

## METHODS FOR PLANT RESCUE AND HABITAT REHABILITATION

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### List of Abbreviations

<b>CARA:</b>	Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act 43 of 1983
<b>DEA:</b>	Department of Environmental Affairs
<b>EA:</b>	Environmental Authorisation
<b>ECO:</b>	Environmental Control Officer
<b>EMP:</b>	Environmental Management Plan
<b>NEMA:</b>	National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998
<b>LFA:</b>	Landscape Functional Analysis (Tongway and Hindley 2004)
<b>IAP:</b>	Invasive Alien Plant

### List of Definitions:

**Accelerated soil erosion:** Soil erosion induced by human activities.

**Acceptable cover:** An acceptable cover shall mean that not less than 75% (in an area with rainfall above 400 mm per annum), or 40% (in regions receiving less than 400 mm rain per annum), of the area planted or hydroseeded shall be covered with grass and that there shall be no bare patches of more than 500 mm in maximum dimension.

**Alien:** originating from another country or continent and originally different environment, commonly used to describe plants that are not indigenous to South Africa and have become problematic (spreading rapidly, threatening existing biodiversity).

**Allelopathic components:** one or more biochemical compound produced by a plant and released through leaf litter or roots that suppresses the growth, survival, and reproduction of other surrounding vegetation.

**Bare soil:** Un-vegetated soil surface, unaltered by humans.

**Compacted soil surface:** A soil surface that has been hardened by an outside source, causing the soil to be more compacted than the surrounding area.

**Container plants:** Container plants include all vegetation which are bought or supplied in acceptable containers from nurseries or vegetation lifted out of their natural position and placed in containers.

**Desirable end state:** the future condition or target on which the rehabilitation is designed and that will serve later as a basis for rehabilitation success evaluation. This can be based on a reference site or modelled according to available information on historic vegetation.

**Ecological rehabilitation:** The process of assisting the recovery of a degraded or damaged ecosystem in a trajectory that renders the ecosystem fully functional, stable, and able to develop further, but not necessarily returning to the original historic state.

**Ecological restoration:** The process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded damaged or destroyed, in a trajectory that ultimately returns the ecosystem to its natural successional stage.

**Ecosystem:** The combination of biota within a given area, together with a suitable environment that sustains the biota and the interactions between biota. It can have a spatial unit of any size, but shows some degree homogeneity as far as structure, function and species composition is concerned. Small-scale ecosystems typically link up to larger scale ecosystems and all contribute to the ecosystem function and services at the landscape-scale.

**Environmental Management Plan:** an environmental management tool used to ensure that undue or reasonably avoidable adverse impacts of the construction and operation, and decommissioning of a project are prevented; and that the positive benefits of the projects are enhanced.

**Establishment of grass:** All procedures necessary to produce an acceptable cover of grass on an area.

**Establishment Period:** The Establishment Period is defined as the period beginning from the actual planting or placing of vegetation until three months thereafter, unless otherwise specified or unless grass cover is unacceptable or unless plants have not taken.

**Extinction debt:** is a concept that describes the future extinction of species due to events in the past. Extinction debt occurs because of time delays between impacts on a species, such as destruction of habitat or reduction of population size, and the species' ultimate disappearance.

**Geophytic:** resprouting during the growing season from an underground storage organ such as bulbs, corms, tubers or rhizomes, and dying back completely during unfavourable seasons.

**Hydroseeding:** To apply seed in a slurry with water (plus other materials to enhance growth) by means of a spraying device.

**Indigenous:** refers to a plant or animal that occurs naturally in the place in which it is currently found.

**Invasive plant:** a kind of plant which has under section 2 (3) of CARA been declared an invader plant, and includes the seed of such plant and any vegetative part of such plant which reproduces itself asexually.

**Landscape:** Consists of a mosaic of two or more ecosystems that exchange organisms, energy, water, and nutrients.

**Nursery conditions:** These are the necessary conditions to maintain healthy growth of rescued and/or container plants. This includes protection of such plants against wind, frost, direct sunlight, pests, rodents, diseases, and drought. It also includes the provision of suitable water, fertilizer and any other measures required to maintain the container plants.

**Period of Maintaining:** The Period of Maintaining is defined as the period following directly after the Establishment Period until the end of the Period

of Maintenance for the whole Contract as defined in the General Conditions of Contract, unless otherwise specified.

**Revegetation:** The process of establishing a vegetative cover on exposed soils, regardless of species composition or structure, as long as the species are non-invasive and their presence will not impede the gradual process of ecological rehabilitation or –restoration.

**Soil Erosion:** is a natural process whereby the ground level is lowered by wind or water action and may occur as a result of inter alia chemical processes and or physical transport on the land surface.

**Scarifying:** To roughen the surface of soil as a preparation for seeding or topsoil addition.

**Trimming:** To neatly round off the levels of existing or previously shaped earthworks to blend in with the levels of other earthworks, constructed works, or natural landforms.

**Transformation:** The conversion of an ecosystem to a different ecosystem or land use type.

**Topsoil:** uppermost layer of soil, in natural vegetation maximally 30 cm, in cultivated landscapes the total depth of cultivation, containing the layer with humus, seeds and nutrients. Topsoils that are applied to landscapes to be rehabilitated must be free of refuse, large roots and branches, stones, alien weeds and/or any other agents that would adversely affect the topsoils suitability for re-vegetation.

**Weed:** a plant that grows where it is not wanted, and can therefore be an indigenous or alien species. An unwanted plant growing in a garden is just called a weed, but the 198 listed IAPs are called “declared weeds and invaders”.

