report and resolve incidents. In addition, during the operational phase, the majority of low and semi-skilled beneficiaries are likely to be HD members of the community. Procurement during the operational phase will also create opportunities for the local economy and businesses. Furthermore, the establishment of a community benefit structure (typically, a Community Trust) also creates an opportunity to support local economic development in the area. In addition, with regards to the benefits associated with the socio-economic development contributions, the Socio-Economic Assessment notes that socio-economic development (SED) contributions are an important focus of the Renewable

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			Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) and are aimed at ensuring that local communities benefit directly from the investments attracted into the area. These contributions are linked to Community Trusts and accrue over the project operation life and, in so doing, create an opportunity to generate a steady revenue stream over an extended period. This revenue can be used to fund development initiatives in the area and support the local community. The long-term duration of the revenue stream also allows local municipalities and communities to undertake long term planning for the area. Therefore, potential benefits of the proposed projects to the surrounding communities, including farming communities, have been identified in the Scoping and EIA Process. ▪ **Agricultural Sustainability**: *Response provided by the CSIR and Agriculture Specialist:* The concern regarding the proposed development not viewed as enhancing agricultural sustainability is noted. This was responded to during the Scoping Phase as well. The Agricultural Compliance Statement (Chapter 6 of the Final EIA Report) has confirmed that the proposed projects are acceptable from an agricultural perspective, and that the agricultural sensitivity of the site is less than high (mainly low and medium). The Compliance Statement also discusses the allowable development limits for renewable energy developments of more than 20 MW, as per the Agriculture Assessment Protocol of GN320, which essentially refers to the area of a particular agricultural sensitivity category that can be directly impacted (i.e. taken up by the physical footprint) by a renewable energy development. The agricultural footprint is defined in the protocol as the area that is directly occupied by all infrastructure, including roads, hard standing areas, buildings etc., that are associated with the renewable energy facility during its operational phase, and that result in the exclusion of that land from potential cultivation or grazing. It excludes all areas that were already occupied by roads and other infrastructure prior to the establishment of the energy facility but includes the surface area required for expanding existing infrastructure (e.g. widening existing roads). It therefore represents the total land that is actually excluded from agricultural use as a result of the renewable energy

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			facility (the agricultural footprint). The allowable development limit for non-cropland with a land capability value of less than 8, as this site has been confirmed to be, is 2.5 ha per MW. The proposed facilities are within this limit, as described in Section 9.9 of the Agriculture Compliance Statement (Chapter 6 of the Final EIA Report). The above being said, as noted in the Agriculture Compliance Statement, the proposed development will provide reliable and predictable income to the owners of the land on which the proposed project will be constructed and operated on. This income is likely to increase their financial security and could improve farming operations and productivity through increased investment into farming - therefore improved agricultural sustainability. For neighbouring landowners, the proposed project will potentially create various impacts, such as visual impacts, as described in Chapter 10 of the Final EIA Report. However, as indicated by the Agricultural specialist, the proposed project will have no impact on the agricultural production potential of adjacent farms, and therefore, no impact on agricultural sustainability. South Africa needs agricultural production for food security. It also urgently needs renewable energy development. In order to achieve its renewable energy generation requirements, agriculturally zoned land will inevitably need to be used for renewable energy generation. In order to ensure the sustainability of agricultural production and food security in the country, it is important that renewable energy be located in agricultural areas that have low agricultural production potential, such as the assessed site, and that scarce arable land in productive areas is not sacrificed to renewable energy. The site under question is some of the country's lowest potential agricultural land. Rather than endangering agricultural sustainability, the location of this project is optimal for protecting agricultural sustainability. Furthermore, it is also important to reiterate that the Agriculture Compliance Statement has been undertaken in compliance with the Protocol for the Specialist Assessment and Minimum Report Content Requirements of Environmental Impacts on Agricultural Resources by Onshore Wind and/or Solar Energy Generation Facilities where the Electricity Output is 20 MW or

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			more, as published in March 2020 (GN 320). The Protocols were gazetted by the National DFFE to ensure that the correct information and methodologies are adopted by specialists undertaking assessments as part of the EIA Process. Complying with the protocols therefore shows that relevant legislation has been adhered to in this regard. ▪ **Benefit of Affected Landowners**: *Response provided by the CSIR, Socio-Economic Specialists, Agriculture Specialist and Applicant:* Also refer to the response provided to the comment regarding the "Number of Farm Portions Affected". The comment from this stakeholder states "*The alternative model where approximately 20 farms get the benefit from solar development will definitely benefit 20 farmers and their farmworkers…*". It is understood that the stakeholder is referring to the Crossroads Green Energy Cluster of Solar PV developments that are being proposed by another developer. According to the EIA Report for the Crossroads Green Energy Cluster, this project consists of a total of up to 21 Solar PV Facilities, with a total of 3 050 MW consisting of three phases (as opposed to 12 Solar PV Facilities totalling 2 180 MW for the Kudu Solar Facilities). The Scoping and EIA Process for Phase 1 of the Green Energy Cluster project was launched in 2023 and consists of 9 projects. Phases 2 and 3 consisting of 6 projects each will be undertaken at a later stage (Savannah Environmental, 2023. EIA Report Tafelkop Solar PV Facility, Northern Cape Province[7]). The Crossroads Green Energy Cluster project is a larger project compared to the Kudu Solar Facilities; hence it is expected to cover a larger area, and therefore affect more farm portions. However, in this region it is noticed that one farmer may own more than one farm portion, therefore it does not necessarily mean that there will be more landowners that benefit if more farm portions are affected. Even though more than 20 farm portions are affected by the Crossroads Green Energy Cluster project, it is unclear how many landowners will benefit for all three phases of the development. In the case of the Kudu Solar Facilities, the entire study

[7] https://sahris.sahra.org.za/cases/proposed-tafelkop-solar-pv-facility-near-petrusville-de-aar-phillipstown-northern-cape

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			area assessed consisted of eight farm portions, and all 12 Kudu Solar Facilities will be placed on six farm portions, which are owned by different landowners, which as per the title deeds consists of three entities. The Applicant did not set out to specifically seek these eight farm portions to "enrich only 2 farmers". As noted in Chapter 5 of the Final EIA Report, various factors were considered by the Applicant in selecting the preferred site / study area. These factors include land availability, environmental sensitivities, irradiation levels, distance to the national grid, site accessibility, topography, current land use and landowner willingness. The Applicant also considered adjacent farm portions and approached several landowners surrounding the greater Kudu area and offered multiple land agreements; however, this exercise was unsuccessful as the land had already been secured by other developers or the landowners declined ABO Wind's offer. Furthermore, some of the main determining points for the Project Applicant was to find suitable, developable land in one contiguous block to (i) optimize design, (ii) minimize construction and operational costs, and (iii) minimize sprawling development and limit the impact footprints. In addition, the proximity to the proposed Eskom Hydra B Substation, as well as existing Eskom 400 kV power lines, was also a major determinant for identifying suitable sites for the proposed development. It must also be noted that the initial proposed development footprint, as communicated at the Project Initiation (Background Information Document) Phase, was reduced based on discussions with the landowners and to accommodate the current land use. Note that whilst income generation for the affected landowners is listed as a positive impact in the Agriculture Compliance Statement and Socio-Economic Assessment, other wider community benefits have also been identified, as noted above in the response to the comment raised on "Benefits to the Farming Community". In addition, while the number of landowners associated with the Kudu Solar Facilities project may be lower, the broader farming community in the area would be in a position to benefit from the SED contributions from both the Kudu Solar and Crossroads Green Energy PV

