



**MERAPI SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY
EXCELSIOR, FREE STATE
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT**

FOCUS GROUP MEETING

**FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL
DEVELOPMENT**

NOTES OF FOCUS GROUP MEETING

**HELD ON
30 JANUARY 2013**

**VENUE
40 Jan van Riebeeck Road, Thaba Nchu,
Free State**

Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd

Contact: Gabriele Wood

Address: PO Box 148
Sunninghill, 2157

Tel: 011 656 3237

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E-mail: gabriele@savannahsa.com

Notes for the Record prepared by:

Savannah Environmental

Please address any comments to Gabriele Wood at the above address.

**FOCUS GROUP MEETING:
MERAPI SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY**

Venue: 40 Jan van Riebeeck Road, Thaba Nchu, Free State
Date: 30 January 2013
Time: 11h00

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Ms Gabriele Wood of Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd thanked everyone for availing themselves for the meeting. She said that the purpose of the meeting was to present the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed Merapi Solar Energy Facility project.

Ms Wood noted that Solaire Direct is the developer of the project and that Savannah Environmental had been appointed to undertake the EIA for the project. She said that the background to the project as well as the findings of the draft EIA report would be presented at the meeting.

MEETING ATTENDEES

Name	Organisation & Position
Thabithe Mokane	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Dineo Motlogelwa	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
M.J Motoboli	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Matokelo Sehloho	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development – Agric. Advisor
Annie Seutloadi	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development – Agric. Advisor
Mosima Dipela	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development – Agric. Advisor
S.H Legegevu	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development – Agricultural Technician
Katlego Sitshingo	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development – Intern
Alicia Govender	Savannah Environmental – Environmental Assessment Practitioner
Gabriele Wood	Savannah Environmental – Public Participation and Social Consultant

APOLOGIES

None

BACKGROUND & TECHNICAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Alicia Govender presented the background to the project and the findings of the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report. The presentation is attached hereto.






DISCUSSION SESSION


Ms Thabita Mokone of the Free State Department of Agriculture and Rural Development thanked Savannah Environmental for the presentation. She noted that the Department would submit their comments in writing within the course of the following week.

WAY FORWARD AND CLOSURE

Ms Gabriele Wood thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting was closed at 12:00.

SAVANNAH ENVIRONMENTAL (PTY) LTD		ATTENDANCE REGISTER	
Project	Merapi Solar Energy Facility	Meeting	Free State Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Date	30 January 2013	Time	11h00
		No.	Venue
			40 Jan Van Riebeeck Road, Thaba Nchu, Free State

	Organisation	Name & Postal Address	Contact Details	Signature
1	Department of Agric libre and Rural Development.	Thabane MOKONE	Tel : 051 875 1160 Fax : 051 875 2271 Cell : 076 2332323 E-mail : nthebele@yahoo.com.	
	Designation			
	Director.			
2	Department of Agric and Rural development	Dineo MOTLOGIWA	Tel : 051 875 1160 Fax : Cell : 0713113228 E-mail : dmotlogiwa@gmail.com	
	Designation			
3	Savannah Environmental	Gabriele Cusack	Tel : 011 656 3237 Fax : 086 684 0547 Cell : 083 458 5570 E-mail : gabriele@savannahsa.com	
	Designation			
	Public Participation Consultant.			
4	Department of Agric & Rural Dev	Motokelo SETHOTO	Tel : 051 875 1020 Fax : 051 875 2271 Cell : 073 494 7275 E-mail : Motokelo@fs.agric.za	
	Designation			
	Agric Advisor			
5	Department of Agriculture and Rural Dev	Annie SEKHOAI	Tel : 051 875 1020 Fax : 051 875 2271 Cell : 073 143 3612 E-mail : annie@fs.agric.za	
	Designation			
	Agric Advisor			