## 1. Purpose

The Plant Rescue and Revegetation Management Plan addresses the need to mitigate all impacts leading to disturbed vegetation, loss of species and/or agricultural potential, disturbed soil surfaces, and generally bare soils prone to erosion and further degradation on the proposed development site. The plan overlaps to some degree with the Storm Water and Erosion Management Plan, and for successful rehabilitation, it is imperative that this plan is at all times used in conjunction with other EMPs mentioned.

The objective of the plan is therefore to provide:

- » Protocols for the removal, temporary storage and replanting of plant species of conservation concern
- » Protocols for the rehabilitation of vegetative cover across the project area
- » Tools for planning the rehabilitation work and responding to unforeseen events
- » Guidelines on implementation and post-implementation tasks
- » Criteria for evaluating rehabilitation success
- » A summary of items to be included in the rehabilitation budget to ensure that there is sufficient allocation of resources on the project budget so that the scale of EMP-related activities is consistent with the significance of project impacts

## 2. Scope

This document is a plant rescue, rehabilitation, and revegetation plan that provides a guideline to be applied by all contractors on the development site. This plan, as part of the project EMP, is a legally binding document that must be implemented to fulfill the requirements of relevant legislation. However, the management plan is an evolving guideline that needs to be updated or adapted as progress is made with the rehabilitation and revegetation of the project area, and successes and failures of procedures identified.

The objective of rescuing plants, rehabilitation and revegetation on the project area is:

- » Preventing the loss of species either directly or through future extinction and minimising impacts of development on population dynamics of species of conservation concern.
- » Preserving the natural configuration of habitats as part of ecosystems, thus ensuring a diverse but stable hydrology, substrate and general environment for species to be able to become established and persist.
- » Preserving or re-creating the structural integrity of natural plant communities.
- » Actively aid the improvement of indigenous biodiversity according to a desirable end state according to a previously recorded reference state. This reference

state, if healthy, will be dynamic and able to recover after occasional disturbances without returning to a degraded state.

- » Improving the ecosystem function of natural landscapes and their associated vegetation.

### **3. Legislation and Standards**

Relevant legislation:

- » Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act 43 of 1983
- » Environmental Conservation Act 73 of 1989
- » National Forestry Act 84 of 1998
- » National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998
- » Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act (Act No. 9 of 2009)

### **4. Effect of clearing alien vegetation**

Invasive and Alien Plants (IAPs) gradually displace and suppress indigenous and/or herbaceous vegetation as their stands become bigger and denser. In addition, they use more water, hence desiccate the soil more, and may alter chemical properties of the soil – partially through secondary compounds released from their litter, partially from compounds released from roots. These altered soils suppress the germination and establishment of herbaceous species, leading to bare soil underneath dense IAP canopies.

After clearing dense stands of invasive shrubs, soil surfaces are thus generally bare with topsoil exposed to erosion and often already somewhat capped and eroded.

### **5. Effect of removing individuals of species of conservation concern**

Species of conservation concern are declining either due to overexploitation or because their range of occupancy is limited and further infringed on by development. Most plant populations require a certain minimum number of individuals within a population or metapopulation to allow for sufficient genetic transfer between individuals. This prevents genetic erosion and hence weakening of the ability of individuals to persist in their environments. Similarly, where the distance between metapopulations is significantly increased due to fragmentation and the resultant loss of some populations, populations may suffer genetic decline due to restricted movement of pollen. Pollinators or other species that depend on a particular plant species for a specific microhabitat or food source may be equally affected because of the reduction of available resources. Therefore the aim of plant rescue actions are always to maintain as many individuals of a plant population in as close proximity to the original habitat as possible to minimise loss of individuals and fragmentation of populations to prevent the creation of future extinction debts of the development.

## **6. General: Plant rescue and protection**

Successful plant rescue can only be achieved if:

- » Species can be removed from their original habitat with minimal damage to the plant, especially the roots.
- » All plants removed are safely stored and treated according to their specific requirements prior to being transplanted again.
- » They are relocated into a suitable habitat and protected from further damage and all disturbances to aid their re-establishment.
- » Timing of planting activities is planned with the onset of the growing season.
- » Steps are taken where necessary to aid the initial establishment of vegetation, including occasional watering.

### **6.1. Time of planting**

- » All planting shall be carried out as far as is practicable during the period most likely to produce beneficial results (i.e. during the peak growing season), but as soon as possible after completion of a section of earthworks.
- » Drainage line rehabilitation preparation must be done during autumn, and planting of appropriate species in these areas should commence during early spring after the first rains.

## **7. General: IAP removal**

Removal of invasive plants should at all time follow the specifications and guidelines of the Working for Water Programme (refer also to invasive plant management plan).

Information can be obtained from the relevant website:

<http://www.dwaf.gov.za/wfw>

Detailed information on clearing methods is available on the above websites "Alien Invasive Plants" menu (clearing methods, operational standards and species-specific treatment methods).

## **8. General: Rehabilitation and re-vegetation**

Successful rehabilitation can only be achieved with:

- » A long-term commitment
- » Practical, adaptive management
- » Viable goals of desired outcomes

Prior to vegetation rehabilitation, all stakeholders involved should be consulted to determine:

- » What the rehabilitation is ultimately aiming for– rehabilitation of cropping/grazing lands or rehabilitation of indigenous vegetation, after soil erosion and storm water management is in place and IAPs have been cleared?
- » A clear definition of incompatible and compatible vegetation on and in the immediate surroundings of the development must be defined and maintained as such. No tree or shrubs shall be allowed to grow to a height in excess of the horizontal distance of that tree or shrub from the nearest newly developed structure or to grow in such a manner as to endanger the development or its operation
- » Who will take long-term ownership and hence responsibility for the rehabilitation and its subsequent monitoring and management? Continued monitoring of vegetation establishment and composition, as well as erosion detection will have to be coupled with continued follow-up maintenance of rehabilitation and erosion control from commencement of activity up to the decommissioning phase.

