

As mentioned in *Chapter 4*, the solar power plant would have a minimum lifespan of at least 20 years. Once the facility reaches the end of its lifespan the arrays may be refurbished or replaced to continue operating as a power generating facility or the facility could be closed and decommissioned. If decommissioned, all components would be removed and the site rehabilitated. The solar panels would be recycled as appropriate. The preferred panel manufacturer, *First Solar*, undertakes a module or panel collection and recycling programme in which the glass and encapsulated semiconductor material is processed into new modules or other products. The decommissioning and reinstatement of the site will involve many activities that may have some environmental and social impacts.

It is anticipated that the impacts associated with decommissioning will be similar to those encountered during construction. The generation of waste through the decommissioning activity is anticipated to be high although the choice of the preferred supplier was made to mitigate this impact since the supplier has an existing programme which would maximise the reuse and recycling of the panels therefore significantly decreasing the waste generation during decommissioning. The PV panels are piled or screwed into the ground and therefore the need to excavate panel foundations during decommissioning is avoided thus limiting the disturbance of vegetation.

The comprehensive decommissioning plan should be developed prior to the decommissioning of the facility to minimise potential negative impact and enhance positive impacts associated with decommissioning.