Organisation	Name & Postal Address	Contact Details	Signature
Department of Agriculture Designation	MOSIMA DIPLOMA	Tel : 051 875 1020 Fax : 051 875 2271 Cell : 074 1995 332 E-mail : N/A	
AGRIC ADVISOR			
Department of Agriculture Designation	Katlego, Sitshinga 2682 unit one THABA NCHU 9783	Tel : 051 875 1020 Fax : Cell : 083 3495 388 E-mail : Kasitshinga@webmail	<i>Katshinga</i>
Internship			
Dept of Agriculture Designation	S. H. Legogonyu P.O. Box 1544 GA-RAFULANA 9775.	Tel : 051 875 1020 Fax : 051 - 875 2271 Cell : 083 421 9467 E-mail : Legogonyu@fcs.gov.za.	
Agricultural Technician			
Dept of Agriculture Designation	Motoboli MJ 40 Van Riebeck Street THABA-NCHU 9781	Tel : 051 875 1160 Fax : 051 875 2271 Cell : 073 499 4328 E-mail : Mjacobym@gmail.com	
Savannah Environmental Designation	AUCIA GOVENDER	Tel : 011 656 3237 Fax : Cell : E-mail : alicia@savannahsa.com	
EAP			
Designation			
Designation			
Designation			



**MERAPI SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY
EXCELSIOR, FREE STATE
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT**

FOCUS GROUP MEETING

MANTSOPA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

NOTES OF FOCUS GROUP MEETING

**HELD ON
30 JANUARY 2013**

**VENUE
38 JOUBERT STREET, LADYBRAND**

Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd

Contact: Gabriele Wood
Address: PO Box 148
Sunninghill, 2157
Tel: 011 656 3237
Fax: 086 684 0547
E-mail: gabriele@savannahsa.com

Notes for the Record prepared by:

Savannah Environmental

Please address any comments to Gabriele Wood at the above address.

**FOCUS GROUP MEETING:
MERAPI SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY**

Venue: 38 Joubert Street, Ladybrand
Date: 30 January 2013
Time: 14h00

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Ms Gabriele Wood of Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd thanked Mr Selepe for availing himself for the meeting. She said that the purpose of the meeting was to present the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed Merapi Solar Energy Facility project.

Ms Wood noted that Solaire Direct is the developer of the project and that Savannah Environmental had been appointed to undertake the EIA for the project. She said that the background to the project as well as the findings of the draft EIA report would be presented at the meeting.

MEETING ATTENDEES

Name	Organisation & Position
Mr Selby Selepe (SS)	Mantsopa Local Municipality – Municipal Manager
Ms Alicia Govender (AG)	Savannah Environmental
Ms Gabriele Wood (GW)	Savannah Environmental

APOLOGIES

None

BACKGROUND & TECHNICAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Alicia Govender presented the background to the project and the findings of the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report. The presentation is attached hereto.

DISCUSSION SESSION




Question / Comment	Response
SS: When does the public review period end?	GW: The public review period ends on 20 February 2013.
SS: The socio-economic impacts of the project are of key interest for the municipality as it is in the process of reviewing its Integrated Development Plan (IDP).	AG: A Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is undertaken as part of the EIA. This report outlines the socio-economic impacts the development would have on the municipality in general.
SS: When would construction commence?	AG: Construction is due to commence towards the last quarter of 2014 if the developer is awarded preferred bidder status by the Department of Energy (DoE).

WAY FORWARD AND CLOSURE

Mr Selpe noted that Solaire Direct would be invited to present the project at the next Council Meeting which will be held on 22 February 2013.

Ms Gabriele Wood once again thanked Mr Selepe for availing himself for the meeting. The meeting was closed at 14:30.

SAVANNAH ENVIRONMENTAL (PTY) LTD		ATTENDANCE REGISTER	
Project	Merapi Solar Energy Facility	Meeting	Manisopa Local Municipality
Date	30 January 2013	Time	Venue
		13h00	38 Joubert Street, Ladybrand

	Organisation	Name & Postal Address	Contact Details	Signature
1	Savannah Environmental Designation Public Participation.	Gabi Uwood	Tel : 011 656 3237 Fax : Cell : 083 458 5570 E-mail : gabriele@savannahsa.com	
2	SEEBI SEETO Designation	Box 63 Ladybrand	Tel : Fax : Cell : 071 852 4709 E-mail : Serby@manisopa.co.za	
3	Municipal Manager Savannah Designation EAP	Alicia Gorenades P.O. Box 148 Sunninghill	Tel : Fax : Cell : E-mail : alicia@savannahsa.com	
4	Designation		Tel : Fax : Cell : E-mail :	
5	Designation		Tel : Fax : Cell : E-mail :	



**MERAPI SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY
EXCELSIOR, FREE STATE
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT**

PUBLIC MEETING

NOTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

**HELD ON
30 JANUARY 2013**

**VENUE
EXCELSIOR PUBLIC LIBRARY, 39 KOMMISSIE
STREET, EXCELSIOR**

Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd

Contact: Gabriele Wood
Address: PO Box 148
Sunninghill, 2157
Tel: 011 656 3237
Fax: 086 684 0547
E-mail: gabriele@savannahsa.com

Notes for the Record prepared by:

Savannah Environmental

Please address any comments to Gabriele Wood at the above address.

