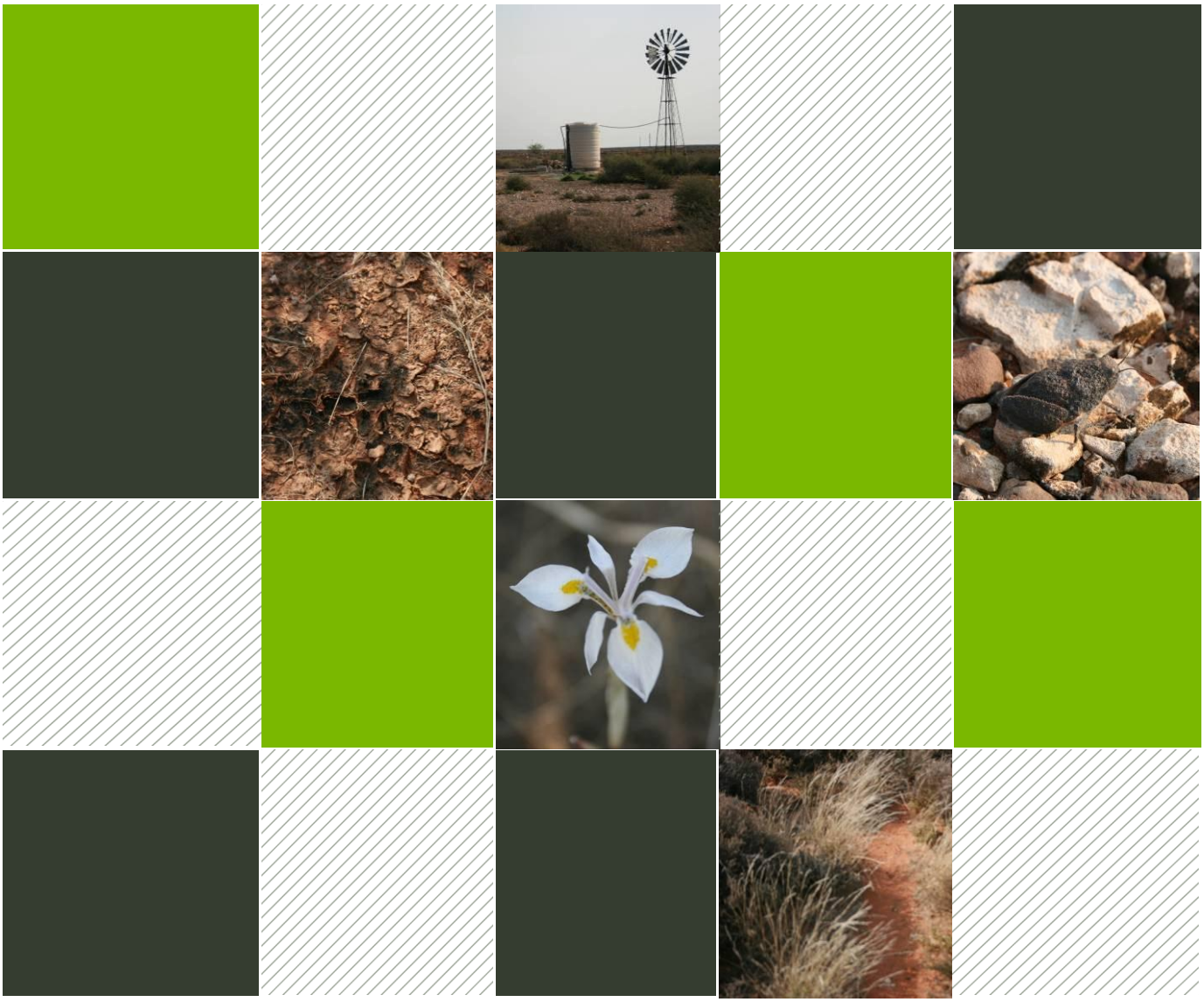

PROPOSED PHOTOVOLTAIC ENERGY PLANT ON FARM HOEKPLAAS NEAR COPPERTON, NORTHERN CAPE

(DEA Ref. No. 12/12/20/2503 & NEAS Ref. No. DEAT/EIA/0000605/2011)

DRAFT SCOPING REPORT
November 2011

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CONTENTS

Project details ..... **i**
Contents ..... **ii**
Glossary of terms ..... **vii**
Abbreviations ..... **viii**

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND **1**
1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Legal requirements 3
1.2.1 National Environmental Management Act, No. 107 of 1998 3
1.2.2 National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25 of 1999 4
1.2.3 Astronomy Geographic Advantage Act, No. 21 of 2007 4
1.2.4 National Water Act, No 36 of 1998 5
1.2.5 Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, No. 43 of 1983 6
1.2.6 Other applicable legislation and policies 6
1.3 Terms of reference and Scope of the EIA 12
1.3.1 Guidelines 13
1.4 Approach to the project 13
1.4.1 Initial Application Phase 13
1.4.2 The Scoping Phase 15
1.4.3 The EIA Phase 16
1.4.4 The public participation process 16
1.4.5 Authority involvement 16
1.4.6 Decision making 17
1.5 Assumptions and limitations 17
1.5.1 Assumptions 17
1.5.2 Gaps in knowledge 18
1.6 Independence 18
1.7 Structure of the Scoping Report 19

2 THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY **23**
2.1 The need for the proposed activity 23
2.1.1 Utilise resources available to South Africa 23
2.1.2 Meeting nationally appropriate emission targets in line with global climate change commitments 24
2.1.3 Enhancing energy security by diversifying generation 25
2.1.4 Creating a more sustainable economy 25
2.2 Description of the proposed activity 28
2.2.1 Construction phase 30
2.2.2 Operational phase 31
2.2.3 Decommissioning phase 31
2.3 Consideration of alternatives 31
2.3.1 Introduction 31
2.3.2 Location alternatives 33
2.3.3 Activity alternatives 35

2.3.4 Site layout alternatives 35
2.3.5 Technology alternatives 35
2.3.6 Summary of alternatives 39

3 THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS 41
3.1 Introduction 41
3.2 Initiation of public Participation process 41
3.2.1 Compilation of I&AP database 42
3.2.2 Advertising in local newspapers 42
3.2.3 Site notices 42
3.3 Issues and concerns raised 43
3.4 Comment on the Draft Scoping Report 43
3.5 Comment on the Final Scoping Report 43
3.6 Review and Decision period 44

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS 45
4.1 Introduction 45
4.2 Broad Description of the affected Biophysical and Socio-economic environment 45
4.2.1 Description of site 45
4.2.2 Climate 46
4.2.3 Topography 46
4.2.4 Flora 46
4.2.5 Fauna (including avifauna) 48
4.2.6 Surface and groundwater 50
4.2.7 Geology 51
4.2.8 Heritage and cultural material 52
4.2.9 Population demographics 53
4.2.10 Surrounding land uses 54
4.3 Operational phase impacts on the biophysical environment 55
4.3.1 Impact on flora 55
4.3.2 Impact on fauna (including avifauna) 56
4.3.3 Impact on surface water resources 57
4.4 Operational phase impacts on the socio-economic environment 58
4.4.1 Impact on heritage resources 58
4.4.2 Visual impacts 59
4.4.3 Impact on energy production 60
4.4.4 Impact on local economy (employment) and social conditions 61
4.4.5 Impact on agricultural land 61
4.4.6 Impact on surrounding land uses 62
4.5 Construction phase impacts on the biophysical and socio-economic environments 62
4.5.1 Disturbance of flora and fauna 63
4.5.2 Sedimentation and erosion 63
4.5.3 Impact on traffic 63
4.5.4 Storage of hazardous substances on site 63
4.5.5 Noise pollution 64
4.5.6 Dust impacts 64