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			projects (should the projects go ahead). The potential opportunities for maximising these combined opportunities should be explored in consultation with the local farming association/s.
8.	27/06/2023 (Letter received via email on 27/06/2023) Adjacent/Surrounding Landowner ([redacted])	INPUT AND OBJECTION TOWARDS THE KUDU DEVELOPEMET I registered as an interested and affected party to the proposed Kudu development in the Philipstown ditrict. Paragraphs 1 to 3 was mentioned in my previous objection. 1. We understand according to documents at our disposal that your development is a massive one proposed on only two farms. As a neighbour who has been farming for my entire life in the Karoo, I want to know what the water use of this project will be. Further, I also request information on measures that you have put in place to test the availability of water resources. 2. According to the layouts of the solar farms, it appears the majority of certain farms will be covered almost entirely under panels. What is your company's viewpoint and understanding of the subdivision of agricultural land act (Act 70 of 1970)? How would the act impact on your proposed developments? 3. What benefits would your development have for the farming community of Philipstown district? **4. I want to emphasize paragraph 2:** In many meetings between government and agriculture, the importance of food security is emphasized. Agricultural unions such as Agri SA, to which most farmers in our area belong, will therefore support the legislation that no more than 10% of agricultural land per farm must be used for other purposes. I feel that this point should be respected by all developers.	**CSIR**: The comments received are noted and responded to below: ▪ **I&AP Registration**: This I&AP was pre-identified and included on the initial project I&AP database during the Project Initiation Phase (i.e. for the release of the Background Information Document), and maintained for the release of the Draft Scoping Report and Draft EIA Report. Refer to Appendix E of this Final EIA Report for a copy of this database. ▪ **Note on comments raised**: The comments raised here in Paragraph 1, Paragraph 2 and Paragraph 3 are the same as that raised above in Row 7. Kindly refer to the responses provided above in Row 7, specifically with regards to the Previous Objection / Comments Submitted During the Scoping Phase; Number of Farm Portions Affected; Water Usage; Water Availability; Coverage of the Affected Farm Properties; Implications of SALA; Benefits to the Farming Community; Agricultural Sustainability; and Benefit of Affected Landowners. ▪ **10% of Agricultural Land**: *Response provided by the CSIR and Agriculture Specialist:* The 10% of agricultural land rule has been addressed in detail in Section 9.10 of the Agricultural Compliance Statement (Chapter 6 of the Final EIA Report). **It is imperative to note that the 10% rule is not formalised or gazetted as legislation**. This was an internal guideline formulated and adopted by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development (DALRRD) committee that makes approval decisions on rezoning and related SALA applications, and it was used in the past for renewable energy applications (however it is understood to apparently no longer be in use). The Agricultural Compliance Statement explains that the 10% rule that has been used by DALRRD is not considered to be constructive for assessing the agricultural approval of this project. In this agricultural environment, the rule is likely to simply hinder solar energy development without serving any benefit to agriculture. This rule states that a solar energy facility may not utilise more than 10% of the surface area of a farm. Its aim

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			was to ensure that each farm unit remained predominantly agricultural rather than certain farms abandoning agricultural production in favour of renewable energy generation. The rule was established when solar energy development was new and unknown. However, it is now evident that solar energy development is less of a threat to agricultural production and the agricultural economy than it was initially feared that it might be. Solar energy development has demonstrated benefits for agriculture and has potential to be integrated into the rural agricultural economy. It is a source of much needed income into rural areas. The 10% rule is now considered unnecessary and impractical. It is far more constructive and effective to focus on integrating renewable energy with agricultural production in a way that provides benefits to agriculture and focuses on minimising loss of future agricultural production potential. This can be done by using only the production potential of land as the deciding factor for solar energy approval. The concern with the 10% rule and only utilising up to 10% of each farm, is that it forces solar facilities to be spread across the landscape in a way that is impractical and financially non-viable and creates a much larger environmental impact footprint in the landscape. Furthermore, it does not actually make any difference to the loss of agricultural production potential or to the impact on the agricultural economy of the area. From an agricultural production and food security point of view there is only a need to preserve scarce arable land for crop production and therefore to limit solar development to land that is of insufficient land capability to support viable crop production.
9.	27/06/2023. (Letter received via email on 27/06/2023) Adjacent/Surrounding Landowner ([redacted])	**Note from the CSIR**: The comments raised are the same as those raised above in Row 8.	**CSIR:** A copy of the above letter was sent to the EMS email address again, most likely erroneously. Nevertheless, kindly refer to the responses provided above in Row 8.
10.	27/06/2023 Email Adjacent/Surrounding Landowner ([redacted])	Attached the requested inputs on Kudu development.	**CSIR:** These comments are noted and responded to in detail below.

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11.	27/06/2023 (Letter received via email on 27/06/2023) Adjacent/Surrounding Landowner ([redacted])	INPUT AND OBJECTION TOWARDS THE KUDU DEVELOPMENT I registered as an interested and affected party to the proposed Kudu development in the Philipstown district. 1. We understand according to documents at our disposal that your development is a massive one proposed on only two farms. As a neighbour who has been farming for my entire life in the Karoo, I want to know what the water use of this project will be. Further, I also request information on measures that you have put in place to test the availability of water resources. 2. According to the layouts of the solar farms, it appears the majority of certain farms will be covered almost entirely under panels. What is your company's viewpoint and understanding of the subdivision of agricultural land act (Act 70 of 1970)? How would the act impact on your proposed developments? 3. What benefits would your development have for the farming community of Philipstown district? 4. You emphasize in paragraph 3 the positive socio-economic benefits for the farming community in your environmental reports. Your model will have the opposite effect and deny 20 farms the benefit of the solar development while enriching only two farmers. This hold no positive socio-economic benefits for the greater farming community and will not positively enhance agricultural sustainability.	**CSIR**: The comments received are noted and responded to below: ▪ **I&AP Registration**: This I&AP was pre-identified and included on the initial project I&AP database during the Project Initiation Phase (i.e. for the release of the Background Information Document), and maintained for the release of the Draft Scoping Report and Draft EIA Report. Refer to Appendix E of this Final EIA Report for a copy of this database. ▪ **Note on comments raised**: The comments raised here are the same (with Paragraph 4 being similar) as that raised above in Row 7. Kindly refer to the responses provided above in Row 7, specifically with regards to the Previous Objection / Comments Submitted During the Scoping Phase; Number of Farm Portions Affected; Water Usage; Water Availability; Coverage of the Affected Farm Properties; Implications of SALA; Benefits to the Farming Community; Agricultural Sustainability; and Benefit of Affected Landowners. ▪ **Benefit of Affected Landowners**: Refer to the response provided to the comment regarding the "Benefit of Affected Landowners" in Row 7 above. However, in addition to this, it must be noted that the following statement made by the stakeholder is not fully correct "Your model will have the opposite effect **and deny 20 farms the benefit of the solar development** while enriching only two farmers". The proposed Kudu Solar Facilities development will **not in any way** deny 20 other farms from the benefit of the solar development. A separate EIA Process is being undertaken by Savannah Environmental (2023) for the proposed Crossroads Green Energy Solar PV cluster, which is located in the surrounding region; and the landowners affected by this project will also benefit from Solar PV. In addition, while the number of landowners associated with the Kudu Solar Facilities project may be lower, the broader farming community in the area would be in a position to benefit from the SED contributions from both the Kudu Solar and Crossroads Green Energy PV projects (should the projects go ahead). The potential opportunities for maximising these combined opportunities should be explored in consultation with the local farming association/s.
12.	29/06/2023 Email	Julle het vir my n e pos gestuur oor die Kudu Solar Ontwikkeling naby De Aar. Ek verstaan dat julle wil krag opwek deur middel van sonpanele en	**CSIR**: This comment is noted, and an emailed response was sent to this stakeholder on 29 June 2023 explaining that this stakeholder's farm portion is not