The ultimate objective for rehabilitation should focus on the stabilisation of soil erosion, retaining agricultural potential of transformed areas and /or the establishment of a dense and protective plant cover and the maintenance of habitats to enable vegetation to persist and flourish on rehabilitated areas indefinitely, ultimately relying only on environmental resources.

### **8.1. Map and create management areas**

The entire project area must be mapped and divided into management areas indicating:

- » Current land cover
  - Roads and residential
  - Areas with IAPs, subdivided further in sparse or dense infestations where applicable
  - Transformed areas
  - Untransformed indigenous vegetation

For every one of the management areas, the project proponent, in consultation with the land users, will have to decide what intervention will be necessary, desirable, and feasible to enable the development of the project and long-term sustainable maintenance of infrastructure. Thus for every management area there must be an operational outline on:

- » what will happen there
- » what needs to be mitigated – including storm water- and erosion management
- » which management units need priority intervention/mitigation
- » how will this mitigation / intervention be done (method statements) including schedule of work
- » realistic and desirable end states including list of species that should be established to initiate rehabilitation after initial revegetation

- » approximate timeframes
- » monitoring protocol to evaluate success or failures of interventions
  - establish permanently marked transects and monitor with fixed-point photography
- » who will be responsible for doing what
- » how will different actions be integrated to achieve and maintain or improve the desirable end state of the environment of that management unit

Special attention will have to be given to drainage zones, as these not only have very active morphodynamics, but are also distributors of seeds – both indigenous and of IAPs. Thus clearing a downstream invasion of aliens to enable maintenance of the development will be futile if the upstream IAPs are not cleared or at least aggressively controlled.

## **8.2. Setting realistic rehabilitation goals**

Rehabilitation efforts typically aim at improving ecosystem function that consists of a series of processes, which can in the end be evaluated against a desired outcome or reference state of the vegetation and environment.

Attainable goals of rehabilitation on the project area should be possible and viable for at least the following:

- » Stabilisation of soils
- » Stabilisation of riparian areas
- » Storm water reduction through management and wetland integrity
- » Clearing of IAPs
  - The degree to which IAPs can be cleared from the project area needs to be determined according to desirability, available project funding, personnel and project requirements
- » Restoring and/or rehabilitating vegetative cover on non-transformed areas to obtain an acceptable vegetation cover that can be maintained or persists on its own indefinitely

## **8.3. Remove or ameliorate the cause of degradation**

This will include:

- » Physical rehabilitation of topsoil where it has been removed.
- » Topsoil on areas that have not been cultivated are considered as the upper 20 - 30 cm only. These contain the most important nutrients, micro flora and –fauna essential for nutrient cycling processes. Topsoils are also an important source of seeds.
- » Subsoils and overburden substrata lack the above elements and will first have to be used for physical rehabilitation of landscapes as and where necessary, and then overlain with topsoils



- » Stabilisation of topsoils and prevention of erosion – refer to the Erosion management plan
- » Removal of all invasive vegetation – refer to the Invasive Management Plan
  - Where it is desirable to use brush or logs of the cleared vegetation for soil stabilisation, such material must be free of regenerative material – e.g. seeds or root suckers

#### **8.4. Initial revegetation**

Immediately after clearing of vegetation, the soil surface must be inspected for signs of erosion and stabilised as soon as possible. After completion of construction, such erosion stabilisation should preferably be with a cover of vegetation. A dense initial grass or other perennial cover will be desirable. The appropriate seed mix should be determined in consultation with an ecologist familiar with the area. The aim of the first vegetation cover is to form a protective, relatively dense indigenous layer to slow runoff, increase moisture infiltration into the soil, and gradually change the soil nutrient status in order for it to be more favourable for other desirable indigenous vegetation to become established.

#### **8.5. Plant Search and Rescue**

Prior to construction, once all the areas where topsoil will be removed or areas will be transformed have been demarcated, the ECO and contractor will be responsible to remove all bulbous species from the topsoil, as well as succulents and small indigenous shrubs that can be transplanted. These are to be kept in a raised, protected position in a designated area until they can be replanted again as part of the rehabilitation process. Further details are listed in the operation standards.

#### **8.6. Natural seed banks and improvement of plant structural and compositional diversity**

It is expected that soil seed banks of indigenous vegetation will be present to initiate initial vegetation cover, but may not be sufficient to establish an acceptable cover of desirable species. After deciding which indigenous species should be re-introduced, seed should be ideally collected from site or an environmentally-matched site nearby.

Seed collection may be done throughout the year as seed ripens, but can also be restricted to summer, when a large amount of the perennial seed should have ripened. Seeds should be stored in paper or canvas bags dusted with insecticide, and sown at the onset of the rainy season.

Alternatively, slower-growing perennials may be raised from seed or cuttings in a nursery and then transplanted once established. It will be beneficial to investigate if community members would be able to create and maintain such a nursery, or if there are nurseries in the area, that raise indigenous flora from the area.

The final vegetation cover should resemble the original (non-encroached) vegetation composition and structure as far as practicable possible or permissible within each management unit.

