

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 Process to Date

This report documents the tasks that were undertaken as part of the Scoping phase of the EIA. These scoping tasks include the public participation process and the documentation of the issues that were identified as a result of the scoping process. The scoping process hopes to identify all environmental issues that should be taken into consideration during the evaluation and assessment phase of the EIA.

To date, tasks that have been initiated and concluded are as follows as well as completed include the:

- Identification of the stakeholders or I&APs;
- Notification and advertisements of the proposed development ;
- Background Information Documents; and
- Ongoing consultation and engagement of Stakeholders and I&AP's.

More details of the above are available in **Chapter 3 of this report.**

The Draft Scoping Report is released for public review and comments for a period of 40 days. During the review period, a public participation process (PPP) will be undertaken, which will allow Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) to engage with the project proponents and independent environmental consultants. The PPP consists of the public meetings as well as one-on-one interactions when required. Issues raised by I&APs during the public participation process will be documented and will be included in the Final Scoping Report. In the EIA phase another round of public participation will be undertaken to include other issues that will be raised by I&APs during the public review of the draft Environmental Impact Report.

The relevant authorities required to review the proposed project and provide an Environmental Authorisation were consulted from the onset of this study and have been engaged throughout the project process. The National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) is the competent authority for this project (DEA oversee the project and must issue the authorization that the development can continue). The Northern Cape Department of Environment and Nature Conservation (DENC) and the //Khara Hais Local Municipality are the commenting authorities for this project. For a comprehensive list see **Chapter 3.**

The Scoping Phase of an EIA serves to define the scope of the detailed assessment of the potential impacts of a proposed project as well as any possible technical and site alternatives. The Environmental Scoping Phase was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of sections 24 and 24D of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (Act 108 of 1998), as read with Government Notices R 543 of the 2010 EIA Regulations. The objectives of the Scoping Phase are to:

- Ensure that the process is open and transparent and involves the Authorities, proponent and stakeholders;
- Identify the important characteristics of the affected environment;
- Ensure that feasible alternatives are identified and selected for further assessment;
- Assess and determine possible impacts of the proposed project on the biophysical and socio-economic environment and associated mitigation measures; and
- Ensure compliance with the relevant legislation.

6.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the studies undertaken to date no environmental fatal flaws have been identified that would prohibit the project from continuing at this stage of the process. However, a number of potentially significant environmental impacts were identified and require some more in-depth investigation and the identification of detailed mitigation measures. Therefore, a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment is required to be undertaken in order to provide an assessment of these potential impacts and recommend appropriate alternative or/and mitigation measures, where required.

The proposed development might however contribute to cumulative impacts in the area, which are becoming increasingly large given the concentration of renewable energy facilities in the immediate area as indicated in **Chapter 4**. The concentration of development within the area will increase the fragmentation of the landscape and impact landscape connectivity.

Based on the results of the scoping study, four key potential impacts were identified that should receive consideration during the scoping phase public participation, authority consultation and detailed infrastructure layout planning for consideration in the EIA phase:

- The abundance of listed tree species within the site are likely to be relatively high and as there is little scope for avoidance it is likely that a large number of the trees present will be impacted by the development. Depending on the exact number of trees that might be impacted (to be determined in the EIA phase studies), DAFF and provincial authorities may want to engage the developer through the EIA process with regards to the implementation of offset measures to compensate for the loss of the protected trees.
- The dunes at the site cannot be developed in their current state and it is likely that they will need to be levelled (depending on the viability and final layout) as part of the development. This is seen to constitute an irreversible impact as it is not likely that the dunes can be reformed when the facility is decommissioned. This will generate a large amount of loose sand at the site and it is likely that a long-term dust suppression and wind erosion management strategy will need to be developed to deal with this problem, should these areas be developed.
- There are a number of small rocks pans present at the site that forms the main sensitivity feature of the site. These pans are scattered across the site, but does only form a small overall portion of the study area. Not all the pans are of equal significance

and those pans identified as most ecologically significant should be targeted for incorporation into corridors or green areas within the development (to be determined through the EIA phase studies).

- While the concentration of development within the current site can be viewed in a positive light as it reduces the overall footprint that would be required if the same output was obtained from a number of separate sites, it does increase the likelihood and significance of some impacts. In particular, there is little space between the different elements of the development and this will increase the potential disruption of landscape connectivity for fauna. It is recommended that the potential for the development of at least one ecological corridor or 'green belt' be investigated as a possibility to reduce the potential impact of the development on the connectivity of the landscape (part of the scope of work required in the EIA phase).

The scope of work required in the EIA phase of the project is included in the Plan of Study for EIA (**chapter 7**).