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	Surrounding Landowner ([redacted])	windlaaiers. Ek is in die Philipstown omgewing. As julle by my wil sonpanele op sit kontak my Op my landlyn by [redacted]. My plaas se naam word nie genoem nie, maar Die plaas Basberg word genoem. So ek neem aan dit is om my in kennis te stel van julle ontwikkeling. *Translation:* *Your team sent me an email regarding the Kudu Solar Development near De Aar. I understand that you want to generate electricity by means of solar panels and wind chargers. I am in the Philipstown region. Please contact me on my landline at [redacted] if you want to erect solar panels on my property. My farm's name is not mentioned, but the farm Basberg is mentioned. So I assume it is to notify me about your development.*	directly involved in the proposed development of the Kudu Solar Facilities. No wind facilities are being proposed as part of this current application. A list of the affected farm portions (i.e. where listed activities in terms of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) are being applied for the proposed project) was sent to this stakeholder. The correspondence issued by the CSIR was to inform landowners in the nearby area of the proposed development, as well as offer an opportunity to comment on the projects. A note has been made for the project Applicants to contact this stakeholder if they are planning any future projects in the area. Refer to Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report for a copy of the follow up correspondence sent.
13.	29/06/2023 Email Adjacent/Surrounding Landowner ([redacted])	Dankie vir nota betreffende die sluit van die kommetaar periode. Ek sluit graag my kommetaar as aangeheg in. Indien dit slegs in Engels verkies word, sal ek dit in so 'n formaat kan verskaf. Ek het al my kommer oor die omgewings inpak van genoemde ontwikkeling tydens 'n vorige deelname proses, aan die einde van Januarie uitgespreek sonder enige terugvoering tot nou ontvang. Ek kan ook nie sien waar in die "draft EIA report" my bekommernisse en vrae hanteer word nie. Ek hoor graag van u. *Translation:* *Thank you for the note regarding the closure of the comment period.* *I include my comments as per the attachments. If it is preferred in English, then I will provide it in such a format.* *I have voiced my concerns about the environmental impact of the said development during a previous participation process at the end of January. I have received no feedback until now. I also cannot see where in the draft EIA report my concerns and questions were handled.*	**CSIR:** This comment is noted. A response was sent to this stakeholder via email, as shown in Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report. The CSIR Project Team explained that the comments provided in Afrikaans on 29 June 2023 can be translated by the CSIR Project Team unless the stakeholder prefers to do so personally. The CSIR Project Team explained that all comments received during the comment period on the DSR, from 9 December 2022 to 30 January 2023, were addressed in the Comments and Responses Report. This Comments and Responses Report was included in Appendix E of the FSR which was submitted to the DFFE for consideration, and also made available to all registered stakeholders on the database on 14 February 2023. A copy of each comment was included in Appendix E.10 and E.11 in the Final Scoping Reports, and was also included in Appendix F (Parts 2 and 3) of the Draft EIA Reports. The specific file names and link to the Google Drive where the reports were made available were submitted to the stakeholder. The stakeholder was also informed that this comment, dated 29 June 2023, along with the corresponding responses from the Project Team, will be included in the Comments and Responses Report in the Final EIA Reports. The Final EIA Reports will be made available to all registered I&APs and stakeholders once submitted to the DFFE for decision-making, via the project website.

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		I would like to hear back from you. **Note from the CSIR: The attachments referred to in this comment was sent again by the stakeholder on 29 June 2023. These comments have not been captured below and responded to in Rows 14 and 15.**	
14.	29/06/2023 Email Adjacent/Surrounding Landowner ([redacted])	Please find my comment on the draft EIA report: Kudu Solar development of 12 facilities, De Aar region, as an attachment herewith.	**CSIR:** The comments received are noted and have been captured in this Comments and Responses Report, as well as Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report.
15.	29/06/2023 Image Attachment (received via email on 29/06/2023) Adjacent/Surrounding Landowner ([redacted])	**Aan wie dit mag gaan:** My naam is [redacted]. Ek is die eienaar van die plaas [redacted] in die Phillipstown distrik. [redacted] is aangrensend vir [redacted] tot die beoogde Kuduprojek en [redacted] tot die [redacted] van hierdie projek. Aangesien ek as 'n belanghebbene formeel by die projek geregistreer is, teken ek weereens die volgende besware aan: Eerstens, die Kudu Sonkragprojek het 'n uiters gebrekkige openbare deelname inisiatief van stapel gestuur. Fokusgroepe soos naasliggende bure tot die projek, asook ander betrokke grondeienaars, is nie gekontak nie. Verder is vorige insette en besware nie hanteer nie. Die voorlopige EIA verslag spreek nie die verdraaide en negatiewe realiteite van die Kuduprojek tot die maatskaplike en sosio-ekonomiese impak en uitdagings van die Bo- Karoo en sy inwoners aan nie. • Die verspreiding van die moontlikhede tot die skep van welvaart is uiters beperk, met die Kuduprojek van 12 eenhede wat slegs twee grondeienaars uitermatig bevoordeel. 'n Alternatief sou wees om 'n groter aantal grondeienaars te betrek en sodoende die bree gemeenskap te bevoordeel en die geleentheid tot welvaart baie beter te versprei.	**CSIR**: The comments received are noted and responded to below. Responses are provided by the CSIR, unless stated otherwise: ▪ **I&AP Registration**: This I&AP was pre-identified and included on the initial project I&AP database during the Project Initiation Phase (i.e. for the release of the Background Information Document), and maintained for the release of the Draft Scoping Report and Draft EIA Report. Refer to Appendix E of this Final EIA Report for a copy of this database. ▪ **Public Participation:** The Public Participation Process undertaken for the Scoping and EIA Process for the proposed Kudu Solar Facilities was not flawed. Various measures were undertaken to seek comments and concerns from stakeholders, including numerous email correspondence, telephonic calls, and text messages. Telephonic calls were held with various key stakeholders, especially those that expressed concerns during the Scoping Phase, in order to inform them of the availability of the Draft EIA Reports for comment, and to seek comment. Refer to Chapter 4 and Appendix H of this Final EIA Report for feedback on the Public Participation Process undertaken during the EIA Phase In addition, various nearby, adjacent and affected landowners were interviewed as part of the Socio-Economic Assessment, as indicated in Chapter 13 of this Final EIA Report. The stakeholder that made this comment was also one of these parties that were interviewed for the assessment, therefore this stakeholder had an opportunity to raise additional comments (over and above what was raised during the Scoping Phase). The

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		• Die Karoo is 'n semi ariede gebied wat gebuk gaan onder periodieke droogtes. Die welvaart van die gebied is hoofsaaklik afhanklik van die voor of teenspoed wat die landbou en veral die grondeienaar of boer ervaar. Die landbougemeenskap van die distrik is die primere ekonomiese basis van die dorpe Phillipstown, Petrusville en Vanderkloof, waar werkloosheid en armoede aan die orde van die dag is. Tydens dr word werkers afgele as gevolg van dalende ekonomiese aktiwiteilk en verriirlerde boerderyinkomste. Die plaaslike besighede se omset en wins daal drasties gedurende droogtes, omdat daar minder geld beskikbaar en in omloop is. • 'n Beter en meer eweredige verspreiding van “die geleentheid” sal dus meebring dat droogtes en natuurrampe meer vohoubaar hanteer kan word. Die rimpel effek van 'n meer eweredige verspreiding van die “geleentheid”, sal gevolglik die lewensgehalte en kwaliteit van 'n groter aantal bewoners van die distrik en streek positief beiinvloed. **Tweedens**, die voorlopige EIA spreek NIE die hoe riskiko aan van die oorbenutting van onderaardse waterbronne in die streek aan nie. Grondwater is 'n skaars en kosbare hulpbron in die Karoo. Die FIA is vaag oor die impak van 'n gekonsentreerde massa water onttrekking gedurende die konstruksie fase van die Kudu projek, asook die hoeveelheid benodig vir die onderhoud tydens die 20 jaar opwekkingsperiode. • Die Kudu ontwikkeling beslaan etlike duisend hektaar, gekonsentreerd in 'n massiewe blok. • As dieselfde ontwikkeling oor 'n groter geografiese gebied versprei kan word, sal dit die impak van massa onttrekking, van die onderaardse water, beter versprei en die kans op volhoubare onttrekking verhoog. • Die navorsing wat gedoen is oor die beskikbare hoeveelheid onderaardse water in die gebied van die projek, asook van die naasliggende gebiede en die aanvulling van grondwater, is gebrekkig. Verder, is dit nie gedeel of bespreek met die naasliggende grondeienaars nie. Die rigting van die beweging van onderaardse water, asook die aanvulling daarvan is nie goed nagevors en in die	interviews provided valuable inputs that were considered in the specialist assessment, and guided the identification of mitigation measures, which were then included in the project Environmental Management Programmes (EMPRs), which will become legally binding should the proposed project be approved. Therefore, the concerns raised by such stakeholders have been considered in this Scoping and EIA Process. ▪ **<u>Previous Objection / Comments Submitted During the Scoping Phase</u>**: This I&AP submitted comments, dated 30 January 2023, on the Draft Scoping Report for the proposed Kudu Solar Facilities, which was made available for a 30-day comment period extending from extending from 9 December 2022 to 30 January 2023 (excluding the regulated shutdown period). These comments were included in Appendix E.10 of the Final Scoping Report and addressed in detail in the Comments and Responses Report included in Appendix E.11 of the Final Scoping Report. The Final Scoping Report was then submitted to the DFFE in February 2023 for consideration. In line with best practice, all registered I&APs were informed via email on 14 February 2023 of the submission of the Final Scoping Report to DFFE and were provided with links to the Google Drive and project website where the Final Scoping Report could be accessed. In this correspondence (refer to Appendix F.13 of this Final EIA Report), the registered I&APs were informed that all comments and issues raised as part of the 30-day comment period on the Draft Scoping Report were captured and responded to in Comments and Responses Reports included as appendices to the Final Scoping Reports (i.e. Appendix E.11 (Part 3 of Appendix E) of the Final Scoping Reports). <u>Therefore, the comments previously submitted during the Scoping Phase were responded to in the Final Scoping Report, and also responded to in the relevant specialist assessments in the EIA Phase</u>. Also note that for information and record purposes, all comments raised during the Scoping Phase were also included in Appendix F of the Draft EIA Report which was also made available for a 30-day comment period extending from 2 June 2023 to 3 July 2023. This has been retained in the Final EIA Report. ▪ **<u>Lack of cognisance of the perceived negative realities of the Kudu Solar Project to the social and socio-economic impact and challenges of the</u>**