**PUBLIC MEETING:
MERAPI SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY**

Venue: Excelsior Public Library, 39 Kommissie Street, Excelsior
Date: 30 January 2013
Time: 16h00

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Ms Gabriele Wood of Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd thanked everyone for availing themselves for the meeting. She said that the purpose of the meeting was to present the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed Merapi Solar Energy Facility project.

Ms Wood noted that Solaire Direct is the developer of the project and that Savannah Environmental had been appointed to undertake the EIA for the project. She said that the background to the project as well as the findings of the draft EIA report would be presented at the meeting.

MEETING ATTENDEES

Name	Organisation & Position
Mr. D.B Holmes (DH)	Excelsior Farmers' Association
Mr J.T.D Wessels (JW)	Farm Ceylon – Land Owner
Mr J.S Harmse (JH)	Farm Moedersgift – Land Owner
Ms A. Govender (AG)	Savannah Environmental – Environmental Assessment Practitioner
Ms G. Wood (GW)	Savannah Environmental – Public Participation and Social Consultant

APOLOGIES

None

BACKGROUND & TECHNICAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Alicia Govender presented the background to the project and the findings of the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report. The presentation is attached hereto.




DISCUSSION SESSION

Question / Comment	Response
DH: What areas have been identified as having a high/medium ecological sensitivity?	AG: The ecologically sensitive areas comprise of ridges located north of the proposed development.
JW: Will the solar panels reflect sunlight off of them? Would this result in glare?	CR: The module glass is not a smooth glass finish and does have an anti-reflective component to reduce reflection. Effort is made in design to reduce reflection as this would then limit the generation capacity of a module. Our modules have even been approved to be used in an airport flight path which just indicates that reflection is not to cause any issues.
DH: When will construction commence and when will the plant start producing electricity?	AG: Construction is likely to commence towards the last quarter of 2014 if the developer is awarded preferred bidder status by the Department of Energy (DoE) and then generation 18 months later.
DH: The Farmers Association should be informed if alien plant species are identified.	Comment noted.
JW: How high are the solar panels from the ground? Will animals be permitted to graze around the solar panels?	The highest point of the module support structure is less than 3 m high. Animals will not be allowed to graze around the park as this has security implications for the Solar Park, which is fenced, guarded and under 'lock and key'.

WAY FORWARD AND CLOSURE

Ms Gabriele Wood once again thanked everyone for availing themselves for the meeting. The meeting was closed at 17:00.

SAVANNAH ENVIRONMENTAL (PTY) LTD		ATTENDANCE REGISTER	
Project	Merapi Solar Energy Facility	Meeting	Public Meeting
Date	30 January 2013	Time	16h00
		No.	Venue
			Excelsior Public Library, 39 Kommissie Street, Excelsior Free State

Organisation	Name & Postal Address	Contact Details	Signature
Savannah Environmental Designation Public Participation.	Gabriele Wood	Tel : 011 656 3237 Fax : Cell : 083 458 5570 E-mail : gabriele@savannah.com	
EXCELSIOR FARMERS ASS. Designation	S. B. HOLMES Box 33 EXCELSIOR.	Tel : 051 973 7206 Fax : 051 973 7066 Cell : 083 303 7868 E-mail : sbholmes@mvweb.co.za	
TENANT CEYLON Designation OWNER	J.T.D. WESSER Box 124. EXCELSIOR	Tel : 051 973 7184 Fax : Cell : 054 582 2450 E-mail : Jtdwesser@f.mael.co.za	
MOLDERS GIEZS Designation OWNER	J.S. HARMSE Box 42 EXCELSIOR 9760	Tel : 051-9730071 Fax : Cell : 0724252124 E-mail :	
Savannah Designation EA	Alicia Goreneder	Tel : 011 656 3237 Fax : Cell : E-mail :	

