

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR THE PROPOSED 225 MW KLOOFSIG SOLAR PV ENERGY FACILITY, NORTHERN CAPE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT



MARW/RUMP

BID No: 486618

JANUARY 2016

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Background Information Document (BID) serves as notice (in terms of regulation 41(2) published in Government Gazette No. R982 under Section 24(5) of the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998), of the intent to develop a photovoltaic solar energy generation facility and associated infrastructure over privately owned agricultural land in the vicinity of Hopetown in the Northern Cape.

This document will provide you with a brief description of the proposed project and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process that will be followed, as well as give you the opportunity to:

- **Register as an Interested and Affected Party (IAP)** - Notifications regarding the process and the availability of reports will only be sent to registered IAPs; and
- **Provide initial comments on any environmental, social and economic issue relating to the proposed development** - During the EIA Process which will be followed, issues of concern and potential environmental and social impacts will be evaluated. Your comments will ensure that relevant issues are evaluated and will form part of the EIA.

You are hereby invited to register your interest in the proposed activity and provide your input by completing the Registration & Comment Form at the end of this document and sending it (either via email, post or fax) to:

Wanda Marais

SRK Consulting

Postal address: P O Box 21842, Port Elizabeth, 6000

Fax: (041) 509 4850; E-mail: wmarais@srk.co.za

Your comments must reach SRK Consulting by **12:00 on 25 February 2016**, to ensure that they will be included and addressed in the draft report. You may however, request to be registered as an IAP at any time during the EIA Process. **Note: this BID provides an overview of three separate EIA applications. It is important therefore that IAPs specify clearly which application their comment and interest relates to, if not all three.**

DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

SRK Consulting (SRK) has been appointed by Kloofsig Solar (Pty) Ltd to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the proposed development of a solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generation facility and associated infrastructure on remainder portion 18 of the farm Kalkpoort, in the vicinity of Hopetown in the Northern Cape (see Figure 2 for site locality).

The proposed development consists of three project phases of 75 MW each (with a total power generation capacity of approximately 225 MW should all phases be developed), covering a total area of approximately 720 ha. A preliminary layout plan indicating the location of each phase, as described below, is included on Figure 2 (project phases are labelled 1- 3).

Phase 1: Centre of the site, including a substation and 132 kV powerline connection to the south of the site;

Phase 2: Northern-most portion, including an on-site substation and connection to the 400 kV powerline crossing the site (this infrastructure will support all phases beyond Phase 1, should they be developed)

Phase 3: Southern-most portion, connecting to the common infrastructure described above for Phase 2.

As separate environmental authorisations are required, each of the phases will be subject to a separate EIA process. It is envisaged that the three EIAs will run concurrently and that three separate reports will be made available for comment by IAPs during each commenting period.

A site sensitivity screening study has already been undertaken to identify environmentally sensitive areas of the site and inform the layout accordingly.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The environmental authorisation process prescribed for listed activities under Listing Notices 1, 2 and 3 published in Government Gazette Numbers R983, R984 and R985 respectively are defined in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations made under section 24(5) of the National Environmental Management Act, 2008 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA).

Activity 1, listed in GN.984 (Listing Notice 2) of the NEMA EIA regulations is the main activity associated with the proposed project:

GN R.984 Item 1: The development of facilities or infrastructure for the generation of electricity from a renewable resource where the electricity output is 20 megawatts or more.

WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a planning and decision-making tool that is used to identify the environmental consequences of a proposed project, before the development takes place. The purpose of the EIA is to describe the potential consequences of the proposed development in environmental, economic and social terms. Public issues and concerns must therefore be identified timeously so that these can be recorded and responded to in the EIA. All comments received in writing are included in the submission to the competent authority for their consideration.

The EIA process consists of two stages. The first stage is a Scoping Study, which identifies potential issues requiring more detailed investigation via specialist studies. A complete list of specialist studies and the issues they should address will be detailed in the Draft Scoping Report, which will be made available for public and authority review.