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		verslag opgeneem nie. • Die volgende vrae bly onbeantwoord: 1. Hoeveel grondwater sal in die gekonsentreerde blok van Kudu onttrek moet word om die ontwikkeling deur te voer? 2. Hoe lank sal die gekonsentreerde onttrekking van onderaardse water die opwekkings termyn deur te voer, volhoubaar wees? 3. Wat sal die effek wees op my as naasliggende buurman se boorgate, wat krities belangrik is vir die volhoubare kleinvee- en wild boerdery op my plaas? 4. Hoe sal chemiese besoedeling van my weiveld voorkom word, aangesien die projek direk stroomop is van 'n reuse waterbaan is wat deur my plaas strek? **Ek teken dus beswaar aan ten opsigte van die deeglikheid en deursigtigheid van die konsep EIA vir die Kudu Sonkragprojek van 12 eenhede en die ontwikkeling van die beoogde projek.** Ek versoek dat my besware en insette met die nodige respek, deursigtigheid en erns hanteer sal word. *Translation:* ***<u>To whom it may concern:</u>*** *My name is [redacted]. I am the owner of the farm [redacted] in the Philipstown district. [redacted] borders the intended Kudu Project for [redacted] and is [redacted] to the [redacted] of this project. Since I am formally registered as an interested party, I am once again registering the following objections:* ***Firstly,** the Kudu Solar Project consisted of an extremely flawed public participation initiative. Focus groups such as adjacent landowners to the*	**<u>Bo-Karoo and its inhabitants</u>**: *Response provided by the CSIR, Socio-Economic Specialists, and Applicant:* A detailed Socio-Economic Assessment was undertaken for the Kudu Solar Facilities Scoping and EIA Process, which is included in Chapter 13 of this Final EIA Report. Note that the same specialists that compiled the Socio-Economic Assessment for the Kudu Solar Facilities undertook the Socio-Economic Assessment for the proposed Crossroads Green Energy Cluster of Renewable Energy Facilities (Savannah Environmental, 2023. EIA Report Tafelkop Solar PV Facility, Northern Cape Province[8]). This is a positive factor as the specialist was able to carry through well informed learning and recommendations for both projects. Various positive and negative impacts were identified in the Socio-Economic Assessment for the Kudu Solar Facilities, which adequately address the challenges of the surrounding region. The Socio-Economic Assessment for the proposed Kudu Solar Facilities (Chapter 13 of this Final EIA Report) (*for Kudu Solar Facility 6 only*), explains the following: ○ The only trophy hunting operation located adjacent to the site is associated with Jakkalskuil's use of Grass Pan 40/4 as part of its hunting area based on Jakkalskuil 209 further to the north. Grass Pan 40/4 is leased to the Jakkalskuil owner. ○ The only sensitive land use receptor is associated with the trophy hunting on Grass Pan 40/4. The Kudu PV 6 site borders almost directly onto Grass Pan 40/4. While a portion of the property is proposed to accommodate Crossroads Middelplaas PV, the portion bordering onto the Kudu 6 PV site constitutes the only broken terrain (and associated game species) on the large Jakkalskuil hunting property (Interviewed stakeholder, pers. comm). The potential impact of the Kudu PV 6 on the hunting activities on Grass Pan 40/4 should be discussed with the relevant lessee (Jakkalskuil operation). The above recommendation has been included in the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) for the proposed project, and will be undertaken by the Applicant during the design phase, prior to construction

[8] https://sahris.sahra.org.za/cases/proposed-tafelkop-solar-pv-facility-near-petrusville-de-aar-phillipstown-northern-cape

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		project, as well as other involved landowners, were not contacted. Additionally, no previous inputs and objections were handled. *The Draft EIA report does not address the twisted and negative realities of the Kudu Project to the social and socio-economic impact and challenges of the Bo-Karoo and its inhabitants.* • *The distribution of the possibilities to the creation of prosperity is extremely limited, as the Kudu Project comprises of 12 units that will exceedingly benefit two landowners. An alternative would have been to involve a larger number of landowners, thereby benefitting the wider community and better distributing the opportunity for prosperity.* • *The Karoo is a semi-arid area prone to periodic droughts. The prosperity of the area is mainly dependent on the adversity faced by agriculture and especially the landowner or farmer. The agricultural community of the district is the primary economic basis of the towns of Phillipstown, Petrusville, and Vanderkloof, where unemployment and poverty are the order of the day. Workers are retrenched during droughts as a result of the declining economic activities and reduced farming income. The local businesses' profit and turnover drastically decreases during droughts, as less funds (money) are available and in circulation.* • *A better and more proportional distribution of "the opportunity" will thus ensure that droughts and natural disasters are handled more sustainably. The ripple effect of a more proportional distribution of the "opportunity" will have a positive impact on the quality of life of a larger number of inhabitants of the district and region.* ***Secondly,** the draft EIA does NOT address the high risk of overusing the underground water resources in the region. Groundwater is a scarce and precious resource in the Karoo. The EIA is vague around the impact of extracting a concentrated and massive amount of water during the construction phase of the Kudu Project, as well as the quantity of water required for the maintenance during the 20-year generation period.*	(should Environmental Authorisation (EA) and other relevant permits be granted). It should be reiterated that during the interviews undertaken for the Socio-Economic Assessment, the above concerns were only raised for Kudu Solar Facility 6; and no other specific comments or concerns were raised by this stakeholder for the remaining facilities. Further to the above, the EMPr also states that an open communication strategy should be is created and maintained between the Project Applicant, Contractor and owners (or managers) of nearby or adjacent farms where hunting takes place in order to ensure that the Project Applicant and Contractor are made aware of planned hunts. Also ensuring that construction personnel are made aware of the planned hunts and are trained on the necessary protocols to be taken. In addition, while the number of landowners associated with the Kudu Solar Facilities project may be lower, the broader farming community in the area would be in a position to benefit from the SED contributions from both the Kudu Solar and Crossroads Green Energy PV projects (should the projects go ahead). The potential opportunities for maximising these combined opportunities should be explored in consultation with the local farming association/s to ensure that SED contributions / initiatives also benefit local farmers (in addition to local communities). ▪ **<u>Benefit of Affected Landowners</u>**: Refer to the response provided to the comment regarding the "Benefit of Affected Landowners" in Row 7 above. ▪ **<u>Agricultural dependency, socio-economic impacts and droughts</u>:** *Response provided by the CSIR, Socio-Economic Specialists, Agriculture Specialist, Geohydrology Specialists and Applicant:* Various specialist studies were sufficiently undertaken for the Kudu Solar Facilities Scoping and EIA Processes. Such studies include an Agriculture Compliance Statement (Chapter 6 of this Final EIA Report), in which the impact of the proposed project on agricultural resources is considered and management actions are recommended. As noted above, a detailed Socio-Economic Assessment (Chapter 13 of this Final EIA Report) was also undertaken, which considered