5 PLAN OF STUDY FOR EIA 65
5.1 Purpose of this Plan of Study for EIA 65
5.2 Description of the activity 65
5.3 Description of tasks to be performed 65
5.3.1 Potential environmental impacts identified during Scoping 65
5.3.2 Method of assessing the significance of potential environmental impacts 66
5.4 Need for additional information: Specialist studies 68
5.5 Reasonable project alternatives identified during scoping 69
5.6 The Environmental Impact Assessment Report 69
5.7 Public participation process 70
5.7.1 Public comment on the Draft EIAR 70
5.7.2 Public comment on the Final EIAR 70
5.7.3 Opportunity for appeal 71
5.8 Proposed programme 71
5.9 Personnel 71

6 CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD 73
6.1 Conclusions 73
6.2 The way forward 74

7 REFERENCES 77
7.1 Reports 77
7.2 Electronic resources 78

LIST OF ANNEXURES

Annexure A: Application Form and DEA's letters of acknowledgement

Annexure B: Public Participation Process

- Relevant authorities contact details
- I&AP notification letter
- Advertisements
- Site notices

Annexure C: List of Interested and Affected Parties

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1: Location of the proposed PV plant on Farm Hoekplaas near Copperton, Northern Cape (2922 CD) 2
Figure 1-2: The EIA process in terms of NEMA 14
Figure 2-1: Annual solar radiation for South Africa (DME, 2003) 24
Figure 2-2: Example of an existing 132 kV transmission line (taken 29/09/2011) 29
Figure 2-3: Typical layout of panel structures 30
Figure 2-4: Basic PV system layout 30
Figure 2-5: Map showing the preferred and alternative locations for the proposed PV plant on Farm Hoekplaas, near Copperton 32
Figure 2-6: Other renewable energy projects (solar and wind) proposed for the Copperton area 34
Figure 2-7: Photovoltaic solar cells (left) and a CPS system (right) were considered for the proposed PV plant 36
Figure 2-8: Diagram showing daily water usage for different 10 MW plants 37
Figure 2-9: Solar panels can be mounted via (a) fixed axis photovoltaic systems, (b) single axis tracking PV systems and (c) dual axis tracking systems 37
Figure 2-10: Illustrations of various anchoring options to be considered for the proposed PV plant (Courtesy: Mulilo) 38
Figure 4-1: Photograph from a low point (a pan) within the site (taken 28/9/2011) 46
Figure 4-2: Vegetation types occurring within the area of investigation 47
Figure 4-3: Different vegetation forms found on site (taken 24/9/2011) 48
Figure 4-4: Map indicating pans and dry rivers on site and in the surrounding environment 50
Figure 4-5: General geology of the Copperton area 51
Figure 4-6: A large numbers of Middle Stone Age and Late Stone Age tools were found on the adjacent PV site. Stone age tools were also evident during a site visit in September 2011 (taken 24/9/2011) 53
Figure 4-7: Different landuses within the vicinity of the proposed Hoekplaas PV plant 54

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1: Listed activities in terms of NEMA GN No. 544, 545 and 546, 18 June 2010, to be authorised for the proposed PV plant 3
Table 1-2: Generation capacity and price cap per each technology 9
Table 1-3: Bid submission dates, selection of preferred bidders and signing of agreements[13] 9
Table 1-4: Policy adjusted scenario of the IRP2010 as gazetted on 6 May 2011 11
Table 1-5: Information required by NEMA for inclusion in the EIA documentation 19
Table 2-1: Specific questions as detailed in the Need and Desirability Guideline 26
Table 4-1: Co-ordinates of corner points of the site 45
Table 4-2: Red-listed bird species which could occur on site (endemic species are highlighted in grey) 49
Table 5-1Assessment criteria for the evaluation of impacts 67
Table 5-2: Definition of significance ratings 67

Table 5-3: Definition of probability ratings 68
Table 5-4: Definition of confidence ratings 68
Table 5-5: Definition of reversibility ratings 68
Table 5-6: Proposed EIA programme 71

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Environment	The surroundings (biophysical, social and economic) within which humans exist and that are made up of i. the land, water and atmosphere of the earth; ii. micro-organisms, plant and animal life; iii. any part or combination of (i) and (ii) and the interrelationships among and between them; and iv. the physical, chemical, aesthetic and cultural properties and conditions of the foregoing that influence human health and wellbeing;
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A study of the environmental consequences of a proposed course of action.
Environmental Impact Report Assessment (EIAR)	A report assessing the potential significant impacts as identified during the Scoping phase.
Environmental impact	An environmental change caused by some human act.
Environmental Management Programme (EMP)	A document that provides procedures for mitigating and monitoring environmental impacts, during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases.
Photovoltaic (PV)	Method to convert solar radiation into direct current electricity[1].
Public Participation Process	A process of involving the public in order to identify needs, address concerns, in order to contribute to more informed decision making relating to a proposed project, programme or development
Scoping	A procedure for determining the extent of and approach to an EIA, used to focus the EIA to ensure that only the significant issues and reasonable alternatives are examined in detail
Scoping Report	A report describing the issues identified
Wetland	"Land which is transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is periodically covered with shallow water and which in normal circumstances supports or would support vegetation typically adapted to life in saturated soils." (SA Water Act of1998).

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photovoltaics (Accessed on: 21/10/2011)

ABBREVIATIONS

BID	Background Information Document
CRR	Comments and Response Report
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs (previously Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism)
DEA&DP	Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning
DEANC	Department of Environmental Affairs and Nature Conservations
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DM	District Municipality
DME	Department of Minerals and Energy
DSR	Draft Scoping Report
EAP	Environmental Assessment Practitioner
EAPSA	Environmental Assessment Practitioner of South Africa
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EMP	Environmental Management Programme
GN	Government Notice
ha	Hectares
HIA	Heritage Impact Assessment
I&APs	Interested and Affected Parties
IEC	International Electro-technical Commission
IEIM	Integrated Environmental Information Management
IEP	Integrated Energy Plan
IPP	Independent Power Producer
IRP	Integrated Resource Plan
kV	Kilovolt
LM	Local Municipality
MW	Megawatts
NEAS	National Environmental Authorisation System
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act (No. 107 of 1998) (as amended)
NERSA	National Energy Regulator of South Africa
NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999)
NIRP	National Integrated Resource Plan
NWA	National Water Act (No 36 of 1998)
PPA	Power Purchase Agreement
PV	Photovoltaic
REFIT	Renewable Energy Feed-In Tariffs
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
SACNSP	South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
ToR	Terms of Reference
VIA	Visual Impact Assessment
WMA	Water Management Area

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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Chapter is to introduce the project and describe the relevant legal framework within which the project takes place. Other applicable policies and guidelines are also discussed. The Terms of Reference, scope of and approach to the Environmental Impact Assessment are described and assumptions and limitations are stated.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Mulilo Renewable Energy (Pty) Ltd (Mulilo) proposes to construct a photovoltaic (PV) solar energy plant on a farm, near Copperton in the Northern Cape. Aurecon South Africa (Pty) Ltd (Aurecon) has been appointed to undertake the requisite environmental process as required in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (No. 107 of 1998), as amended, on behalf of Mulilo.

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is for the proposed 100 MW (preferred alternative) or 150 MW (alternative) PV plant on the farm Hoekplaas (Remainder of Farm No. 146) near Copperton (see **Figure 1-1**). The plant would have a footprint of 300 ha (preferred alternative) or 450 ha (alternative) and connect to the Kronos substation by means of a new 132 kV distribution line.

In terms of the National Environmental Management Act (No. 107 of 1998) (as amended) (NEMA), the proposed development triggers a suite of activities, which require authorisation from the competent environmental authority before they can be undertaken. As this proposed project triggers a number of listed activities in terms of NEMA, it accordingly requires environmental authorisation. Since the project is for the generation of energy, and energy projects are dealt with by the national authority, the competent authority is the national Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). DEA's decision will be based on the outcome of this EIA process.