MERAPI PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY NEAR EXCELSIOR

FREE STATE PROVINCE

PUBLIC MEETING 30 JANUARY 2013



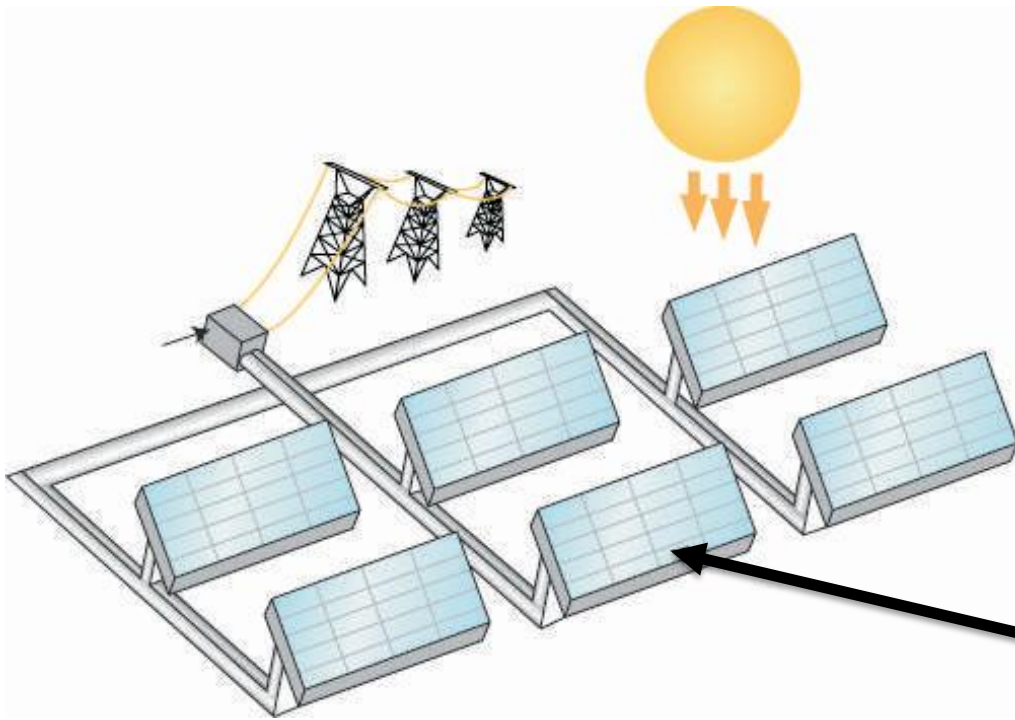
solairesdirect



PROJECT OVERVIEW

- **Applicant: SolaireDirect Southern Africa**
 - **Merapi Solar Energy Facility with FOUR PHASES near Excelsior**
 - **DEA REF NO.: 14/12/16/3/3/2/361-364.**
 - **130 MW (total capacity for the four phases)**
 - **Technology: Photovoltaic (PV) Panels**
 - **EIA required**
-

WHAT IS A PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) FACILITY?