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		• *The Kudu development consists of several thousand hectares, concentrated in a massive block.* • *If the same development were to be distributed across a larger geographic area, it would distribute the impact of the mass extraction of the underground water and it would increase the chances of sustainable extraction.* • *The research conducted on amount of available underground water in the project area, as well as the surrounding areas, and the supplementation thereof, is lacking. Additionally, it was not shared or discussed with adjacent landowners. The direction of the flow of the underground water, as well as the supplementation thereof, was not researched adequately and was not included in the report.* • *The following questions remain unanswered:* 1. *How much groundwater will be extracted in the concentrated Kudu block to execute the development?* 2. *How long will the concentrated extraction of underground water (to maintain the generation period) be sustainable?* 3. *What will the effect be on my boreholes, as an adjacent neighbour, which are critically important to the sustainability of small life stock and game farming on my farm?* 4. *How will chemical pollution of my grazing land be avoided, considering that the project is located directly upstream from a giant water course that extends through my farm?* ***I therefore object with regards to the thoroughness and transparency of the draft EIA for the Kudu Solar Project consisting of 12 units and the development of the intended project.*** *I request that my objections and inputs are handled with the necessary respect, transparency, and seriousness.*	various positive and negative impacts of the proposed project on the surrounding socio-economic environment, and it does discuss poverty and unemployment levels, and agricultural contribution to the economy. A Geohydrology Assessment was also undertaken (Chapter 16 of this Final EIA Report) to address the impacts of groundwater usage and the impact of the project on groundwater, including contamination. The Geohydrology Specialist notes that droughts are seasonal and will occur. The more information that is collected (e.g. monitoring prior to construction) the more certainty there will be on the actual observed effect on the proposed development on the groundwater resources. Therefore, groundwater monitoring is crucial for the protection of the regional groundwater resources. Kindly refer to the responses provided above in Row 7, specifically with regards to the Water Usage and Water Availability. ▪ **Better and more proportional distribution of "the opportunity" ensuring more sustainable handling of droughts and natural disasters**: Refer to the response provided to the comment regarding the "Benefit of Affected Landowners" in Row 7 above. ▪ **Addressing high risk of overusing underground water resources; and vagueness of impact of abstracting groundwater and quantity of water required**: *Response provided by the CSIR and Geohydrology Specialists:* As indicated above and in the Draft Scoping and Draft EIA Reports, a detailed Geohydrology Assessment was commissioned and undertaken to assess the potential impact of the proposed project on groundwater resources, should groundwater from existing boreholes be used for the proposed project. As noted in Chapter 4 of the EIA Report, the National DFFE Screening Tool does not request or list a Geohydrology Assessment as a requirement for Solar PV applications. However, for best practice, and to ensure that all potential impacts are assessed, a detailed Geohydrology Assessment was undertaken for the Kudu Solar Facilities. This is over and above the minimum requirements of specialist studies required by the DFFE. Therefore, due diligence was followed by the EAP, Applicant and specialists to ensure that the potential groundwater impacts are covered. In addition, a comprehensive breakdown of the expected water use against the expected available

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			groundwater and Generally Authorised water use volumes for each Kudu Solar Facility is given in Chapter 16 of the Final EIA Report. In addition, the Geohydrology Assessment has more than adequately assessed the following potential impacts: ○ Construction Phase: ▪ Potential impact 1: Potential lowering of the groundwater level from construction requirements. ▪ Potential impact 2: Potential impact on groundwater quality as a result of accidental oil spillages or fuel leakages. ○ Operational Phase: ▪ Potential impact 3: Potential lowering of the groundwater level from operational requirements. ▪ Potential impact 4: Potential impact on groundwater quality as a result of using cleaning agents for cleaning the solar panels. ▪ Potential impact 5: Groundwater quality deterioration as a result of electrolyte that will be used for the BESS. ○ Decommissioning Phase: ▪ Potential impact 6: Potential impact on groundwater quality as a result of accidental oil spillages or fuel leakages. ▪ Potential impact 7: Potential lowering of the groundwater level from decommissioning requirements. Therefore, it is evident that the Draft EIA Report included an assessment of the risk of overusing the groundwater resources in the region. Kindly also refer to the responses provided above in Row 7, specifically with regards to the Water Usage and Water Availability; which adequately show that the Draft EIA Report was not vague around the impact of abstracting water during the construction phase, and providing specifications on the quantity of water required for operations (i.e. maintenance).

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			▪ **<u>Extent of the development (i.e. "massive block")</u>:** The Kudu Solar Facility development consists of 12 Solar Facilities and associated infrastructure. Refer to Chapter 2 of the Final EIA Report for a full description of the affected properties per project. Note that during the construction phase, vegetation is planned to be trimmed within the PV array area (and not removed completely). Therefore, even though it appears that a large area will be covered by the Solar PV array, not all the vegetation will be removed completely. ▪ **<u>Distribution of the development over a larger area thereby distributing the impact of groundwater abstraction and increasing sustainable abstraction</u>:** *Response provided by the CSIR and Geohydrology Specialists:* Refer to the response provided to the comment regarding the "Benefit of Affected Landowners" in Row 7 above. Developing the proposed Kudu Solar Facilities on the six affected properties will ensure that design is optimized, the construction and operational costs are minimized, and sprawling development and impact footprints are limited. If the proposed project were to be distributed across a larger geographic area, the impacts of groundwater abstraction would not reduce, it will merely be distributed to other areas, and thus have a bigger impact footprint and spatial extent and will not be localised. There is also no guarantee that groundwater resources in the larger geographical area would be of a suitable quality or quantity. Furthermore, the De Aar Region Groundwater Strategic Water Source Area lies about 26 km to the southwest of the Kudu Solar Facility study area. Distributing the proposed project across a larger geographical area could therefore impact this important area from a geohydrological perspective. Kindly also refer to the responses provided above in Row 7, specifically with regards to the Water Usage and Water Availability. As noted in the Geohydrology Assessment, during the construction phase, cumulatively across all facilities (1 to 12) this equates to 144 000 m^3/a (~4.6 L/s). Thus, if all facilities are developed during the same year the proposed groundwater abstraction is higher than the yield potential of the underlying aquifer (0.5 – 2.0 L/s). However, it is unlikely that all 12 facilities will be developed in the same year and additionally, the extent over which the water will be required (and likely abstracted) in the project's current format, is expected to reduce the volume required from any single

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			borehole. Adherence to mitigation measures during the construction phase is vital and will be implemented. During the operational phase, cumulatively across all facilities (1 to 12) this equates to 16 000 m^3/a (~0.5 L/s). Therefore, the groundwater requirement for the operational phase of all 12 projects in its current format is within the yield potential of the underlying aquifer (0.5 – 2.0 L/s). Further to this, with appropriate planning the proposed groundwater abstraction volumes lie well within the volumes that can be abstracted under regional General Authorisation. In the event that groundwater is to be abstracted for use in the project, then the production boreholes will be yield tested according to National Standard (SANS 10299-4:2003, Part 4 – Test pumping of water boreholes), which will help defined the area over which groundwater can be sustainably abstracted. ▪ **Sustainability of Groundwater Usage**: *Response from the Geohydrology Specialists and CSIR*: The impact of the usage of the ground water during the relevant project phases has been addressed in the Geohydrology Assessment, along with the identification of various management actions to address such usage of water, which have been carried over to the EMPr, which is legally binding once approved. Kindly also refer to the responses provided above in Row 7, specifically with regards to the Water Usage and Water Availability, which explain the proposed Phase 2 ground water programme once the groundwater quality and quantity are determined more accurately and confirmed it is suitable for use. ▪ **Research on available groundwater**: *Response from the Geohydrology Specialists and CSIR*: Kindly also refer to the responses provided above in Row 7, specifically with regards to the Water Usage and Water Availability, which highlight the findings of the Geohydrology Assessment undertaken as part of this EIA, as well as the hydrocensus. This information was made available in the Draft Scoping Report that was released in December 2022 for comment (which was commented on by this stakeholder). In addition, the Geohydrology Assessment was also made available to stakeholders, including adjacent and nearby landowners, for a 30-day comment period. In addition, the responses to the previous comments raised by this stakeholder were documented in the Final Scoping Report and Draft EIA Report, as