This report serves to document the Scoping Phase of the EIA process (the EIA process and sequence of documents produced as a result of the process are detailed in **Section 1.4**).

The purpose of this Scoping Report[2] is to provide the background and outline the scope of work proposed to be undertaken in the EIA Report (EIAR) phase. Accordingly, the Scoping Report:

- Outlines the legal and policy framework;
- Describes the proposed project and its alternatives;
- Describes the Public Participation Process undertaken to date;
- Describes the biophysical and socio-economic context;
- Describes the range of alternatives that require further investigation in the EIA Phase.
- Identifies potential impacts, including cumulative impacts, that will be assessed in the EIA Phase, inclusive of specialist studies that will be undertaken; and
- Details the assessment methodology that will be adopted for the project.

[2] Section 28 of EIA Regulation No. 543 of NEMA lists the content required in a Scoping Report.

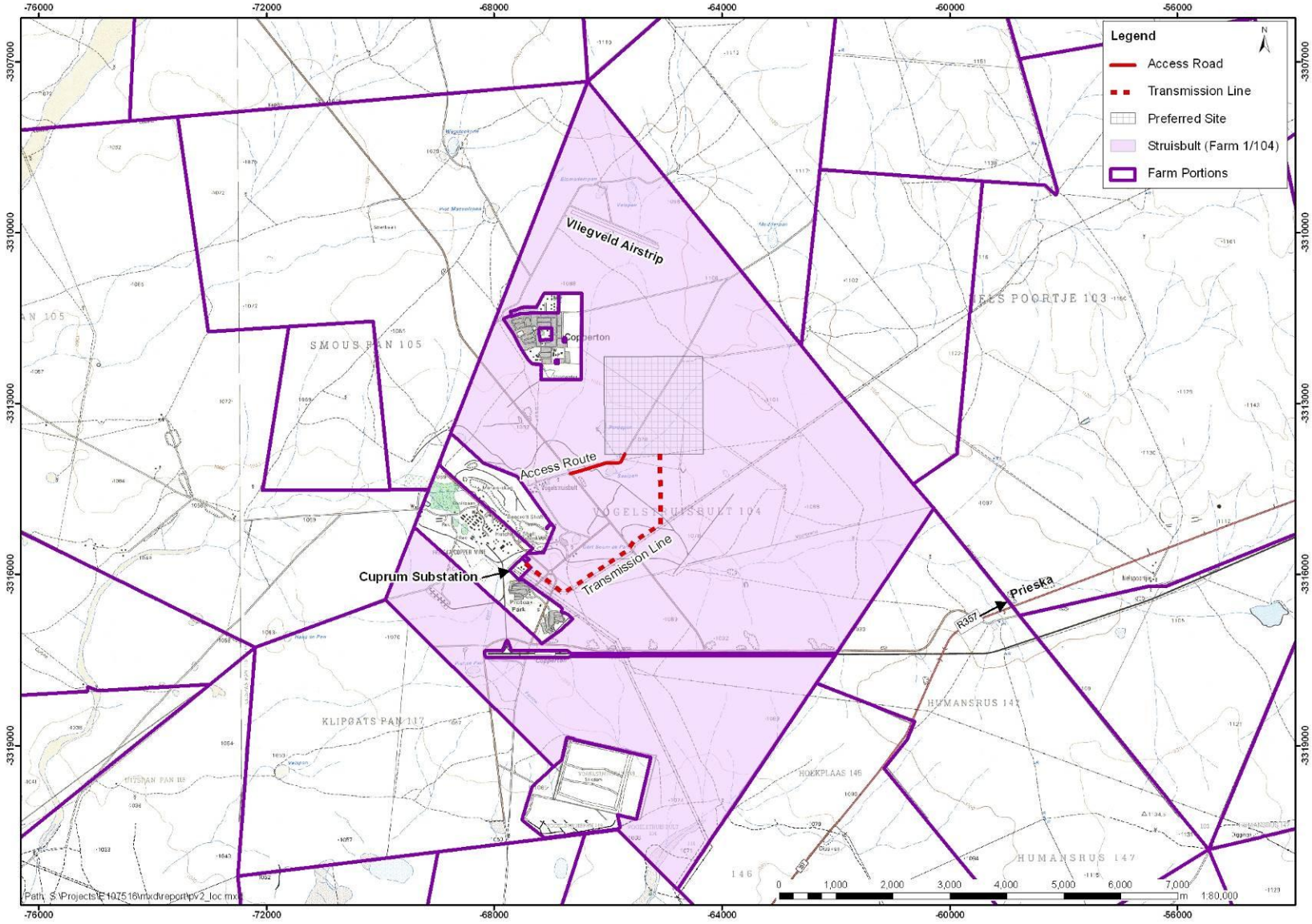

Figure 1-1: Location of the proposed PV plant on Farm Hoekplaas near Copperton, Northern Cape (2922 CD)

1.2 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

1.2.1 National Environmental Management Act, No. 107 of 1998

NEMA, as amended, establishes the principles for decision-making on matters affecting the environment. Section 2 sets out the National Environmental Management Principles which apply to the actions of organs of state that may significantly affect the environment. Furthermore, Section 28(1) states that "every person who causes or may cause significant pollution or degradation of the environment must take reasonable measures to prevent such pollution or degradation from occurring, continuing or recurring". If such pollution or degradation cannot be prevented then appropriate measures must be taken to minimise or rectify such pollution or degradation.

Mulilo has the responsibility to ensure that the proposed activity as well as the EIA process conforms to the principles of NEMA. In developing the EIA process, Aurecon has been cognisant of this need, and accordingly the EA process has been undertaken in terms of NEMA and the EIA Regulations promulgated on 18 June 2010[3].

In terms of the EIA regulations, certain activities are identified, which require authorisation from the competent environmental authority, in this case DEA, before commencing. Listed activities in Government Notice (GN) No. 545 require Scoping and EIA whilst those in GN No. 544 and 546 require Basic Assessment (unless they are being assessed under an EIA process). The activities being applied for in this EIA process are listed in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1-1: Listed activities in terms of NEMA GN No. 544, 545 and 546, 18 June 2010, to be authorised for the proposed PV plant

NO.	LISTED ACTIVITY
	GN No. R544, 18 June 2010
10	The construction of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity - • outside urban areas or industrial complexes with a capacity of more than 33 , but less than 275 kilovolts; or • inside urban areas or industrial complexes with a capacity of 275 kilovolts or more.
	GN No. R545, 18 June 2010
1	The construction of facilities or infrastructure for the generation of electricity where the electricity output is 20 megawatts or more.
	GN No. R546, 18 June 2010
14	The clearance of an area of 5 hectares or more of vegetation where 75 % or more of the vegetation cover constitutes indigenous vegetation (a) in the Northern Cape (i) All areas outside urban areas.

[3] GN No. R 543, 544, 545, 546 and 547 in Government Gazette No. 33306 of 18 June 2010.

Since the proposed project is based in the Northern Cape, DEA will work closely with the provincial Department of Environmental Affairs and Nature Conservation (DEANC), to ensure that the provincial environmental concerns are specifically identified and addressed.

Further information on the EIA approach is provided in **Section 1.4**.

1.2.2 National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25 of 1999

In terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA), any person who intends to undertake "*any development … which will change the character of a site exceeding 5 000 m^2 in extent*", *"the construction of a road…powerline, pipeline…exceeding 300 m in length"* or *"the rezoning of site larger than 10 000 m^2 in extent…"* must at the very earliest stages of initiating the development notify the responsible heritage resources authority, namely the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) or the relevant provincial heritage agency. These agencies would in turn indicate whether or not a full Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) would need to be undertaken.