The second stage is the Impact Assessment phase, during which detailed investigations of the issues identified during scoping, will be undertaken.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

A number of potential impacts have been identified which will be considered further in the process as required. Typical impacts that may be investigated as part of this EIA include:

- Heritage (archaeology & palaeontology);
- Terrestrial and aquatic ecology and wetlands;
- Avifaunal impacts;
- Visual impacts; and
- Agricultural potential.

Additional impacts can be added based on the findings of the desktop and site inspection as well as input from the public.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is the cornerstone of the Environmental Impact Assessment process. The principles of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) govern most aspects of Environmental Impact Assessments, including public participation. These include the ongoing provision of sufficient information (in a transparent manner) to Interested and Affected Parties (IAPs).

During the Public Participation Process, input from the applicant, technical experts, government authorities and the general public will be gathered to result in a better

understanding of the project for all involved, and more informed decision-making throughout the process. IAPs will be given the opportunity to comment on the findings of both the Scoping and EIA Reports, and findings of the Specialist studies during the specified comment periods.

IAPs are hereby invited to comment on environmental, social and economic issues relating to the proposed project.

To receive further communications regarding this development, please register by sending the completed and signed registration sheet at the back of this document to SRK Consulting.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The flow diagram below provides an overview of the EIA process according to the 2014 EIA Regulations:

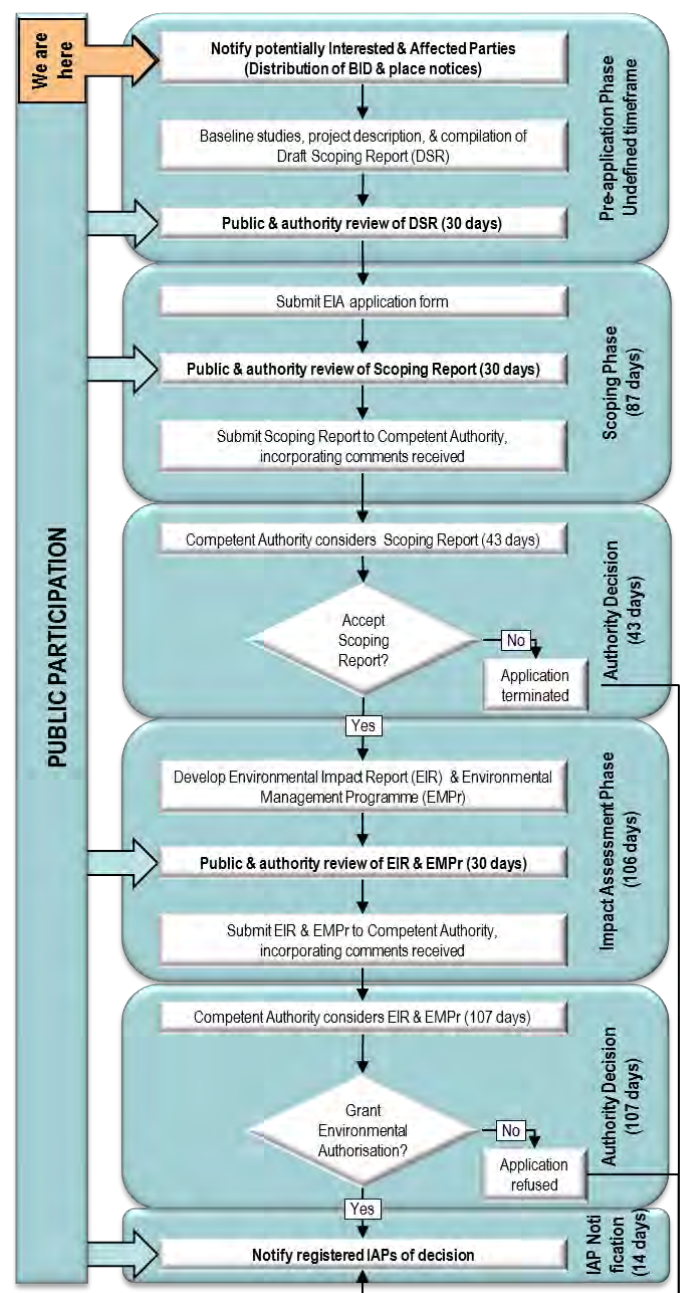


Figure 1: A typical Environmental Impact Assessment Process and stages where public comment will be invited