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			explained above. Regional groundwater availability has been defined for the area according to DWAF (2002), with a regional average borehole yield of 0.5 to 2.0 l/s. In the event that groundwater will be utilised for the projects, the identified production boreholes will be yield tested according to National Standard (SANS 10299-4:2003, Part 4 – Test pumping of water boreholes), which will further quantify the groundwater availability in the area. ▪ **Groundwater flow direction not researched**: *Response from the Geohydrology Specialists and CSIR*: It was acknowledged in the Final Scoping Report that ground water moves from south to north, based on the available information. Groundwater movement is driven by gravity and (generally speaking) flows from high elevations to low elevations. Refer to Section 16.4 of the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of this Final EIA Report) for additional information. In addition, the responses to the previous comments raised by this stakeholder were documented in the Final Scoping Report and Draft EIA Report, as explained above. ▪ **Water Usage and Groundwater Implications**: *Response from the Geohydrology Specialists and CSIR*: Please refer to the responses entitled "water usage" and "water availability" in Row 7 of this section of the Comments and Responses Report. ▪ **Effect on Boreholes used to Supply Drinking Water to Livestock and Game Farm Activities**: *Response from the Geohydrology Specialist*: The Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of the Final EIA Report), assessed the impact of the water required for the proposed development on the environment. With appropriate sighting and management measures groundwater impact on existing users can be entirely mitigated. The assessment has identified the lowering of groundwater levels as a result of over-abstraction as a potential impact during the construction and operational phases, of low significance, with the implementation of recommended mitigation measures (i.e. adhere to the borehole's safe yield and to monitor water levels and flow; and boreholes must be correctly yield tested according to the National Standard (SANS 10299-4:2003, Part 4 – Test pumping of water boreholes). This includes a Step Test, Constant Discharge Test and

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			recovery monitoring). The yield test will be able to quantify the safe sustainable abstraction rate for any proposed production boreholes as well as define the potential radius of influence on any neighbouring boreholes. This has been included as a requirement in the EMPr. In addition, an appropriate monitoring program will need to be instated as part of Phase 2 of the plan (as noted above) to ensure over abstraction of groundwater is not taking place, and/or to ensure that no contamination of groundwater is taking place. This will allow the Environmental Control Officer / Environmental Manager of the proposed project (appointed post EA should authorisation be granted, and the proposed project progresses to the commencement phase) to determine the observed effect on the groundwater resources in the area. This is expanded on within Section 16.9 of the Geohydrology Assessment. ▪ **<u>Chemical Pollution of Grazing Land</u>**: *Response from the Geohydrology Specialists, Aquatic Specialist and CSIR*: As explained above, the Geohydrology Assessment (Chapter 16 of this Final EIA Report) included the assessment of various geohydrological impacts, including the following from a chemical management perspective: o Construction Phase: ▪ Potential impact on groundwater quality as a result of accidental oil spillages or fuel leakages. o Operational Phase: ▪ Potential impact on groundwater quality as a result of using cleaning agents for cleaning the solar panels. ▪ Groundwater quality deterioration as a result of electrolyte that will be used for the BESS. o Decommissioning Phase: ▪ Potential impact on groundwater quality as a result of accidental oil spillages or fuel leakages. These impacts were rated with a very low impact significance with the implementation of mitigation measures. Several mitigation measures were recommended and included in the EMPr, which is legally binding once

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			approved and EA is issued (should it be granted). The recommendations will thus be earnestly implemented. Such mitigation measures include ensuring that vehicles are regularly serviced and maintained to check and ensure there are no leakages; and ensuring that fuel storage tanks, are located above ground on an impermeable surface in a bunded area. Further to this, should groundwater be utilised for the project, the proposed monitoring plan will also be able to rapidly identify any potential chemical pollution present within the local aquifer. In addition, the Aquatic Biodiversity Assessment (Chapter 8 of the Final EIA Report) included the assessment of increased sedimentation and risks of contamination of surface water runoff due to construction work. This was rated with a very low significance with the implementation of mitigation measures (e.g. good housekeeping and site management measures must be implemented at the laydown areas and the construction site as per the project EMPr and monitored by the appointed Environmental Control Officer (ECO)). ▪ **Thoroughness and Transparency of the Draft EIA Report; and Handling of Objections and Inputs**: As noted in Chapter 20 of the EIA Report, based on the findings of the detailed specialist assessments and technical studies, which all recommend that the proposed project can proceed and should be authorised by the DFFE, the proposed project is considered to have an overall Moderate to Very Low negative environmental impact, and an overall Moderate to High positive socio-economic impact (with the implementation of respective mitigation and enhancement measures). In addition, the development footprint and buildable areas avoid the "no-go" sensitive features identified and mapped by the respective specialists, where relevant and applicable. Furthermore, additional specialist studies (not recommended by the Screening Tool) have been undertaken as part of the EIA Process to ensure that all potential environmental impacts are addressed and assessed. These include a Geohydrology Assessment, BESS High Level Risk Assessment, Avifauna Assessment and Traffic Impact Assessment. Therefore, it is believed that a thorough and transparent Scoping and EIA Process was undertaken for this proposed project. The objections and inputs made by this stakeholder have been addressed in detail above and have

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			been handled with the necessary respect, transparency, and seriousness. The same was done for the Scoping Phase comments as well, as described above.
16.	30/06/2023 Email Adjacent/Surrounding Landowner ([redacted])	Ek sal dit op prys stel as jy my kommentaar kan vertaal. Baie dankie. *Translation:* *I would appreciate it if you could translate my comment. Thank you very much.*	**CSIR**: This comment is noted. The CSIR Project Team translated the comments received on 29 June 2023 into English, as requested by the stakeholder. On 3 July 2023, the stakeholder was provided with the translated comment via email to review, verify and confirm if the translated comments are correct before it is included in the Comments and Responses Reports. Refer to Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report for a copy of this follow up correspondence.
17.	03/07/2023 Email Adjacent/Surrounding Landowner ([redacted])	Baie dankie Helen, vir jou profesionele aanslag en goeie vertaling. Jy kan die kommentaar asb indien. *Translation:* *Thank you very much for your professional approach and good translation. Can you please submit the comment.*	**CSIR**: This comment is noted. After the CSIR Project Team translated the comments received on 29 June 2023 into English, the stakeholder reviewed, verified and confirmed that the translated comments are correct and can be submitted as part of the Comments and Responses Reports. A confirmation email was also sent to this stakeholder. Refer to Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report for a copy of this follow up correspondence.
18.	03/07/2023 Email Adjacent/Surrounding Landowner ([redacted])	Vind aangeheg die volgende dokumente insake die Kudu sonkragfasiliteite *Translation:* *Find attached the following documents regarding the Kudu solar facilities.*	**CSIR:** The comments received are noted and have been captured in this Comments and Responses Report, as well as Appendix H.6 of this Final EIA Report.
19.	03/07/2023 Letter (Received via email) Adjacent/Surrounding Landowner ([redacted])	INSAKE: KUDU SONKRAGFASILITEITE Verder tot u Whatsup gerig aan my rakende bovermelde ontwikkeling, maak ek weer kontak. Ek [redacted] is die eienaar van eiendomme (plase) wat naby of aangrensend is van die beoogde ontwikkeling in die Phillipstowndistrik. Verder huur ek ook al meer as twintig jaar die plaas Basberg, waar van die ontwikkeling beplan word. Ek het ook ook vroeer kommentaar gelewer soos versoek rakende die projekte, maar dit blyk dat my insette nie oorweeg is in die voorlopige verslag nie. Die volgende kommentaar word weer en aanvullend tot my vorige insette gelewer.	**CSIR**: The comments received are noted and responded to below. Responses are provided by the CSIR, unless stated otherwise: ▪ **I&AP Registration**: This I&AP was pre-identified and included on the initial project I&AP database for the release of the Draft Scoping Report and Draft EIA Report. Refer to Appendix E of this Final EIA Report for a copy of this database. ▪ **Interest in the approval or refusal of the proposed Kudu Solar Facility Application**: Research has been undertaken to determine the farm property that is owned / in control by this stakeholder. Based on research undertaken, it is understood that another Solar PV Facility (proposed by another Applicant) is planned on the aforementioned said property (i.e. Phase 3 of