Section 38(8) of the NHRA specifically excludes the need for a separate HIA where the evaluation of the impact of a development on heritage resources is required in terms of an EIA process. Accordingly, since the impact on heritage resources would be considered as part of the EIA process outlined here, no separate HIA would be required. SAHRA or the relevant provincial heritage agency would review the EIA reports and provide comments to DEA, who would include these in their final environmental decision. However, should a permit be required for the damaging or removal of specific heritage resources, a separate application would have to be submitted to SAHRA or the relevant provincial heritage agency for the approval of such an activity, if Mulilo obtains authorisation and makes the decision to pursue the proposed project further.

1.2.3 Astronomy Geographic Advantage Act, No. 21 of 2007

The Astronomy Geographic Advantage Act (No. 21 of 2007) provides for the preservation and protection of areas within South Africa that are uniquely suited for optical and radio astronomy; for intergovernmental co-operation and public consultation on matters concerning nationally significant astronomy advantage areas and for matters connected thereto.

Chapter 2 of the act allows for the declaration of astronomy advantage areas whilst Chapter 3 pertains to the management and control of astronomy advantage areas. Management and control of astronomy advantage areas include, amongst others, the following:

- Restrictions on use of radio frequency spectrum in astronomy advantage areas;
- Declared activities in core or central astronomy advantage area;
- Identified activities in coordinated astronomy advantage area; and
- Authorisation to undertake identified activities.

On 19 February 2010, the Minister of Science and Technology (the Minister) declared the whole of the territory of the Northern Cape province, excluding Sol Plaatje Municipality, as an astronomy advantage area for radio astronomy purposes in terms of Section 5 of the Act and on 20 August 2010 declared the Karoo Core Astronomy Advantage Area for the purposes of radio astronomy.

The area consists of three pieces of farming land of 13 407 hectares in the Kareeberg and Karoo Hoogland Municipalities purchased by the National Research Foundation. The Karoo Core Astronomy Advantage Area will contain the MeerKAT radio telescope and the proposed core planned Square Kilometre Array (SKA) radio telescope that will be used for the purposes of radio astronomy and related scientific endeavours. South Africa, along with Australia, has been shortlisted to host the world's largest telescope, the SKA. South Africa's bid proposes that the core of the telescope be located in an arid area of the Northern Cape, with about three antenna stations in Namibia, four in Botswana and one each in Mozambique, Mauritius, Madagascar, Kenya and Zambia[4]. A final decision on the location is expected to be made in early 2012 by the SKA Board of Directors.

The proposed plant falls outside of the Karoo Core Astronomy Advantage Area (KCAA), but inside the general astronomy advantage area.

The Minister may still declare that activities prescribed in Section 23(1) of the Act may be prohibited within the area, such as the construction, expansion or operation of any fixed radio frequency interference sources and the operation, construction or expansion of facilities for the generation, transmission or distribution of electricity. It should be noted that solar energy facilities are unlikely to cause radio frequency interference. While the Minister has not yet prohibited these activities it is important that the relevant astronomical bodies are notified of the proposed project and provided with the opportunity to comment on the proposed project.

1.2.4 National Water Act, No 36 of 1998

The National Water Act (NWA) (Act No 36 of 1998) provides for the sustainable and equitable use and protection of water resources. It is founded on the principle that the National Government has overall responsibility for and authority over water resource management, including the equitable allocation and beneficial use of water in the public interest, and that a person can only be entitled to use water if the use is permissible under the NWA.

In terms of Section 21 (c) and (i)[5] of the NWA any activity which takes place within 500 m radius of the boundary of any wetland is excluded from the General Authorisation for these water uses and as such, must be licenced. Should the proposed development occur within 500 m radius of a wetland (including ephemeral pans such as are found on site) it may be necessary to submit a water use license application to the Department of Water Affairs (DWA). If a water use licence application is required it would fall outside of the scope of this EIA and would be addressed by

[4] http://www.ska.ac.za/bid/index.php (Accessed on: 19/10/11)

[5] (c) impeding of diverting the flow of water in a watercourse; (i) altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse.

Mulilo as part of their broader project planning. Comment will also be sought from DWA as part of the Scoping and EIA process.

1.2.5 Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, No. 43 of 1983

The Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (No. 43 of 1983) (CARA) makes provision for the conservation of the natural agricultural resources of South Africa through maintaining the production potential of land, combating and preventing erosion, preventing the weakening or destruction of the water sources, protecting vegetation, and combating weeds and invader plants. Regulation 15 of CARA lists problem plants (undesired aliens, declared weeds, and plant invaders). Plants listed in this regulation must be controlled by the landowner.

As part of the EIA process, recommendations should be made to ensure that measures are implemented to maintain the agricultural production of land, prevent soil erosion, and protect any water bodies and natural vegetation on site. Mulilo together with the relevant landowners should also ensure the control of any undesired aliens, declared weeds, and plant invaders listed in the regulation that may pose as a problem as a result of the proposed PV plant.

1.2.6 Other applicable legislation and policies

This section provides an overview of the policy and legislative context in which the development of renewable energy projects takes place in South Africa. The following policies and legislative context are described:

- White Paper on the Energy Policy of the Republic of South Africa (1998);
- White Paper on Renewable Energy (2003);
- National Energy Act (2008);
- National Electricity Regulation Act (2006);
- Integrated Energy Plan for the Republic of South Africa (2003);
- Integrated Resource Plan (2011);
- National Integrated Resource Plan for Electricity (2002)
- Independent Power Producer (IPP) Procurement Process; and
- Policies regarding greenhouse gas and carbon emissions.

a) White Paper on the Energy Policy of the Republic of South Africa (1998)

As required by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996), the White Paper on the Energy Policy of the Republic of South Africa (1998) was published by the Department of Minerals and Energy in response to the changing political climate and socio-economic outlook. Key objectives are identified in terms of energy supply and demand, as well as co-ordinated with other social sectors and between energy sub-sectors.

The White Paper commits to government's focused support for the development, demonstration and implementation of renewable energy sources for both small and large-scale applications. With the aim of drawing on international best practice, specific emphasis is given to solar and wind energy sources, particularly for rural and often off-grid areas.

While considering the larger environmental implications of energy production and supply, the White Paper looks into the future to adopting an integrated resource planning approach, integrating the environmental costs into economic analysis. It is with this outlook that the renewable energy, including wind energy, is seen as a viable, attractive and sustainable option to be promoted as part of South Africa's energy policy towards energy diversification.

b) White Paper on Renewable Energy (2003)

Published by the Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) in 2003, the White Paper on renewable Energy supplements the above-mentioned Energy Policy which identified the medium- and long-term potential for renewable energy as significant. The White Paper sets out the vision, policy principles, strategic goals and objectives in terms of renewable energy. At the outset the policy refers to the long term target of "*10 000 GWh (0.8 Mtoe) renewable energy contribution to final energy consumption by 2013."* The aim of this 10-year plan is to meet this goal via the production of mainly biomass, wind, solar and small-scale hydro sources. It is estimated that this would constitute approximately 4 % of projected energy demand for 2013.

The White Paper presents South Africa's options in terms of renewable energy as extensive and a viable and sustainable alternative to fossil fuel options. A strategic programme of action to develop South Africa's renewable energy resources is propose, particularly for power generation and reducing the need for coal-based power generation. The starting point will be a number of initial investments spread across both relatively low cost technologies, such as biomass-based cogeneration, as well as technologies with larger-scale application, such as solar water heating, wind and small-scale hydro.

Addressing environmental impacts and the overarching threats and commitments to climate change, the White Paper provides the platform for further policy and strategy development in terms of renewable energy in the South African energy environment.

c) National Energy Act (No. 34 of 2008) and Electricity Regulation Act (No. 4 of 2006)

South Africa has two acts that direct the planning and development of the country's electricity sector:

i. The National Energy Act (No. 34 of 2008); and
ii. The Electricity Regulation Act (ERA) (No. 4 of 2006).

In May 2011, the Department of Energy (DoE) gazetted the Electricity Regulations on New Generation Capacity under the ERA. The New Generation Regulations establish rules and guidelines that are applicable to the undertaking of an IPP Bid Programme and the procurement

of an IPP for new generation capacity. They also facilitate the fair treatment and non-discrimination between IPPs and the buyer of the energy[6].