For drainage areas:

- » First restore drainage line morphology following the guidelines of the Erosion management plan – without that ecological recovery cannot be initiated
- » Determine if natural seed sources may be present further upstream
- » If such upstream seed sources are still present, rehabilitation of riparian vegetation after soil erosion management will most likely occur naturally, PROVIDED that follow-up monitoring of the establishment of vegetation is carried out, and all invasive species eradicated as they emerge. This can only be achieved with a long-term commitment (> 5 years minimum)
- » Should no upstream seed resources be available, suitable species (as determined in consultation with an ecologist) should be sown or planted.

### **8.7. Monitoring and follow-up action**

Throughout the lifecycle of the development, regular monitoring and adaptive management must be in place to detect any new degradation of ecosystems affected by the development, and remedy these as soon as detected.

During the construction phase, the ECO and contractor will be responsible for initiating and maintaining a suitable monitoring system. Once the development is operational, the project proponent will have to identify a suitable entity that will be able to take over and maintain the monitoring cycle and initiate adaptive management as soon as it is required. Monitoring personnel must be adequately trained.

The following are the minimum criteria that should be monitored:

- » Composition and density of replanted vegetation, distinguishing between species introduced for initial revegetation only and species that are part of the pre-determined desirable end state
- » Associated nature and stability of surface soils
  - It is recommended that permanent transects are marked and surveyed annually according to the LFA technique (Tongway and Hindley 2004), adapted to integrate both surface soil characteristics and the vegetation to be monitored
- » Re-emergence of IAPs
  - If noted, remedial action must be taken immediately according to Working for Water specifications
- » Nature and dynamics of riparian zones
  - Stability of riparian vegetation
  - Any form of bank erosion, slumping or undercutting

- Stability of channel form and width of streams – if this increases, it shows that vegetation on plains and/or riparian areas and upper drainage lines are not yet in a stable enough state to be fully functional in reducing excess runoff and the ecosystem overall is losing valuable resources

### **8.8. Timeframes and duration**

- » Rehabilitation will occur during construction, as areas for the re-application of topsoil and revegetation become available or where revegetation can be initiated after clearing of invasives or to stabilise erosion.
- » The initial revegetation period post construction is estimated to be over a period of 6 (minimum) to 12 months (maximum), or a time period specified by the Horticultural Landscape Contractor, particularly if planting of trees and shrubs occurs.
- » The rehabilitation phase (including post seeding maintenance) should be at least 12 months (depending on time of seeding and rainfall) to ensure establishment of an acceptable plant cover is achieved (excluding invasive plant species or weeds).
- » If the plants have not established and the acceptable plant cover is not achieved within the specified maintenance period, maintenance of these areas shall continue until at acceptable plant cover is achieved (excluding alien plant species or weeds).
- » Additional seeding or planting may be necessary to achieve acceptable plant cover. Hydroseeding may have to be considered as an option in this case.
- » Any plants that die, during the maintenance period, shall be replaced by the Horticultural Landscape Contractor (at the Horticultural Landscape Contractor's cost if it was due to insufficient maintenance).
- » Succession of natural plant species should be encouraged
- » Monitoring of rehabilitation success and follow-up adaptive management, together with clearing of emerging invasives shall be carried on until the decommissioning phase has been completed.

## **9. Conclusion**

The Plant Rescue and Revegetation Management Plan is a document to assist the contractor, the developer, and the ECO with guidelines on how to plan and implement the required work, and understand the concepts behind successful rehabilitation. This plan will have to be implemented in conjunction with erosion-, storm water- and IAP management plans. The exact details of the rehabilitation plan will depend on the determined extent of rehabilitation that will have to be undertaken, available funding, and desirable end state of the vegetation after rehabilitation.

## 10. References and further reading

- Clewell, A., Rieger, J. and Munro, J. (2005). *Guidelines for Developing and Managing Ecological Restoration Projects, 2 Edition*. [www.ser.org](http://www.ser.org) and Tucson: Society for Ecological Restoration International.
- Coetzee, K. (2005). *Caring for Natural Rangelands*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
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- Society for Ecological Restoration International Science & Policy Working Group. 2004. *The SER International Primer on Ecological Restoration*. [www.ser.org](http://www.ser.org) & Tucson: Society for Ecological Restoration International.
- Tongway, D.J. and Hindley, N.L. (2004) *Landscape Function Analysis: Procedures for Monitoring and Assessing Landscapes*, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA.
- Tongway, D.J., Freudenberg, D.O., Noble, J.C., and Hodgkinson, K.C. (Eds). (2003). *Landscape Ecology, Function and Management*. CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA.

## A. APPENDIX: RECOMMENDED OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

### OBJECTIVE: Revegetate and Rehabilitate disturbed areas

The Contractor must take all reasonable measures to ensure that plant species of conservation concern are rescued and survive indefinitely. Landscaped topsoils as well as areas cleared of IAPs must be adequately rehabilitated and /or revegetated to ensure that the ecosystems affected by the development regain and/or retain their functionality indefinitely.

Throughout the lifecycle of the development, regular monitoring and adaptive management must be in place to detect any new degradation of ecosystems affected by the development and remedy these as soon as detected.

Mitigation measures relating to the vegetative cover as part of a healthy ecosystem must be implemented in order to effectively limit and gradually reverse the impact on the environment. The focus of the mitigation measures laid out below relate to project-related disturbances. Where such disturbances are exacerbated by farming-related disturbances or vice versa, mitigation measures must be carried out in consultation with the land-user responsible.