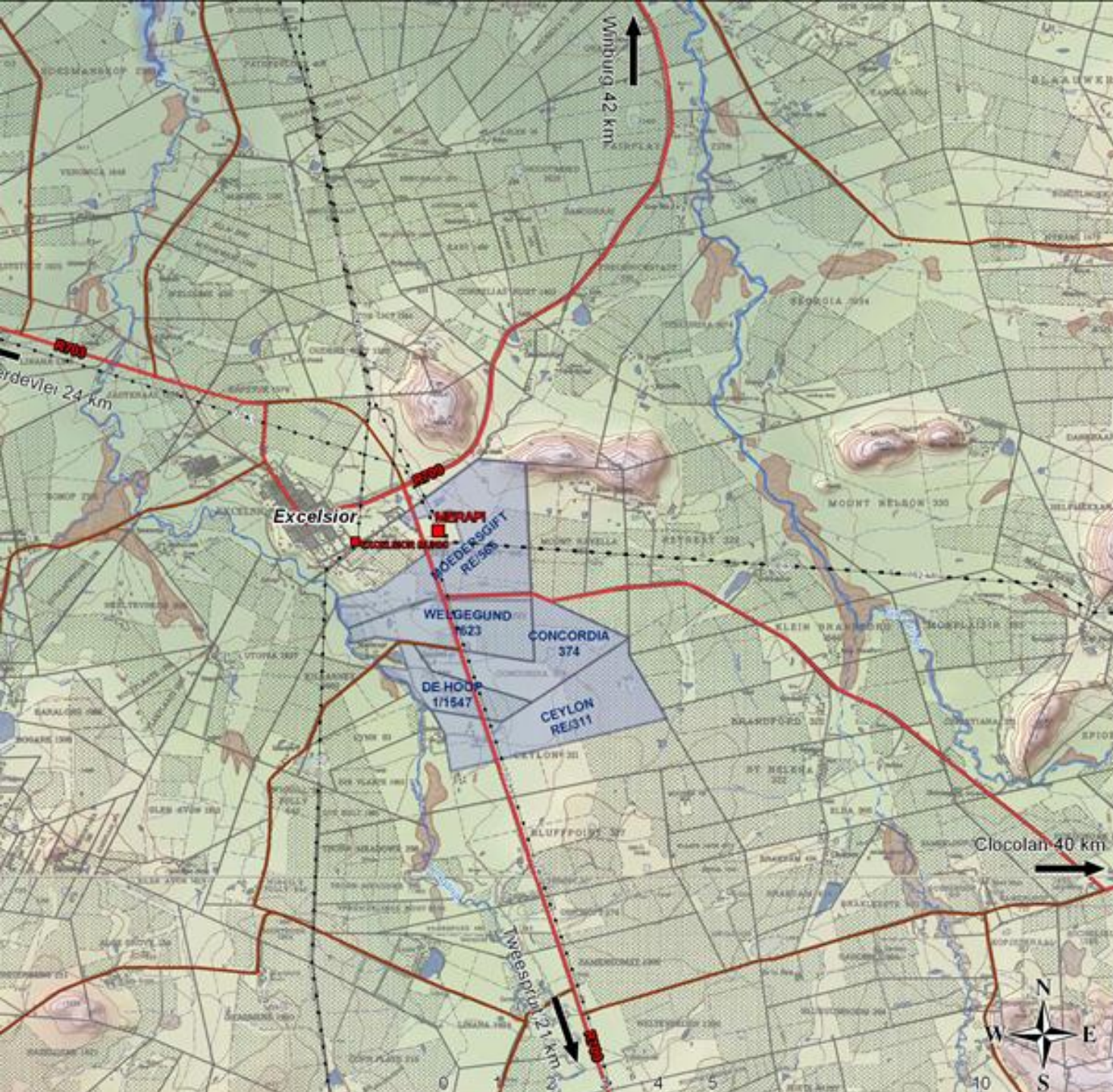


Merapi Solar Energy Facility

Locality Map

Legend

- National Road
- Regional Road
- Secondary Road
- Railway Line
- Perennial River