In terms of the New Generation Regulations, the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) (see **Section 1.2.6.f)**) has been developed by the DoE and sets out the new generation capacity requirement per technology, taking energy efficiency and the demand-side management projects into account. This required, new generation capacity must be met through the technologies and projects listed in the IRP and all IPP procurement programmes will be undertaken in accordance with the specified capacities and technologies listed in the IRP[7].

d) IPP Procurement Process

South Africa aims to procure 3 725 MW capacity of renewable energy by 2016 (the first round of procurement). This 3 725 MW is broadly in accordance with the capacity allocated to renewable energy generation in IRP2010.

On 3 August 2011, DoE formally invited interested parties with relevant experience to submit proposals for the finance, operation and maintenance of renewable energy generation facilities adopting any of onshore wind, solar thermal, solar photovoltaic, biomass, biogas, landfill gas or small hydro technologies for the purpose of entering, *inter alia*, an Implementation Agreement with DoE and a Power Purchase Agreement with a buyer (Eskom)[8] in terms of the ERA. This Request for Qualification and Proposals (RFP) for new generation capacity was issued under the IPP Procurement Programme. The IPP Procurement Programme has been designed to contribute towards the target of 3 725 MW and towards socio-economic and environmentally sustainable growth, and to start and stimulate the renewable industry in South Africa[9].

In terms of this IPP Procurement Programme, Bidders will be required to bid on tariff and the identified socio-economic development objectives of DoE. The tariff will be payable by the Buyer should the project be selected. Although earlier information was that the 2009 Renewable Energy Feed In Tariff would act as an upper limit on price, the actual caps are set out in **Table 1-2**[10]. A bid will be 'non-compliant' and automatically rejected during the qualification phase if the price cap is exceeded. Bid Responses which are submitted must be accompanied by a Bid Guarantee in the form of a bank guarantee for an amount equal to R 100 000 per MW of the proposed installed capacity[11].

The generation capacity allocated to each technology is set out in **Table 1-2.**

[6] http://www.eskom.co.za/c/73/ipp-processes/ (Accessed on: 29/10/11)

[7] http://www.eskom.co.za/c/73/ipp-processes/ (Accessed on: 29/10/11)

[8] http://www.ipp-renewables.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Tender_Notice.png (Accessed on: 30/10/11)

[9] http://www.ipp-renewables.co.za/ (Accessed on: 30/10/11)

[10] http://www.nortonrose.com/knowledge/publications/54959/south-africa-renewable-energy-ipp-request-for-proposals (Accessed on: 30/10/11)

[11] http://www.ipp-renewables.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Tender_Notice.png (Accessed on: 30/10/11)

Table 1-2: Generation capacity and price cap per each technology

Technology	MW	Price cap (per MWh)
Onshore wind	1 850	R 1 150
Concentrated solar thermal	200	R 2850
Solar photovoltaic	1 450	R 2850
Biomass solid	12.5	R 1070
Biogas	12.5	R 800
Landfill gas	25	R 600
Small hydro	75	R 1 030
Small projects[12]	100	As above
TOTAL	**3 725**	

Each project procured in terms of this IPP Procurement Programme will be required to achieve commercial operation by not later than 2016.

The submission and selection dates for projects for the RFP are given in **Table 1-3**.

Table 1-3: Bid submission dates, selection of preferred bidders and signing of agreements[13]

Submission no.	Submission date	Preferred bidder selection date	Signing of agreements date
First	4 November 2011	25 November 2011	19 June 2012
Second	5 March 2012	14 May 2012	13 December 2012
Third	20 August 2012	29 October 2012	31 May 2013
Fourth	4 March 2013	14 May 2013	13 December 2013
Fifth	13 August 2013	21 October 2013	26 May 2014

The selection process to determine the preferred bidders will be based on both price and other economic development criteria in a 70 %/ 30 % ratio respectively (Creamer, T. 2011). If the maximum MW allowance for any particular technology has been allocated during any particular window, then the subsequent bidding opportunities will not be opened for that technology.

IPPs that wish to connect to Eskom's network will be required to apply for a connection, pay a connection charge and sign a connection and use-of-system agreement[13]. All IPPs will be provided non-discriminatory access to Eskom's network, subject to the IPP's obtaining its required approvals such as EIA's and a generating and trading licence from NERSA.

e) Integrated Energy Plan for the Republic of South Africa

Commissioned by DME in 2003, the Integrated Energy Plan (IEP) aims to provide a framework in which specific energy policies, development decisions and energy supply trade-offs can be made on a project-by-project basis. The framework is intended to create a balance in providing

[12] Small projects are less than 5 MW.

[13] http://www.eskom.co.za/c/article/150/independent-power-prodicers-ipp/ (Accessed on: 30/10/11)

low cost electricity for social and economic developments, ensuring security of supply and minimising the associated environmental impacts.

The IEP projected that the additional demand in electricity would necessitate an increase in electricity generation capacity in South Africa by 2007. Furthermore, the IEP concluded that, based on energy resources available in South Africa, coal would be the primary fuel source in the 20 year planning horizon, which was specified as the years 2000 to 2020, although other cleaner technologies continue to be investigated as alternatives in electricity generation options. Therefore, though the next two decades of energy generation are anticipated to remain coal-based, alternative technologies and approaches are available and need to be contextually considered.

f) Integrated Resource Plan

The Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) is a National Electricity Plan, which is a subset of the Integrated Energy Plan. The IRP is also not a short or medium-term operational plan but a plan that directs the expansion of the electricity supply over the given period.

The IRP, indicating the schedule for energy generation programmes, was first gazetted on 31 December 2009. A revised schedule was gazetted on 29 January 2010 and the schedule has once again been revised and the final IRP (IRP2010-2030) was gazetted on 6 May 2011.

Developed for the period of 2010 to 2030, the primary objective of the IRP2010, as with its predecessors, is to determine the long-term electricity demand and detail how this demand should be met in terms of generating capacity, type, timing, and cost. While promoting increased economic development through energy security, the IRP2010 aims to achieve a "*balance between an affordable electricity price to support a globally competitive economy, a more sustainable and efficient economy, the creation of local jobs, the demand on scarce resources such as water and the need to meet nationally appropriate emission targets in line with global commitments*".

As can be seen by Table 1.4 below the current final IRP provides for an additional 14 749 MW (shaded in grey) of renewable energy in the electricity mix in South Africa by 2030.

The final IRP2010 reflects both the consultation process on the draft IRP2010 currently being undertaken with stakeholders and the further technical work undertaken in this period.

Table 1-4: Policy adjusted scenario of the IRP2010 as gazetted on 6 May 2011

	Total generating capacity in 2030		Capacity added (including committed) from 2010-2030		New (uncommitted) capacity options from 2010-2030	
Technology	**MW**	**%**	**MW**	**%**	**MW**	**%**
Coal	41 074	45.9	16 383	29.0	6 250	14.7
OCGT	7 330	8.2	4 930	8.7	3 910	9.2
CCGT	2 370	2.6	2 370	4.2	2 370	5.6
Pumped Storage	2 912	3.3	1 332	2.4	0	0
Nuclear	11 400	12.7	9 600	17.0	9 600	22.6
Hydro	4 759	5.3	2 659	4.7	2 609	6.1
Wind	9 200	10.3	9 200	16.3	8 400	19.7
CSP	1 200	1.3	1 200	2.1	1 000	2.4
PV	8 400	9.4	8 400	14.9	8 400	19.7
Other	890	1.0	465	0.8	0	0
Total	**89 532**	**100**	**56 539**	**100**	**42 539**	**100**

It is noted that *"given the rapid changes in generation technologies and pricing, especially for "clean" energy sources, the IRP will have to be reviewed on a regular basis, for instance every two years, in order to ensure that South Africa takes advantage of emerging technologies. This may result in adjustments in the energy mix set out in the balanced revised scenario within the target for total system capacity."*

g) National Integrated Resource Plan for Electricity

The National Integrated Resource Plan (NIRP) for Electricity is a long-term electricity capacity plan which defines the need for new generation capacity for the country. The National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) published NIRP1 in 2002, which was replaced by NIRP2 in 2005. The outcome of the NIRP2 determined that coal would remain the major fuel for generating electricity over the next 20 years and that additional energy generation facilities would be required from 2007 onwards. The NIRP is replaced by the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), described in **Section 1.2.4.f)** above.

h) Policies regarding greenhouse gas and carbon emissions

Gases that contribute to the greenhouse effect are known to include carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), water vapour, nitrous oxide, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), halons and peroxyacylnitrate (PAN). All of these gasses are transparent to shortwave radiation reaching the earth's surface, but trap long-wave radiation trying to leave the earth's surface. This action leads to a warming of the earth's lower atmosphere, resulting in changes in the global and regional climates, rising sea levels and extended desertification. This in turn is expected to have severe ecological consequences and a suite of implications for mankind.