<b>Project component/s</b>	Project components affecting the objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Turbines</li> <li>» Access roads and cabling between and to turbine units</li> <li>» Power line</li> <li>» Sealed surfaces (e.g. roofs, concrete surfaces, compacted road surfaces, paved roads / areas)</li> <li>» Substation</li> <li>» All other infrastructure</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Loss of suitable substrate for a stable vegetation cover</li> <li>» De-stabilisation and/or alteration of substrate and hence degradation of vegetation cover, significant change in species composition or loss of agricultural potential</li> <li>» Loss of suitable habitat for flora and fauna</li> <li>» Leaky ecosystem due to loss of nutrients and moisture from the system, leading to a less resilient vegetation cover and loss of ecosystem function and -services</li> <li>» Degradation and/or loss of riparian areas and wetlands on and beyond the project boundaries</li> <li>» A loss of indigenous vegetation cover and possibly endangered species</li> <li>» Disturbance of fauna species</li> </ul>
<b>Activities/risk sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Rainfall and wind erosion of disturbed areas</li> <li>» Excavation, stockpiling and compaction of soil</li> <li>» Existing IAPs as well as clearing thereof</li> <li>» Concentrated discharge of water from construction activity or new</li> </ul>

	<p>infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Storm water run-off from sealed, altered or bare surfaces</li> <li>» Mobile construction equipment movement on site</li> <li>» Cabling and access roads construction activities</li> <li>» Power line construction activities</li> <li>» River/stream/drainage line road crossings</li> <li>» Roadside drainage ditches</li> <li>» Project related infrastructure</li> <li>» Premature abandonment of follow-up monitoring and adaptive management of rehabilitation</li> </ul>
<b>Mitigation: Target/ Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» To minimise loss of plant species of conservation concern</li> <li>» To minimise unfavourable runoff conditions and loss of resources from the ecosystems</li> <li>» To minimise erosion of soil from site during and after construction</li> <li>» To minimise and mitigate unfavourable alteration to drainage lines, especially incision</li> <li>» To minimise damage to indigenous vegetation during and after construction</li> <li>» No accelerated overland flow related surface erosion as a result of project infrastructure</li> <li>» No reduction in the surface area or general nature and functionality of wetlands (drainage lines and other wetland areas) as a result of the establishment of infrastructure on the project areas and beyond its boundaries</li> <li>» A clear reduction of IAPs on the project area and replacement thereof by indigenous vegetation according to a pre-determined desirable end state</li> </ul>

<b>Mitigation: Action/control</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Planning</b>		
Classify the entire project area into management units according to current land cover and state of the environment and map accordingly	Developer / Contractor	Prior to construction
<p>For each management unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» establish what interventions will be necessary relating to IAPs, soil erosion management, topsoil handling, landscape rehabilitation and revegetation</li> <li>» where rehabilitation and revegetation will be necessary, decide on the desired end state of vegetation for that management unit and create a list of species to be established on specific sites</li> <li>» outline the management of construction activities, including topsoils, excavated materials and felled biomass in a manner that will optimise the rehabilitation goals as fast and as effective as possible for that management unit</li> </ul>	Developer / Contractor in collaboration with ECO and land-users	Prior to construction
<b>Plant Rescue and indigenous plant materials</b>		
<p>All harvested plant materials shall be labelled with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Genus as minimum, species if known</li> <li>» Habitat from which materials were collected</li> </ul>	ECO	Prior to construction

Mitigation: Action/control	Responsibility	Timeframe
<p>Indigenous plant materials for re-vegetation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» All plant material shall be obtained from the search-and-rescue operation on the site prior to clearing or from local nurseries or reputable seed providers</li> <li>» Indigenous materials shall only be removed from their habitat with the necessary permits whenever applicable</li> <li>» Each plant removed shall be handled, packed and stored in a manner suitable for that species</li> <li>» Removed plants shall be protected from windburn or other damage during transportation</li> <li>» No plants or plants with exposed roots shall be subjected to excessive exposure to drying winds and sun, or subjected to water logging</li> <li>» All plants shall be kept free from plant diseases and pests and protected from rodents or other damaging agents</li> <li>» All indigenous plants that have been removed prior to clearing shall be returned to conditions resembling their original habitat as close as practically possible</li> </ul>	Contractor in collaboration with ECO	Before, during and after construction
<p>Seed stocks for rehabilitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Seed can be used for cultivation of desirable species for revegetation</li> <li>» Seed shall be utilised for direct sowing or hydroseeding</li> <li>» Seed collected from the site must be dried and stored in a suitable facility under cool (7-10°C), dry, insect free conditions until required for cultivation or seeding. Only viable, ripe seed shall be used</li> <li>» Seed harvested shall be insect- and pathogen free</li> <li>» Seed harvested shall not contain materials of any invasive species</li> <li>» Prior to clearing, seed should be collected from the site on a regular basis as species start to seed to maximise the amount of fully developed seed secured</li> <li>» From sites that will be cleared, 100% of all seeds available may be collected</li> <li>» From sites adjacent to the development, 25% of seeds can be collected for rehabilitation</li> </ul>	Contractor and ECO	Before, during and after construction
<p>Site-specific nursery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» On-site nursery facilities shall be erected for the holding of rescued plant material and the propagation of appropriate species for re-vegetation</li> <li>» Where nursery facilities can only cater for rescued plants, a suitable (local) nursery shall be identified that will be willing to receive seeds collected and propagate the necessary species for later revegetation</li> <li>» Soil or other propagation media, were used, shall be weed- and pathogen free</li> <li>» Argentine ants shall be controlled at all times</li> <li>» The area where plants are stored shall be kept free of</li> </ul>	Contractor, ECO to control	Prior to construction