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		Ons familie boer reeds geslagte in die distrik, insluitend die plaas [redacted]. Ek is ook reeds van kindsbeen af betrokke by die boerdery en het, nadat ek afstudeer het aan die Universiteit van die Vrystaat, voltyds begin boer. Die afgelope ongeveer veertig jaar het ek en my familie, in samewerking met die breer boerderygemeenskap en werkers, gepoog om so volhoubaar as moontlikte boer. Ons besef deeglik wat dit is om periodieke droogtes en natuurrampe te oorkom in die ongenaakbare Karoo. Boerderybestuur, insluitend droogtes en beperkte waterbronne, is van kritiese beland om finansiele lewensvatbaarheid in die semi-woestyn gebied te verseker. Ek en my voorsate het nog altyd gestreef om in lyn met regeringsbeleid soos drakrag per hektaar en die groote van ekonomiese eenhede, te boer. Ons familie was ook nog altyd nou betrokke by die gemeenskappe in die distrik, welwetende wat die positiewe impak van boerdery op die sosio-ekeonomiese uitdagings het. Werkloosheid en armoede in die Renosterberg munisipaliteit is van die hoogste in Suid-Afrika. Die boere van die gemeenskap hou nietemin die gemeenskappe in stand, ten spyte van die laer produksiepryse, inflasie en rente stygings, 'n plaaslike owerheid wat inplof en geen regerings ondersteuning nie. Die bovermelde paragraaf het ten doel om te bevestig hoe moeilik dit is om volhoubaar in die Karoo te boer. As daar dus nuwe ekonomiese geleenthede na vore kom, soos in die geval met die beoogde Kuduprojekte, is dit noodsaaklik dat ontwikkelaars met groot omsigtigheid die saak te benader. Volgens inligting tot my beskikking, word beoog om 14 sonplase op eiendomme van twee grondeienaars te ontwikkel. Dit is my mening dat die beoogde ontwikkeling kontra-produktief is betreffende die volhoubaarheid van landbou in die gebied. In plaas dat die ontwikkelingsgeleentheid kan meedoen om die breer boerderygemeenskap se welvaart en volhoubaarheid verbeter, gebeur die teenoorgestelde. Dit is strydig wat ten doel gestel word met die Onderverdeling van Landbougrondwet (SALA), wat onder andere landbouvolhoubaarheid bevorder.	the Crossroads Green Energy Cluster of Renewable Energy Facilities, Savannah Environmental, 2023. Scoping Report Tafelkop Solar PV Facility, Northern Cape Province[9]; Savannah Environmental, 2023. EIA Report Tafelkop Solar PV Facility, Northern Cape Province[10]). The Scoping and EIA Process for Phase 3 of the above development has not commenced yet. In line with the above, this stakeholder is reminded of Regulation 43 (1) of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) which states that "*a registered interested and affected party is entitled to comment, in writing, on all reports or plans submitted to such party during the public participation process contemplated in these Regulations and to bring to the attention of the proponent or applicant any issues which that party believes may be of significance to the consideration of the application, provided that the interested and affected party discloses any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which that party may have in the approval or refusal of the application*". ▪ **Previous Objection / Comments Submitted During the Scoping Phase**: Kindly refer to the responses provided above in Row 7, specifically with regards to the Previous Objection / Comments Submitted During the Scoping Phase. ▪ **Agricultural dependency, socio-economic impacts and droughts:** The comments raised on the level of difficultly to farm sustainably in the Karoo are acknowledged**.** Kindly refer to the responses provided above in Row 15, specifically with regards to this. ▪ **Benefit of Affected Landowners**: As indicated in the Socio-Economic Assessment (Chapter 13 of the Final EIA Report), the cumulative loss of farmland associated with the development of Kudu Solar Facilities 1 to 5 was not raised as an issue by the landowner. However, the landowner did indicate that the portion to the north of the farmstead around Basberg Mountain should not be developed. The latter was taken into consideration by ABO

[9] https://savannahsa.com/public-documents/energy-generation/hydra-b-cluster/
[10] https://sahris.sahra.org.za/cases/proposed-tafelkop-solar-pv-facility-near-petrusville-de-aar-phillipstown-northern-cape

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		Die uitkoms van so 'n benadering is dat enkele individue astronomies finansieel bevorder word, terwyl die res van die gemeenskap effektief benadeel word. Die benadering impakteer direk op sosio -— ekonomiese realiteite soos werkloosheid, armoede, tiener swangerskappe, ongeletterheid, drank misbruik en vele meer. Die werklike alternatief is om 'n gedesentralisserde benadering te volg, wat binne die huidige raamwerk van SALA benader word waardeur die ekonomiese trefwydte verbreed word en finansiele voordele meer versprei word. Dit beteken dat daar 'n sinergie tussen landbou volhoubaarheid, energie behoeftes en die sosio-ekonomiese uitdagings van verarmde gemeenskappe soos Phillipstown, Petrusville of Phillipstown en die ontwikkeling moet bestaan. Soos die ontwikkeling tans beplan word, is en sal dit nie die geval wees nie. Aangesien ek die plaas Basberg vir langer as twintig jaar huur, het ek ook verder 'n direkte belang by die ontwikkeling. Basberg speel 'n belangrike rol in my boerderybeplanning en inkomste. As sonplase buite die raamwerk van SALA op die eiendom ontwikkel word, sal dit nie meer ekonomies produktief wees om daar te boer nie, met natuurlik die gepaardgaande verlies aan inkomste en werksgeleenthede. Dit is ook noodsaaklik om te noem dat ek uiters afhanklik is van die volhoubare grondwater om te boer, ook op Basberg. Ek is nie bewus of volhoubaarheidstudies rakende die ondergrondse water gedoen is nie, en wat die uitslag daarvan was nie. Die stoffaktor wat voortspring uit die massiewe gesentraliseerde benadering, impakteer ook direk op die produksievermoe van die veld, aangesien die vee nie plante eet wat met 'n stoflaag bedek word nie. Ek wil verder vermeld dat daar volgens my inligting gebrekkige kommunikasie was met die tersaaklike gemeenskappe en plaaslike owerheid. Dit is krities dat daar saam met georganiseerde landbou en regeringsinstellings gewerk word om stabiliteit ten opsigte van moontlike arbeidsonrus, volhoubaarheid en gemeenskaps betrokkenheid te verseker.	Wind and no Kudu Solar Facilities have been proposed in this area. It must also be re-iterated that at the commencement of this Scoping and EIA Process, approximately 14 Kudu Solar Facilities were proposed. However, following the identification of sensitivities, the Bidding Window 6 Request for Proposal capacity limits, as well as discussions with the said landowner of the Basberg properties, the proposed projects were re-clustered, **and two originally proposed Kudu Solar Facilities on Farm 88/3 were removed from the development proposal, and a total of up to 12 Solar PV Facilities are being proposed**. Therefore, such concerns have been taken into consideration by the Project Applicant. Therefore, only 12 PV projects are being proposed as part of the Kudu Solar PV development. Also note that the Refer to the response provided to the comment regarding the "Benefit of Affected Landowners" in Row 7 and Row 11 above. ▪ **Agricultural Sustainability, SALA and 10% of Agricultural Land**: Kindly refer to the responses provided above in Row 7, specifically with regards to Agricultural Sustainability and the Implications of SALA. Refer also to Row 8 with regards to 10% of Agricultural Land. ▪ **Benefits to the Farming Community**: Kindly refer to the responses provided above in Row 7, specifically with regards to Benefits to the Farming Community, as well as Row 15 with regards to "lack of cognisance of the perceived negative realities of the Kudu Solar Project to the social and socio-economic impact and challenges of the Bo-Karoo and its inhabitants". ▪ **Renting of Basberg**: The Socio-Economic Assessment (Chapter 13 of the EIA Report) states that the impact on farmland associated with the proposed Kudu Solar Facilities 1 to 5 was noted as a concern by the affected landowner. The cumulative loss of farmland was not raised as an issue by the owner. However, the landowner did indicate that the portion to the north of the farmstead around Basberg Mountain should not be developed. The proposed projects were re-clustered, and two originally proposed Kudu Solar Facilities on Farm 88/3 were removed from the development proposal, and a total of up to 12 Solar PV Facilities are being proposed. Therefore, such concerns have been taken into consideration by the Project Applicant. The