Electricity generation using carbon based fuels is responsible for a large proportion of carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions worldwide. In Africa, the CO_2 emissions are primarily the result of fossil fuel burning and industrial processes, such coal fired power stations. South Africa accounts for some 38 % of Africa's CO_2 emissions. The global per capita CO_2 average emission level is 1.23 metric tonnes. In South Africa however, the average emission rate is 2.68 metric tonnes per person per annum. The International Energy Agency (2008) estimates that nearly 50% of global electricity supplies will need to come from renewable energy sources in order to halve CO_2 emissions by 2050 and minimise significant, irreversible climate change impacts

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has initiated a process to develop a more specific and binding agreement on the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This led to negotiations with a particular focus on the commitments of developed countries, and culminated in the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, which came into effect in February 2005. Using the above framework to inform their approach, the Kyoto Protocol has placed specific legal obligations in the form of GHG reduction targets on developed countries and countries with 'Economies in Transition'. The developed countries listed in Annex 1 of the UNFCCC are required to reduce their overall emissions of six GHGs by at least 5 % below the 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012. While South Africa, as a developing country, is not obliged to make such reductions, the increase in greenhouse gas emissions must be viewed in light of global trends to reduce these emissions significantly. More recently under the Copenhagen Accord 2010, countries representing over 80 % of global emissions have submitted pledges on emission reductions. South Africa's commitment is to reduce GHG emissions 34 % by 2020 and 42 % by 2025.

The Kyoto Protocol, to which South Africa is a signatory, was informed by the principles of sustainable development which resulted in related policies and measures being identified to promote energy efficiency while protecting and enhancing the 'sinks and reservoirs' of greenhouse gases (forests, ocean, etc.). Other methods/approaches included encouraging more sustainable forms of agriculture, in addition to increasing the use of new and renewable energy and the adoption/implementation of advanced and innovative environmentally sound technologies. South African policies are being informed by the Kyoto Protocol (which is valid until 2012) and its partial successor the Copenhagen Accord 2010 and associated sustainable development principles whereby emphasis is being placed on industries for 'cleaner' technology and production.

1.3 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCOPE OF THE EIA

In October 2011, Mulilo appointed Aurecon to undertake an EIA process, in terms of NEMA, for the proposed PV plant near Copperton in the Northern Cape.

This EIA process specifically excludes any upgrades of existing Eskom infrastructure (i.e. the existing grid) that may be required but does include new connections to the grid.

1.3.1 Guidelines

This EIA process is informed by the series of national Environmental Guidelines[14] where applicable and relevant:

- Integrated Environmental Information Management (IEIM), Information Series 5: Companion to the NEMA EIA Regulations of 2010 (DEA, 2010);
- Implementation Guidelines: Sector Guidelines for the EIA Regulations (draft) (DEA, 2010);
- IEIM, Information Series 2: Scoping (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), 2002);
- DEAT. 2002. IEIM, Information Series 3: Stakeholder Engagement (DEAT, 2002);
- IEIM, Information Series 4: Specialist Studies (DEAT, 2002);
- IEIM, Information Series 11: Criteria for determining Alternatives in EIA (DEAT, 2004);
- IEIM, Information Series 12: Environmental Management Plans (DEAT, 2004);
- Integrated Environmental Management Guideline Series, Guideline 4: Public Participation, in support of the EIA Regulations. Unpublished (DEAT, 2005); and
- Integrated Environmental Management Guideline Series, Guideline 7: Detailed Guide to Implementation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations. Unpublished (DEAT, 2007).

The following guidelines from the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (Western Cape) (DEA&DP) were also taken into consideration:

- DEA&DP.2011. Guideline on Alternatives, EIA Guideline and Information Document Series. (DEA&DP, October 2011).
- DEA&DP.2011. Guideline on Need and Desirability, EIA Guideline and Information Document Series. (DEA&DP, October 2011).
- DEA&DP.2011. Guideline on Public Participation, EIA Guideline and Information Document Series. (DEA&DP, October 2011).

1.4 APPROACH TO THE PROJECT

As outlined in **Figure 1.2**, there are three distinct phases in the EIA process, as required in terms of NEMA, namely the Initial Application Phase, the Scoping Phase and the EIA Phase. This report covers the second phase, *viz.* the Scoping Report Phase.

1.4.1 Initial Application Phase

The Initial Application Phase entailed the submission of an EIA Application Form to notify DEA of the project, on 3 October 2011. Acknowledgement of receipts of the EIA Application Form

[14] Note that these Guidelines have not yet been subjected to the requisite public consultation process as required by Section 74 of R385 of NEMA.