Mitigation: Action/control	Responsibility	Timeframe
weeds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Plants stored in the designated area shall be protected from rodents, excessive sun and wind, and inspected regularly until being planted for pathogens and pests, and then treated accordingly</li> <li>» The nursery shall be adequately secured to prevent loss or theft of species</li> </ul>		
Protected flora <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ensure that no indigenous protected flora is removed from its original habitat in the project area without legal documents from the relevant authorities</li> </ul>	ECO	Before, during and after construction
<b>Topsoil</b>		
Avoid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Management units that will not be developed or selected elements – trees, rocky outcrops on site shall be maintained in situ and demarcated clearly to prevent any disturbance during construction</li> <li>» These units will be considered as NO-GO areas during construction</li> </ul>	Contractor and ECO	Before, during and immediately after construction
Invasives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Remove all invasive shrubs as per the Working for Water specifications</li> </ul>	Contractor, ECO to control	Before, during and after construction
Mulch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» all trees felled shall be debranched and the logs used in controlling erosion from re-landscaped topsoils and/or adding surface roughness and organic matter to topsoils to be rehabilitated</li> <li>» all cut branches from trees, as well as all shrubs cleared from the construction site shall be shredded to mulch, either by a chipper or by hand to sticks no longer than 10 cm</li> <li>» preparation of mulch shall be done at source</li> <li>» mulched material shall be free of seed-bearing invasive plant material</li> <li>» the mulch shall be suitably stored – bagged if necessary - and will be used in rehabilitation and soil erosion management on the site</li> <li>» should additional mulch be used for rehabilitation, this should be obtained from invasive shrubs of areas not cleared</li> <li>» mulch shall be stored for as short a period as possible</li> </ul>	Contractor, ECO to control	Before, during and immediately after construction
Storage of topsoil and subsoil: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» topsoils constitute the upper 20 – 30 cm of soil only, lower layers of soil are regarded as subsoil</li> <li>» stockpiling of topsoils and subsoils shall only be done on previously transformed areas, and be kept at least 50 m from any remaining natural vegetation</li> <li>» care shall be taken during stockpiling to prevent the</li> </ul>	Contractor, ECO to control	During and immediately after construction



Mitigation: Action/control	Responsibility	Timeframe
<p>mixing of topsoil with subsoil and/or any other material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» topsoils shall be stored in heaps no higher than 100 cm, and shall be re-applied as soon as possible</li> <li>» care shall be exercised during stockpiling of topsoils to prevent compaction thereof</li> <li>» topsoils shall be adequately protected from erosion by preventing concentration of surface water and scouring of slopes</li> <li>» erosion of topsoils has to be contained and repaired as soon as it occurs, before large scale erosion and loss of topsoil develops</li> <li>» any logs obtained during clearing operations can be used in continuous rows to curtail erosion where necessary. Geojute (geotextile) shall be used additionally if the logs are not sufficient to remedy any erosion – for details refer to the erosion management plan</li> <li>» where topsoils need to be stored longer than 6 months, such stockpiles shall be revegetated, even if this has to include re-seeding to achieve an acceptable cover of vegetation</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Boulders and rocks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» where removed during clearing, should be stored separately and used in the rehabilitation program</li> <li>» boulders and rocks must be partially buried within the topsoil layer wherever practical to provide greater soil-holding stability and reduce water erosion</li> <li>» placement of rocks and boulders shall mimic the natural occurrence of rocks and boulders in the area</li> </ul>	Contractor, ECO to control	During and after construction
<b>Rehabilitation of surface</b>		
<p>Prior to the application of topsoil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» subsoil shall be shaped and trimmed to blend in with the surrounding landscape or used for erosion mitigation measures</li> <li>» ground surface or shaped subsoil shall be ripped or scarified with a mechanical ripper or by hand to a depth of 15 – 20 cm,</li> <li>» compacted soil shall be ripped to a depth greater than 25 cm and the trimmed by hand to prevent re-compacting the soil</li> <li>» any rubbish, concrete remnants, steel remnants or other objects introduced to the site during the construction process shall be cleared before ripping, or shaping and trimming of any landscapes to be rehabilitated takes place</li> <li>» shaping will be to roughly round off cuts and fills and any other earthworks to stable forms, sympathetic to the natural surrounding landscapes</li> </ul>	Contractor, ECO to control	During and after construction