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		Ek vertrou laastens dat my insette, bekommernisse en bydrae met die nodige sorg en oordeel hanteer sal word. *Translation:* *RE: KUDU SOLAR FACILITIES* *Based on your Whatsup to me regarding the above-mentioned development, I am making contact. I* [redacted] *am the owner of properties (farms) that are near or adjacent to the proposed development in the Phillipstown district. Additionally, I have rented the farm Basberg for more than twenty years, which is where the development is planned. I have previously commented on the projects, as requested, but it appears that my inputs were not considered in the draft reports.* *The following comments are provided again, supplementary to my previous inputs.* *Our family has farmed in the district for generations, including on the farm* [redacted]*. I have been involved in farming since childhood and started farming full time after I completed my studies at the University of the Free State. During the last forty years my family and I, in cooperation with the wider agricultural community and workers, have aimed to farm as sustainably as possible. We thoroughly realise what it is like to overcome periodic droughts and natural disasters in the inhospitable Karoo. Farming management, including droughts and limited water sources, is of critical importance to ensure financial viability in the semi-arid area. My forebears and I have always strived to farm in line with government policy, such as carrying capacity per hectare and the size of economic units. Our family has always been involved with the communities in the district, knowing well that the positive impacts are of agriculture on the socio-economic challenges. The unemployment and poverty rates in the Renosterberg municipality are some of the highest in South Africa. The farmers in the community nevertheless sustain the community, despite lower production prices, inflation, rental increases, an imploding local authority, and a lack of governmental support.*	lessee (i.e. this stakeholder that commented herein) is however concerned about the loss of good grazing to his operation. The concern is that alternative land to rent is scarce in the broader study area. This was assessed as an impact by the Socio-Economic Specialists, specifically for Kudu Solar Facility 5, and it was rated with a moderate significance without the implementation of mitigation measures. One of the mitigation measures made by the specialist is that the proponent should contact the affected landowner [property lessee] to discuss the concerns raised with regard to the potential loss of grazing land associated with Kudu Solar Facility 5. This recommendation has been included in the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) for the proposed project, and will be undertaken by the Applicant during the design phase, prior to construction (should Environmental Authorisation (EA) and other relevant permits be granted). Discussions have also commenced between this stakeholder and ABO Wind. ABO Wind has sent email correspondence to this stakeholder to confirm what was discussed, i.e. justifications for development is based on the economic benefits to the landowner, and the reduced development footprint to accommodate agricultural use (i.e. removal of two Kudu Solar Facilities). ▪ **Note on comments raised regarding groundwater**: Kindly refer to the responses provided above in Row 15, specifically with regards to the addressing high risk of overusing underground water resources; and vagueness of impact of abstracting groundwater and quantity of water required; Extent of the development (i.e. “massive block”); distribution of the development over a larger area thereby distributing the impact of groundwater abstraction and increasing sustainable abstraction; Sustainability of Groundwater Usage; Research on available groundwater; Groundwater flow; Water Usage and Groundwater Implications. ▪ **Dust Pollution Management**: Mitigation measures to control and manage dust pollution that occurs as a result of the proposed project are provided in the EMPrs (Appendix I and Appendix J of the Final EIA Report). Once approved, the EMPr becomes legally binding, therefore the Applicant will place a significant emphasis on ensuring compliance with the management

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		The above paragraph aims to confirm how difficult it is to farm sustainably in the Karoo. If a new economic opportunity arises, such as the Kudu Projects, it is essential that developers approach the situation with great care. According to information at my disposal, 14 solar farms are proposed for development on properties belonging to two landowners. It is my opinion that the proposed development is counterproductive regarding the sustainability of agriculture in the area. Instead of having the development opportunity participate in and improve the wider agricultural community's prosperity and sustainability, the opposite is occurring. It is contrary to what is intended with the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act (SALA), which amongst others promotes agricultural sustainability. *The outcome of such an approach is that a few individuals are astronomically financially promoted, whereas the remaining community is effectively disadvantaged. This approach directly impacts socio-economic realities, such as unemployment, poverty, teenage pregnancies, illiteracy, alcohol abuse, and many more. The feasible alternative is to follow a decentralised approach, which falls within the current framework of SALA, that broadens the economic impact and further distributes financial benefits. This means that a synergy needs to exist between agricultural sustainability, energy needs, and the socio-economic challenges of poverty-stricken communities like Phillipstown, Petrusville, of Phillipstown. As the development is currently planned, this will not be the case.* *Considering that I have been renting the farm Basberg for longer than twenty years, I have a direct interest in the development. Basberg plays an important role in my agricultural planning and income. If solar farms are developed on the properties outside of the framework of SALA, then it will no longer be economically productive to farm there, with the accompanied loss of income and employment opportunities.* *It is also necessary to mention that I am utterly dependent on the sustainable underground water to farm, including on Basberg. I am not aware if sustainability studies regarding the underground water were commissioned, and what the outcomes were. The dust factor that emerges from the massive*	measures included. As an example, the Visual Impact Assessment (Chapter 10 of the Final EIA Report) identified the potential impact of dust and noise from trucks and construction machinery during the construction period, and the effect of this on nearby farmsteads and visitors to the area. The following mitigation measures have been recommended: o Locate construction camps, batching plants and stockpiles in visually unobtrusive areas, away from public roads; and implement the EMPr with the Environmental Control Officer (ECO) during the construction phase. Dust pollution has also been identified as a potential impact in the Traffic Impact Assessment (Chapter 14 of the Final EIA Report), and various mitigation measures such as ensuring that speed control is implemented by means of a stop and go system and speed limit road signage within the construction site. ▪ **<u>Public Participation</u>:** The Public Participation Process undertaken for the Scoping and EIA Process for the proposed Kudu Solar Facilities was not limited. Various measures were undertaken to seek comments and concerns from stakeholders, including numerous email correspondence, telephonic calls, and text messages. Telephonic calls were held with various key stakeholders, especially those that expressed concerns during the Scoping Phase, in order to inform them of the availability of the Draft EIA Reports for comment, and to seek comment. Refer to Chapter 4 and Appendix H of this Final EIA Report for feedback on the Public Participation Process undertaken during the EIA Phase In addition, various nearby, adjacent and affected landowners were interviewed as part of the Socio-Economic Assessment, as indicated in Chapter 13 of this Final EIA Report. The stakeholder that made this comment was also one of these parties that were interviewed for the assessment, therefore this stakeholder had an opportunity to raise additional comments (over and above what was raised during the Scoping Phase). The interviews provided valuable inputs that were considered in the specialist assessment, and guided the identification of mitigation measures, which were then included in the project Environmental Management Programmes

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		centralised approach also directly impacts on the production capacity of the veld, since livestock will not eat plants covered in a layer of dust. *Further, according to my information, I want to state that there was a lack of communication with the relevant communities and local authority. It is critical to work together with organised agricultural- and government institutions to ensure stability with regards to potential labour unrest, sustainability, and community involvement.* *I trust that my inputs, concerns, and contributions will be handled with the necessary care and judgement.*	(EMPRs), which will become legally binding should the proposed project be approved. Therefore, the concerns raised by such stakeholders have been considered in this Scoping and EIA Process. ▪ **Handling of Objections and Inputs:** The inputs, concerns, and contributions made by this stakeholder have been addressed in detail above and have been handled with the necessary care and judgement.