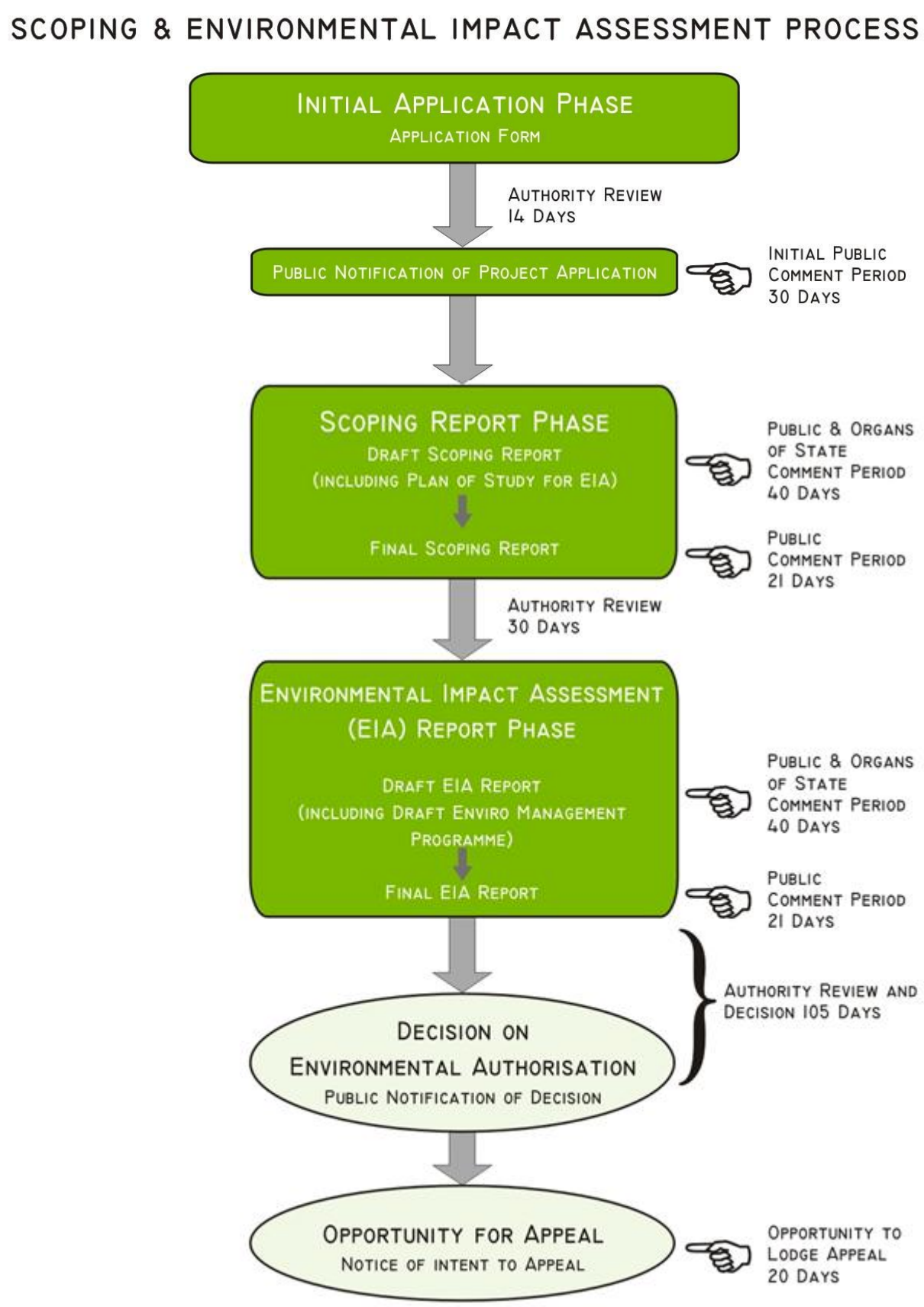

Figure 1-2: The EIA process in terms of NEMA

was received from DEA on 19 October 2011. The Application Form and DEA's letters of acknowledgement are included in **Annexure A**.

1.4.2 The Scoping Phase

Scoping is defined as a procedure for determining the extent of, and approach to, the EIA Report Phase and involves the following key tasks:

- Involvement of relevant authorities and Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs);
- Identification and selection of feasible alternatives to be taken through to the EIA phase;
- Identification of significant issues/impacts associated with each alternative to be examined in the EIA Report; and
- Determination of specific terms of reference for any specialist studies required in the EIA Report (Plan of Study for the EIA Report).

To date the Scoping Phase has involved a desktop review of relevant literature, including a review of previous environmental studies in the area. These included, *inter alia*, the following:

- Pixley ka Seme Integrated Environmental Management Program (IEMP)(African EPA, 2007);
- Pixley ka Seme District Municipality Spatial Development Framework (SDF) (2007);
- Siyathemba IEMP (African EPA, 2007);
- Vegetation Map of South Africa (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006);
- Proposed Solar Farm, Prieska. Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) (DJ Environmental Consultants, 2010);
- Proposed Construction of a Wind Farm and Photovoltaic (PV) Plant near Prieska, Northern Cape Province of South Africa. Draft Scoping Report (SiVEST, 2011) and
- Proposed Wind Energy Facility near Copperton, Northern Cape: Final Scoping Report. Report No. 5357A/ 106563 (Aurecon, 2011).

Other tasks undertaken include:

- Advertisements were placed in a local newspaper, the Gemsbok, notifying the broader public of the initiation of the EIA and inviting them to register as I&APs from 2 November 2011; and

A site notice was erected at the entrance to Farm Hoekplaas on 8 November 2011 (the site notices are included in **Annexure B**).

An inception field trip was held on 28 and 29 September 2011 with the Aurecon EIA team and various landowners. The purpose of the field trip was to gain an understanding of the key aspects such as:

- Biophysical aspects, including:
  - Terrestrial fauna and flora especially avifauna;
  - Surface water resources;
  - Ecological sensitive area; and

  - Vegetation types on site.
- Socio-economic aspects, including:
  - Heritage issues;
  - Land use, including agricultural potential
  - Visual aesthetics including the location of the project in terms of roads, topography and proximity to houses;
  - Location of local communities;
  - Dust;
  - Employment opportunities; and
  - Tourism.

The information gathered during the site visit was used in refining the Plan of Study for the EIA process and Terms of Reference (ToR) for the specialist studies which will be undertaken during the EIA Phase.

1.4.3 The EIA Phase

The Scoping Phase will be followed by the EIA Phase, during which the specialist investigations will occur, and will culminate in a comprehensive EIAR documenting the outcome of the impact assessments.

1.4.4 The public participation process

Consultation with the public forms an integral component of this investigation and enables I&APs (e.g. directly affected landowners, national, provincial and local authorities, environmental groups, civic associations and communities), to identify their issues and concerns, relating to the proposed activities, which they feel should be addressed in the EIA process. To create a transparent process and to ensure that I&APs are well informed about the project, as much information as is available has been included upfront to afford I&APs numerous opportunities to review and comment on the proposed project. A summary of the public participation process is provided in **Chapter 3**.

1.4.5 Authority involvement

Authority consultation represents the first stage of the public consultation process. An EIA Application Form was submitted to DEA to notify the Department of the proposed project. DEA Acknowledged receipt of the EIA Application Form and issued a reference number for the proposed project. The Application Form and DEA's letters of acknowledgement are included in **Annexure A;**

Where the need arises, Focus Group meetings will be arranged with representatives from the relevant national and provincial departments and local authorities. The purpose of these meetings will be to ensure that the authorities have a thorough understanding of the need for

the project and that Aurecon has a clear understanding of the authority requirements. It is anticipated that beyond providing key inputs into the EIA, this authority scoping process will ultimately expedite the process by ensuring that the final documentation satisfies the authority requirements and that the authorities are fully informed with respect to the nature and scope of the proposed wind energy facilities.

The Draft Scoping Report (DSR) was provided to the following authorities for comment, namely:

- SiyaThemba Local Municipality;
- Pixley ka Seme District Municipality;
- South African Heritage Resources Agency;
- Northern Cape DEANC;
- Department of Energy (Northern Cape): Regional Energy Director;
- Department of Agriculture (Northern Cape); and
- Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

1.4.6 Decision making

The DSR will be made available to the public for a prerequisite 40 day comment period. All comments received during the comment period will be included in a Comments and Responses Report (CRR) and annexed to the Final Scoping Report (FSR). Once the FSR has been completed, including the CRR, it will be submitted to DEA for review.

The competent authority (DEA) must, within 30 days of receipt of the FSR, or receipt of the required information, reports, or comments or an amended scoping report, consider it, and in writing –

(a) Accept the report and advise the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to proceed with the tasks contemplated in the Plan of Study for EIA;
(b) Request the EAP to make such amendments to the report as the component authority may require, or
(c) Reject the Scoping Report if it
    (i) Does not contain material information required in terms of these regulations, or
    (ii) Has not taken into account guidelines applicable in respect of Scoping Reports and Plans of Study for EIA.

1.5 ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

1.5.1 Assumptions

In undertaking this investigation and compiling the Scoping Report, the following has been assumed:

- The strategic level investigations undertaken by the Department of Energy regarding South Africa's proposed energy mix prior to the commencement of the EIA process are technologically acceptable and robust.
- The information provided by the applicant and specialists is accurate and unbiased.
- The scope of this investigation is limited to assessing the environmental impacts associated with the proposed PV plant and connection to the grid. The project does not include any infrastructure upgrades which may be required from Eskom to allow capacity in the local grid for the proposed project.

1.5.2 Gaps in knowledge

This Scoping Report has identified the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed activities. However, the scope of impacts presented in this report could change, should new information become available during the EIA Phase. The purpose of this section is therefore to highlight gaps in knowledge when the Scoping phase of the project was undertaken, these include:

- Lack of confirmation of services capacity from the municipality.
- Lack of exact source of water.