- Non-perennial River
- Power Line
- Distribution Substation
- Transmission Substation
- Farm portions



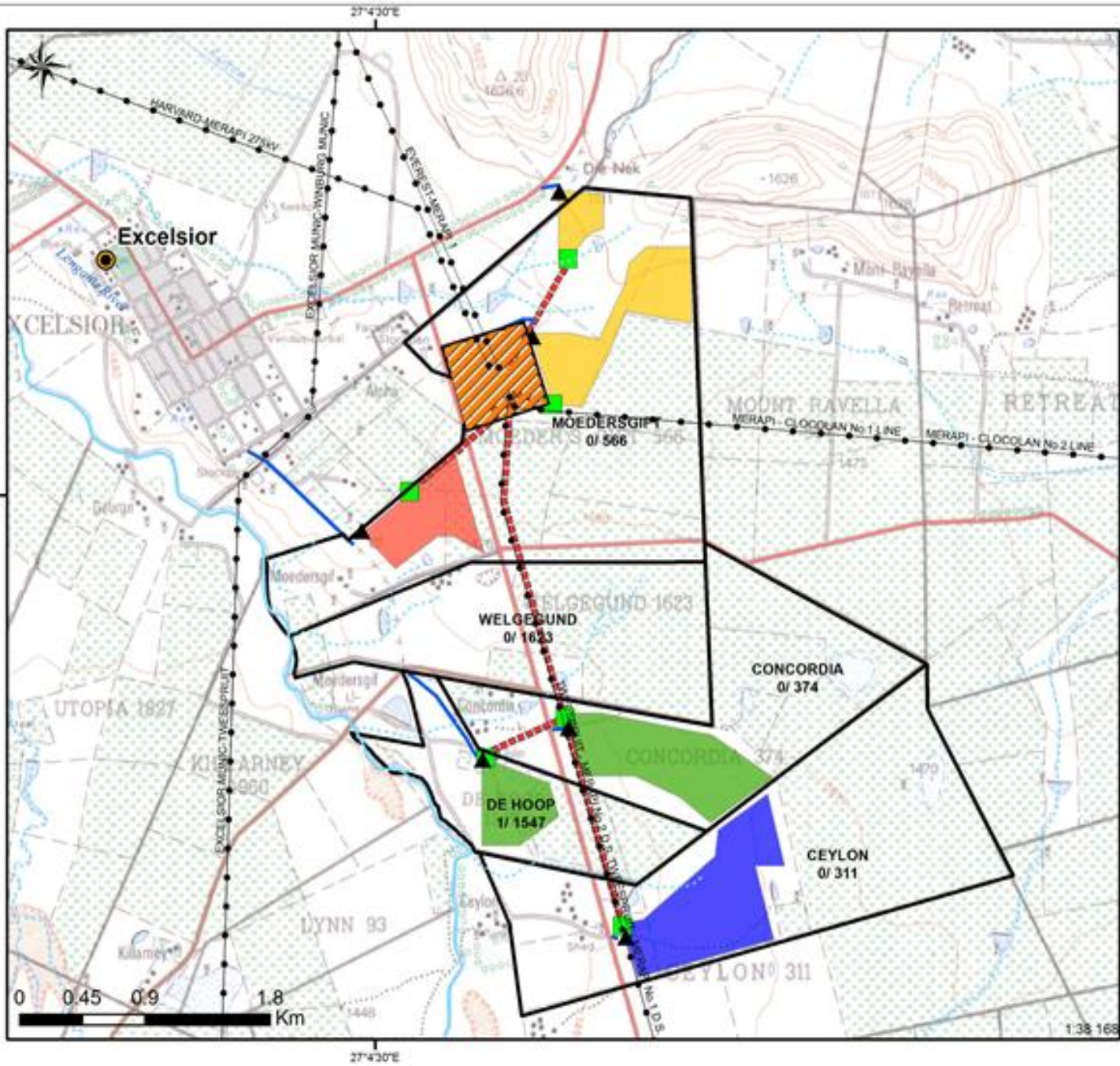
Merapi Solar Energy Facility Layout Plan