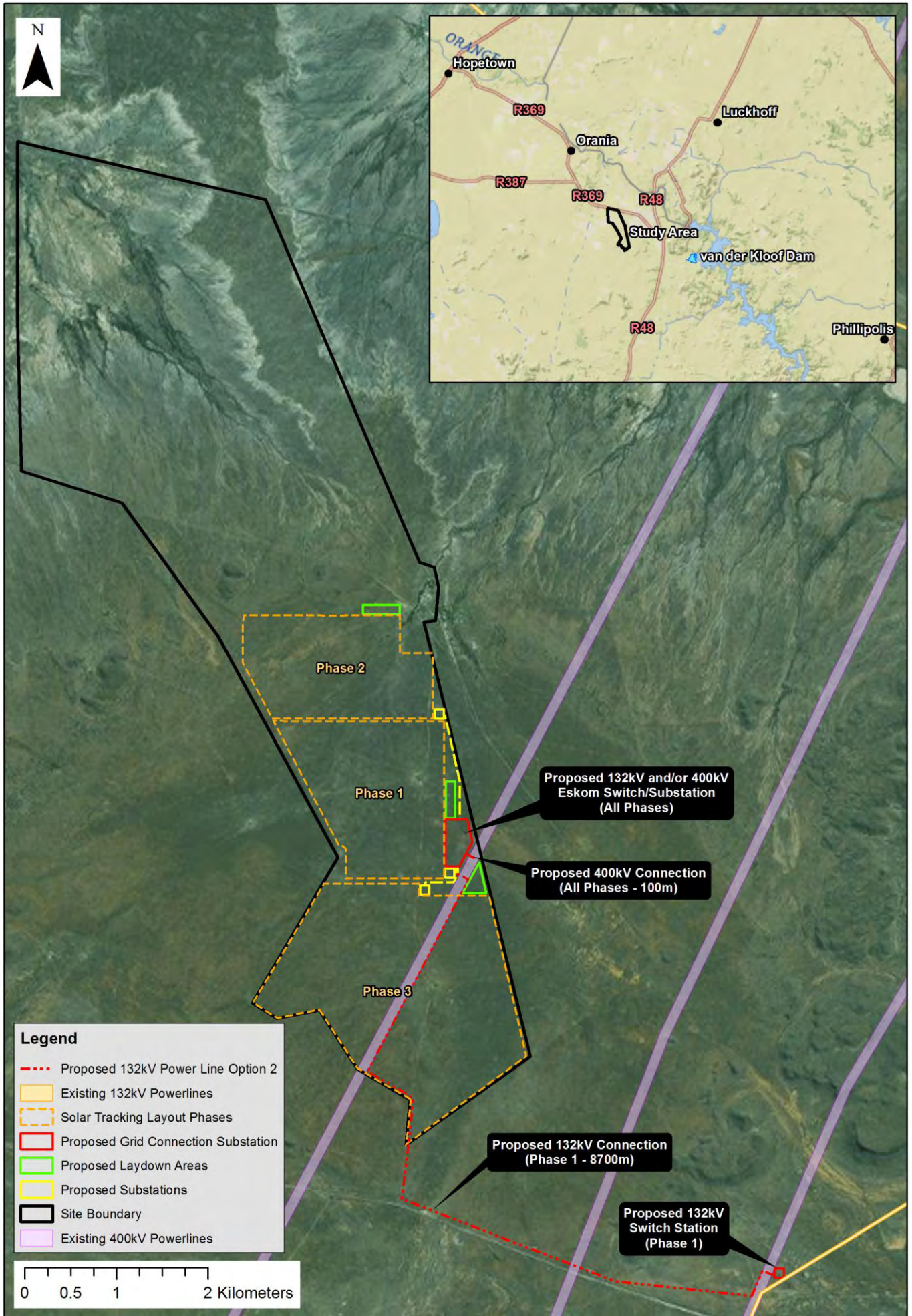


Figure 2: Site locality and conceptual layout for the Kloofsig solar PV project (phases 1 -3)