<b>Mitigation: Action/control</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<p>Application of topsoil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» topsoils shall be spread evenly over the ripped or trimmed surface, if possible not deeper than the topsoil originally removed</li> <li>» the final prepared surface shall not be smooth but furrowed to follow the natural contours of the land</li> <li>» the final prepared surface shall be free of any pollution or any kind of contamination</li> <li>» care shall be taken to prevent the compaction of topsoil</li> <li>» where applicable, the final prepared surface will also contain scattered rocks and/or logs to mimic the natural condition of the original habitat or area and to aid in soil stabilisation and erosion control</li> </ul>	Contractor, ECO to control	During and after construction
<p>Soil stabilisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» mulch from brush shall be applied by hand to achieve a layer of uniform thickness</li> <li>» mulch shall be rotovated into the upper 10 cm layer of soil <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ this operation shall not be attempted if the wind strength is such as to remove the mulch before it can be incorporated into the topsoil</li> </ul> </li> <li>» in very rocky areas a layer of mulch shall be applied prior to adding the topsoil</li> <li>» measures shall be taken to protect all areas susceptible to erosion by installing temporary and permanent drainage work as soon as possible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ where natural water flow-paths can be identified, subsurface drains or suitable surface drains and chutes need to be installed</li> </ul> </li> <li>» additional measures shall be taken to prevent surface water from being concentrated in streams and from scouring slopes, banks or other areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ if mulch is limited, available mulch, together with harvested seeds, should be concentrated in these hollows to promote rapid re-vegetation in them</li> </ul> </li> <li>» runnels or erosion channels developing shall be back-filled and restored to a proper condition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ such measures shall be effected immediately before erosion develops at a large scale</li> </ul> </li> <li>» where erosion cannot be remedied with available mulch, logs or rocks, geojute shall be used to curtail erosion</li> </ul>	Contractor, ECO to control	During and after construction
<p>Borrow-pits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» shall be shaped to have undulating, low-gradient slopes and surfaces that are rough and irregular, suitable for trapping sediments and facilitation of plant growth</li> <li>» upon completion of rehabilitation these reshaped and revegetated areas shall blend into the natural terrain</li> </ul>	Contractor, ECO to control	After construction

Mitigation: Action/control	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Revegetation</b>		
<p>Recreate a non-invasive, acceptable vegetation cover that will facilitate the establishment of desirable and/or indigenous species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» revegetation of the final prepared area is expected to occur spontaneously to some degree where topsoils could be re-applied within 6 months</li> <li>» revegetation will be done according to an approved planting/landscaping plan according to the management units initially delineated and their respective desirable end states and permissible vegetation</li> </ul>	Contractor, ECO to control	Successively during construction , as construction of individual components is completed, then followed up until desired end state is reached
<p>Re-seeding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» revegetation can be increased where necessary by hand- seeding indigenous species <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ previously collected and stored seeds shall be sown evenly over the designated areas, and be covered by means of rakes or other hand tools</li> </ul> </li> <li>» re-seeding shall occur at the recommended time to take advantage of the growing season</li> <li>» in the absence of sufficient follow-up rains after seeds started germinating, watering of the new vegetation cover until it is established shall become necessary to avoid loss of this vegetative cover and the associated seedbank</li> <li>» where, after initial re-seeding, the no acceptable vegetation cover has established within 12 months, hydroseeding should be considered as an option for follow-up revegetation work</li> <li>» sowing rates of seeds used during hydro-seeding should be obtained from the relevant supplier and in accordance with the existing environment</li> </ul>	Contractor, ECO to control	Successively during construction , as construction of individual components is completed, then followed up until desired end state is reached
<p>Planting of species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» species to be planted include all rescued species</li> <li>» the size of planting holes shall be sufficiently large to ensure that the entire root system is well covered with topsoil</li> <li>» soil around the roots of container plants shall not be disturbed</li> <li>» bulbous plants shall be planted in groups or as features in selected areas</li> <li>» before placement of larger plant specimens into prepared holes, the holes shall be watered if not sufficiently moist</li> <li>» during transplanting care shall be taken to limit or</li> </ul>	Contractor, ECO to control	Successively during construction , as construction of individual components is completed, then followed up until desired end state is

Mitigation: Action/control	Responsibility	Timeframe
<p>prevent damage to roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» plants should be watered immediately after transplanting to help bind soil particles to the roots (or soil-ball around rooted plants) and so facilitate the new growth and functioning of roots</li> </ul>		reached
<p>Traffic on revegetated areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» designated tracks shall be created for pedestrian or vehicle traffic where necessary</li> <li>» Disturbance of vegetation and topsoil must be kept to a practical minimum, no unauthorised off road driving will be allowed</li> <li>» All livestock shall be excluded from revegetated areas</li> </ul>	Contractor	Before, during and after construction
<p>Establishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The establishment and new growth of revegetated and replanted species shall be closely monitored</li> <li>» Where necessary, reseeding or replanting will have to be done if no acceptable plant cover has been created</li> </ul>	Contractor	Successively during construction , as construction of individual components is completed, then followed up until desired end state is reached
<b>Monitoring and follow-up treatments</b>		
<p>Monitor success of rehabilitation and revegetation and take remedial actions as needed according to the respective plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Erosion shall be monitored at all times and measures taken as soon as detected</li> <li>» Where necessary, reseeding or replanting will have to be done if no acceptable plant cover has been created</li> </ul>	ECO during construction, suitable designated person/institution after that	During and after construction , during operational and decommissioning phase
<p>Weeding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» It can be anticipated that invasive species and weeds will germinate on rehabilitated soils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ These need to be hand-pulled before they are fully established and/or reaching a mature stage where they can regenerate</li> <li>○ Where invasive shrubs re-grow, they will have to be eradicated according to the Working for Water specifications</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» No activity in identified no-go areas</li> <li>» Acceptable level of activity within disturbance areas, as</li> </ul>	

	<p>determined by ECO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Natural configuration of habitats as part of ecosystems or cultivated land is retained or recreated, thus ensuring a diverse but stable hydrology, substrate and general environment for species to be able to become established and persist</li><li>» The structural integrity and diversity of natural plant communities is recreated or maintained</li><li>» Indigenous biodiversity continually improves according to the pre-determined desirable end state<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ This end state, if healthy, will be dynamic and able to recover by itself after occasional natural disturbances without returning to a degraded state</li></ul></li><li>» Ecosystem function of natural landscapes and their associated vegetation is improved or maintained</li></ul>
<b>Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Fortnightly inspections of the site by ECO during construction</li><li>» An incident reporting system must record non-conformances to the EMP.</li><li>» Quarterly inspections and monitoring of the site by the ECO or personnel designated to the rehabilitation process until 80% of the desired plant species have become established<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ These inspections should be according to the monitoring protocol set out in the rehabilitation plan</li></ul></li><li>» Thereafter annual inspections according to the minimal monitoring protocol</li></ul>