Legend

-  Town
-  Existing Power Line
-  Perennial
-  Non-Perennial
-  Roads
-  Existing substation
-  Affected Farm Portion
-  Guardhouse
-  On-site substation
-  Access roads
-  Proposed power line

Facility Layout

-  Phase 1
-  Phase 2
-  Phase 3
-  Phase 4



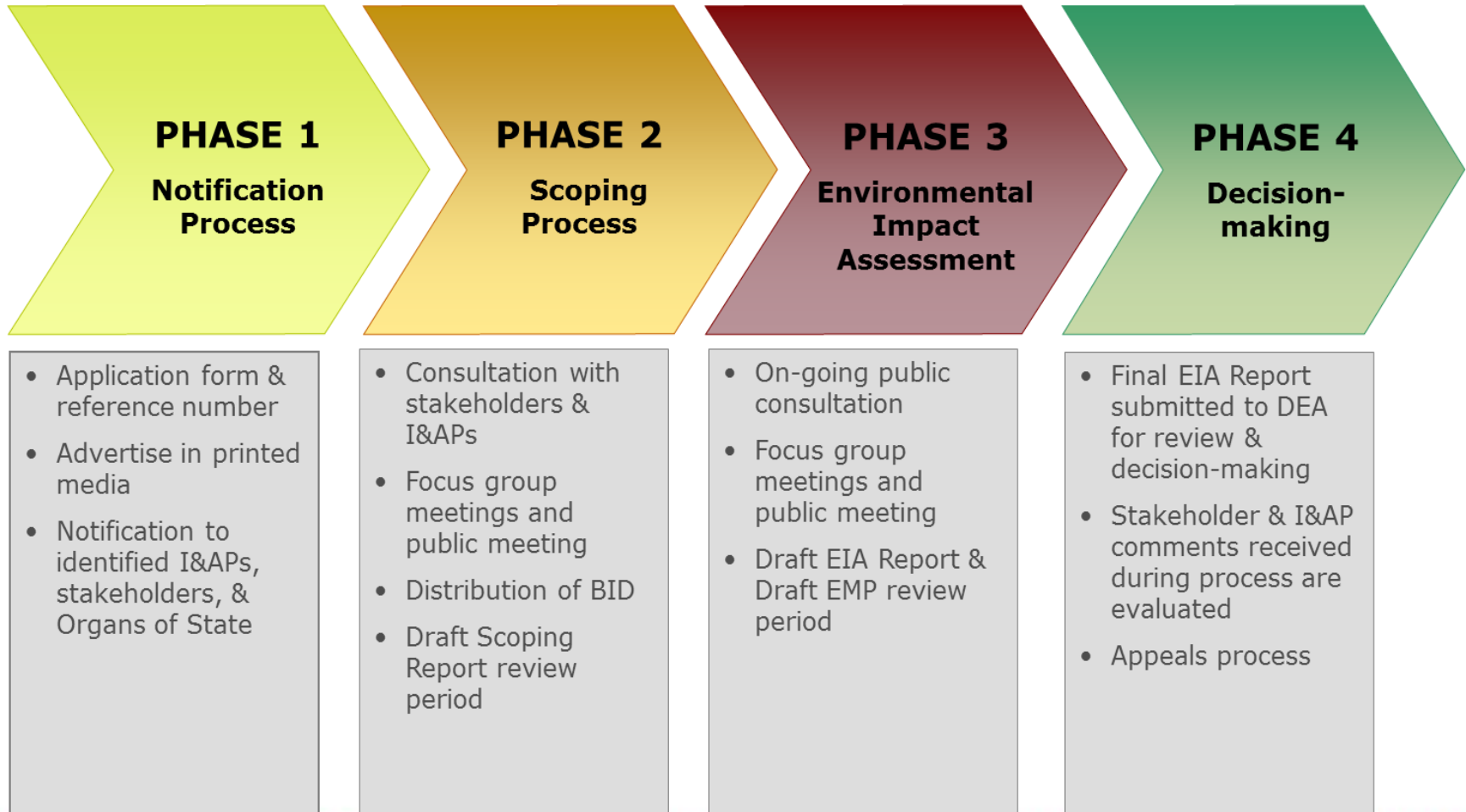
PROJECT COMPONENTS

- PV panels - generating capacity of up to 130MW
 - An on-site substation and 22/132kV overhead power line to facilitate the connection between the solar energy facility and the Eskom electricity grid.
 - Cabling between the project components, to be laid underground where practical
 - Internal access roads and fencing
 - Workshop area for maintenance, storage, and offices
-

LEGAL CONTEXT

- National Environmental Management Act (No 107 of 1998)
 - Overarching environmental legislation in South Africa
 - Identifies and regulates activities which may have a detrimental impact on the environment
 - Specifies the EIA process
 - Applicant requires authorisation from National DEA (in consultation with Provincial FS DETEA)
 - Independent environmental studies in accordance with the EIA Regulations of June 2010
-

OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

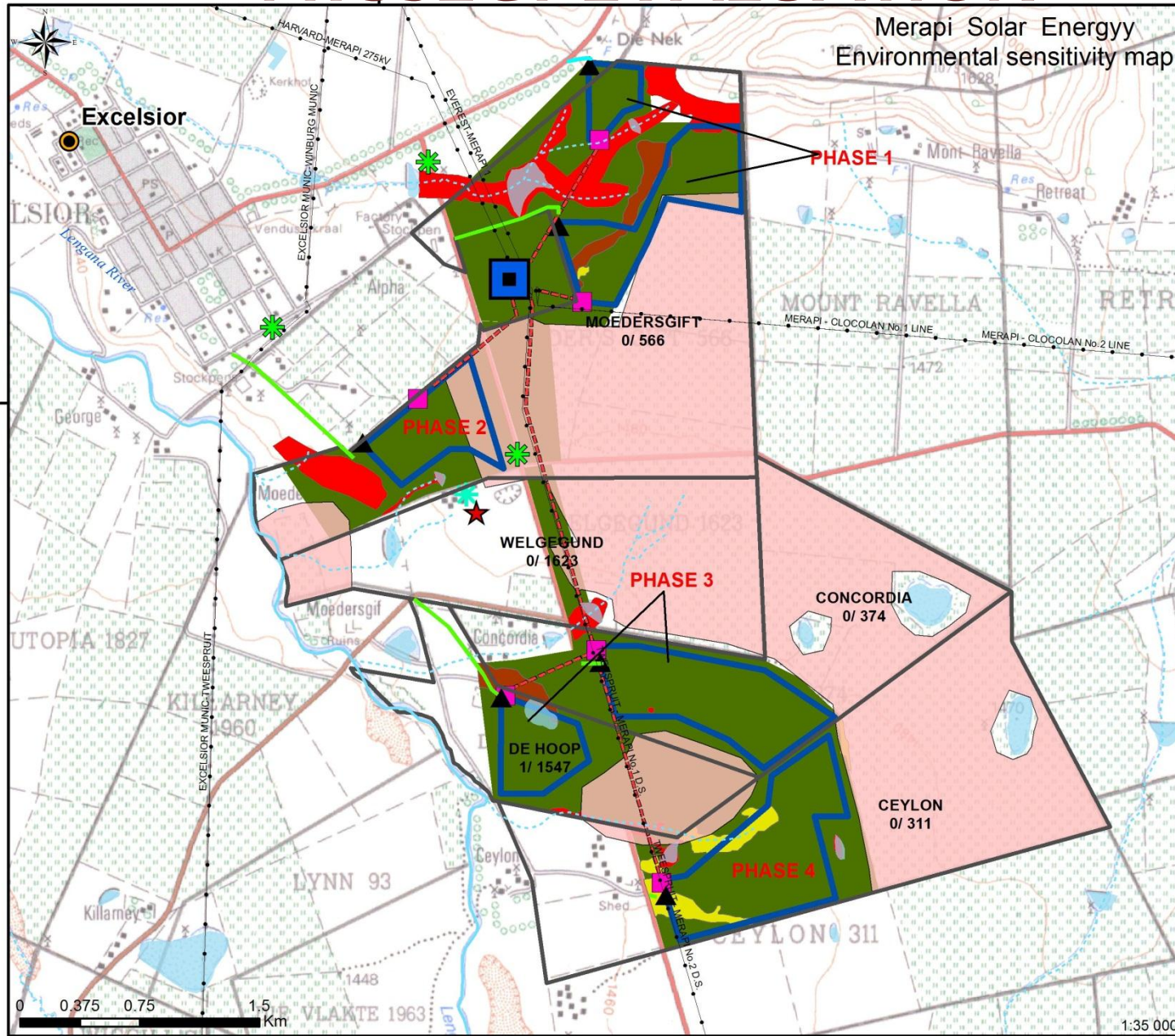


APPROACH TO THE EIA PROCESS

- Identification & assessment of issues:
 - Impacts on biodiversity
 - Impacts on soils & agricultural potential
 - Impacts on heritage resources
 - Impacts on visual aesthetics
 - Impacts on the social environment
 - Sensitive areas/ features identified through specialist studies & consultation
 - Final design of facility to be informed by sensitive areas identified through the EIA Assessment process
-

PROJECT EVALUATION

Merapi Solar Energy Environmental sensitivity map



Legend

- Town
- Existing Substation
- Existing Power Line
- Perennial
- Non-Perennial
- Roads
- Access roads
- Affected Farm Portion
- Waterbody
- LAYOUT**
- Guardhouse
- On-site substation
- Proposed power line
- Proposed facility sites
- ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY**
- Cemetery (burials)
- Old Village Site
- Potential visual receptors
- High Agricultural Potential land
- Ecological sensitivity**
- High
- Medium-High
- Medium-Low
- Low



POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

ISSUE	IMPACT WITHOUT MITIGATION	IMPACT WITH MITIGATION
Impacts on biodiversity	High	Medium
Impacts on visual aesthetics	High	Medium
Impacts on heritage resources	Low	Negligible
Impacts on soils & agricultural potential	Medium	Low
Impacts on the social environment	Medium	Low

CONCLUSIONS

- No environmental fatal flaws identified for any of the phases
- Sites are largely favourable from an **ecological** perspective – areas of high sensitivity have been avoided
- **Soil** degradation/erosion requires management
- **Agricultural** potential is medium. Sensitive areas are avoided.
- **Visual** impact medium due to proximity of site to major roads, i.e. high number of visual receptors in the study area
- No sites of **heritage** significance were found during the surveys
- Positive **social** impact - employment opportunities, skills development, & capacity building within the local communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- All phases of the project should be authorised by DEA
 - Environmental Management Programmes (EMPs) to be implemented to minimise impacts
 - Disturbed areas should be rehabilitated as soon as possible after construction
 - Identify & manage areas of high erosion potential
 - Declared alien plants must be identified and managed
 - Social beneficiation programme to be implemented
-

WAY FORWARD

- Public Review period for Draft Environmental Assessment Reports until 21 February 2013
 - Report available at:
 - Excelsior Public Library
 - www.savannahsa.com
 - Final Reports to be submitted to DEA for review & acceptance
 - Registered I&APs to be notified of decision on projects
-

WHO TO CONTACT

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