## B. APPENDIX: CHECKLIST OF ACTIONS FOR REHABILITATION PLANNING

<p><b>Conceptual Planning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Identify rehabilitation site locations and its boundaries</li> <li>» Identify ownership of rehabilitation program</li> <li>» Describe improvements that are anticipated following rehabilitation</li> <li>» Identify the kind of ecosystem to be rehabilitated at each site</li> <li>» Identify rehabilitation goals and desirable end state</li> <li>» Identify physical site conditions in need of repair</li> <li>» Identify stressors in need of regulation or re-initiation to maintain the integrity of the ecosystem, such as aliens, erosion, fire-regime</li> <li>» Identify the list and kinds of interventions of abiotic and biotic interventions that are and will be needed</li> <li>» Identify landscape restrictions and whether or not its integrity is dependent on a functioning ecosystem outside the project area</li> <li>» Determine project funding and sources</li> <li>» Identify labour sources and equipment needs</li> <li>» Identify biotic resource needs and sources, e.g. suitable topsoil, seeds</li> <li>» Identify any permit requirements or other legal issues</li> <li>» Determine project duration</li> <li>» Outline adaptable strategies for long-term protection and management</li> </ul>
<p><b>Preliminary Tasks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Appoint a rehabilitation practitioner who is in charge of all the technical aspects of rehabilitation</li> <li>» Appoint a restoration team and train where necessary to ensure effective implementation</li> <li>» Prepare a budget to accommodate the completion of preliminary tasks</li> <li>» Document existing site conditions, also describing biota</li> <li>» Conduct pre-project monitoring as needed, including soil chemistry, that may affect the success of the rehabilitation program</li> <li>» Establish a reference site or past reference that represents the desired end state of the site</li> <li>» Gather information on key species to be re-introduced</li> <li>» Conduct investigations as needed to assess the effectiveness of restoration methods and strategies used in similar habitats up to date</li> <li>» Decide if rehabilitation goals are realistic or need modification</li> <li>» Prepare a list of objectives that need to be reached to achieve restoration goals</li> <li>» Ensure liaison with affected stakeholders, especially as far as rehabilitation goals are concerned</li> <li>» Investigate available accedes and infrastructure needed to facilitate implementation of rehabilitation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implementation phase</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Describe the interventions that will be implemented to attain each set objective</li> <li>» Acknowledge potential for passive restoration where viable</li> <li>» Prepare performance standards and monitoring protocols to measure the attainment of each objective</li> <li>» Schedule tasks needed to fulfil each objective</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Obtain equipment, supplies and biotic resources as needed</li><li>» Prepare an appropriate budget</li></ul>
<b>Implementation tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Mark boundaries and work areas</li><li>» Install permanent monitoring fixtures</li><li>» Implement restoration tasks</li></ul>
<b>Post-implementation tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Protect the rehabilitation site against initial disturbance, including herbivores</li><li>» Perform post-implementation maintenance, especially continued monitoring and eradication of emerging IAPs</li><li>» Monitor site at least once per year, using the LFA technique, and identify needs for adaptive management</li></ul>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Assess monitoring data to determine whether performance standards are met and rehabilitation objectives reached and maintained</li><li>» Conduct an ecological evaluation of the newly completed rehabilitation</li></ul>

## **C. APPENDIX: TRANSPLANTING GUIDELINES FOR PLANTS WITH UNDERGROUND STORAGE ORGANS**

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Many of the plants in harsh environments have underground storage organs from which they resprout every year after sufficient rains, flower and then die back soon after fruiting and remain dormant, out of sight until the next growing season. All species of the families Amaryllidaceae, Iridaceae, Orchidaceae are protected provincially, nationally and/or internationally, as are many species of other monocot species.

Root system: underground storage organs are variable in size, but usually between 15 and 40 cm deep in the soil

Transplanting: success of transplanting is usually very high IF handled correctly

Rescue 101: Plants should be lifted and transplanted after flowering and fruiting, preferably as the leaves start to die back. For lifting, loosen the soil or wedge apart rocks working from a circle of about 20 cm away from the base of the plant, working inwards but not closer than about 5 cm of the plant with a sharp narrow object such as a koevoet. Once the soil is loosened, gently feel by hand where the bulb, corm, or other storage organ is, and wedge out by hand, taking care not to damage it. Remove loose soil, gently cleanse off most of remaining soil, or rinse off the storage organ. Group these according to species and label clearly, keep records of labels to include name if that is known, or a brief description or photo, also the average depth of the organs when they were removed, and the habitat they were removed from. Spread these plants so that the storage organ can dry completely, and then loosely pack into newspaper or paper bag and then store in a shaded, dry position for maximally 3 months. Transplant into soil that is as similar as possible to the original habitat, TAKING CARE that the growing point of the organ points to the top, else the plant will die. Make sure the storage organs are positioned according to the records kept about original depth of the storage organ.

Aftercare: Firm down soil around the base of the plant once it is in a new position. Allow plant to resprout naturally after sufficient rains, do not water. As these plants may not be visible for a while, clearly demarcate the area where these have been planted to avoid disturbing and potentially destroying them later on.