The planning for the proposed facility is at a feasibility level and therefore some of the specific details are not available at this stage of the EIA process. This EIA process forms a part of the suite of feasibility studies, and as these studies progress, more information will become available to inform the EIA process. This will require the various authorities, and especially DEA, to issue their comments and ultimately their environmental decision to allow for the type of refinements that typically occur during these feasibility studies and detailed design phase of projects. Undertaking the EIA process in parallel with the feasibility study does however have a number of benefits, such as integrating environmental aspects into the layout and design and therefore ultimately encouraging a more environmentally sensitive and sustainable project.

1.6 INDEPENDENCE

The requirement for independence of the environmental consultant is aimed at reducing the potential for bias in the environmental process. Neither Aurecon nor any of its sub-consultants are subsidiaries of Mulilo nor is Mulilo a subsidiary to Aurecon. Furthermore, all these parties do not have any interests in secondary or downstream developments that may arise out of the authorisation of the proposed project.

The Project Director, Mr Brett Lawson, Project Manager, Miss Louise Corbett, and the Project Staff, Miss Franci Gresse, are appropriately qualified and registered with the relevant professional bodies. Mr Lawson is a certified Environmental Assessment Practitioner of South Africa (EAPSA), and is registered as a Professional Natural Scientist with the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNSP). Miss Corbett is registered as a Professional Natural Scientist with the SACNSP. Aurecon is bound by the codes of conduct for

EAPSA and SACNSP. The CV summaries of the key Aurecon staff are included in the Plan of Study for EIA contained in **Chapter 5**.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE SCOPING REPORT

Table 1-5 presents the structure of the Scoping report as well as the applicable sections that address the required information in terms of NEMA. Specifically, Section 28 (1) of the EIA Regulations requires that the following information is provided:

Table 1-5: Information required by NEMA for inclusion in the EIA documentation

REGULATION	CONTENT AS REQUIRED BY NEMA	SECTION /ANNEXURE
28(1)(a)	(i) Details of the EAP who prepared the report; and	***Project details, page i***
	(ii) Details of the expertise of the EAP to carry out scoping procedures.	***Section 5.9, page 71***
28(1)(b)	A description of the proposed activity.	***Section 2.2, page 28***
28(1)(c)	A description of any feasible and reasonable alternatives that have been identified.	***Section 2.3, page 31***
28(1)(d)	A description of the property on which the activity is to be undertaken and the location of the activity on the property.	***Section 2.2 and Section 4.2, page 28 and 45 respectively***
28(1)(e)	A description of the environment that may be affected by the activity and the manner in which the activity may be affected by the environment.	***Section 4.2, page 45***
28(1)(f)	An identification of all legislation and guidelines that have been considered in the preparation of the scoping report.	***Section 1.2, page 3***
28(1)(g)	A description of environmental issues and potential impacts, including cumulative impacts that have been identified.	***Sections 4.3 – 4.5 and Section 5.3, page 55, 58, 62 and 65 respectively***
28(1)(h)	Details of the public participation process conducted in terms of regulation 27(a), including –	***Chapter 3, page 41***
	(i) The steps that were taken to notify potentially interested and affected parties of the application;	***Section 3.2, page 41***
	(ii) Proof that notice boards, advertisements and notices notifying potentially interested and affected parties of the proposed application have been displayed, placed or given;	***Sections 3.2.1, 3.2.2; 3.2.3, page 42 Annexure B***

REGULATION	CONTENT AS REQUIRED BY NEMA	SECTION /ANNEXURE
	(iii) A list of all persons, organisations and organs of state that were registered in terms of regulation 55 as interested and affected parties in relation to the application; and	***Annexure C***
	(iv) A summary of the issues raised by interested and affected parties, the date of receipt of and the response of the EAP to those issues.	***Sections 3.3 – 3.5, page 43***
28(1)(i)	A description of the need and desirability of the proposed activity.	***Section 2.1, page 23***
28(1)(j)	A description of identified potential alternatives to the proposed activity, including advantages and disadvantages that the proposed activity or alternatives may have on the environment and on the community that may be affected by the activity.	***Section 2.3 and Sections 4.3 – 4.5, page 31, 55, 58 and 62 respectively***
28(1)(k)	Copies of any representations, comments received in connection with the application or the scoping report from interested and affected parties.	***Final Scoping Report***
28(1)(l)	Copies of the minutes of any meetings held by the EAP with interested and affected parties and other role players which record the views of the participants.	***Final Scoping Report***
28(1)(m)	Any response by the EAP to those representations and comments and views.	***Final Scoping Report***
28(1)(n)	A plan of study for environmental impact assessment which sets out the proposed approach to the environmental impact assessment of the application, which must include:	***Chapter 5, page 65***
	(i) A description of the tasks that will be undertaken as part of the environmental impact assessment process, including any specialist reports or specialised processes, and the manner in which such tasks will be undertaken;	***Section 5.2 and Section 5.3, page 65***
	(ii) An indication of the stages at which the competent authority will be consulted;	***Section 3.5; 3.6; and Section 5.7, page 43, 44 and 70 respectively***
	(iii) A description of the proposed method of assessing the environmental issues and alternatives, including the option of not proceeding with the activity; and	***Section 5.3.2, page 66***
	(iv) Particulars of the public participation process that will be conducted during the environmental impact assessment process.	***Chapter 3 and Section 5.7, page 41 and 70 respectively***

REGULATION	CONTENT AS REQUIRED BY NEMA	SECTION /ANNEXURE
28(1)(o)	Any specific information required by the competent authority.	***To be included in FSR***
28(1)(p)	Any other matters required in terms of sections 24(4)(a) and (b) of the Act.	***N/A***
28(2)	In addition, a scoping report must take into account any guidelines applicable to the kind of activity which is the subject of the application.	***Section 1.3, page 12***
28(3)	The EAP managing the application must provide the competent authority with detailed, written proof of an investigation as required by section 24(4)(b)(i) if the Act and motivation if no reasonable or feasible alternatives, as contemplated in sub-regulation (1)(c), exist.	***N/A***

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2 THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY

This chapter considers the need for the proposed project, briefly outlines the nature of the proposed activities and then considers and screens the various project alternatives in order to focus the EIA Phase on the most feasible alternatives.

2.1 THE NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY

The 2009 DEA&DP Guideline for Need and Desirability[15] highlights the obligation for all proposed activities which trigger the environmental regulations to be considered in light of (amongst others) the National Framework for Sustainable Development[16], the spatial planning context, broader societal needs and financial viability. This information allows the authorities to contemplate the strategic context of a decision on the proposed activity. This section seeks to provide the context within which the need and desirability of the proposed activity should be considered.

The need for renewable energy is well documented and reasons for the desirability of solar energy include:

- Utilise resources available to South Africa;
- Meeting nationally appropriate emission targets in line with global climate change commitments;
- Enhancing energy security by diversifying generation; and
- Creating a more sustainable economy.

2.1.1 Utilise resources available to South Africa

As illustrated in **Figure 2-1** South Africa is subject to some of the highest levels of solar radiation in the world with an average daily solar radiation that varies between 4.5 and 6.5 kWh/m^2. This in comparison to the ± 3.6 kWh/m^2 received by parts of the United States and ± 2.5 kWh/m^2 for Europe and the United Kingdom (DME, 2003), indicates that South Africa has considerable solar resource potential which should be utilised. South Africa generates most of its required electricity from coal of which there is a ready supply of at the local level. However, national government is on the verge of augmenting the existing generation capacity of thermal and nuclear power plants with renewable energy power generation, thereby creating a framework that will lead to an increase in the supply of clean energy for the nation.

[15] DEA&DP (2009) Guideline on Need and Desirability, NEMA EIA Regulations Guideline and Information Document Series. Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning (DEA&DP).

[16] Republic of South Africa (2008) People – Planet – Prosperity: A National Framework for Sustainable Development in South Africa**.** Pretoria: Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), Republic of South Africa [Internet]. Available from: http://www.environment.gov.za [Accessed on: 29/03/2011].

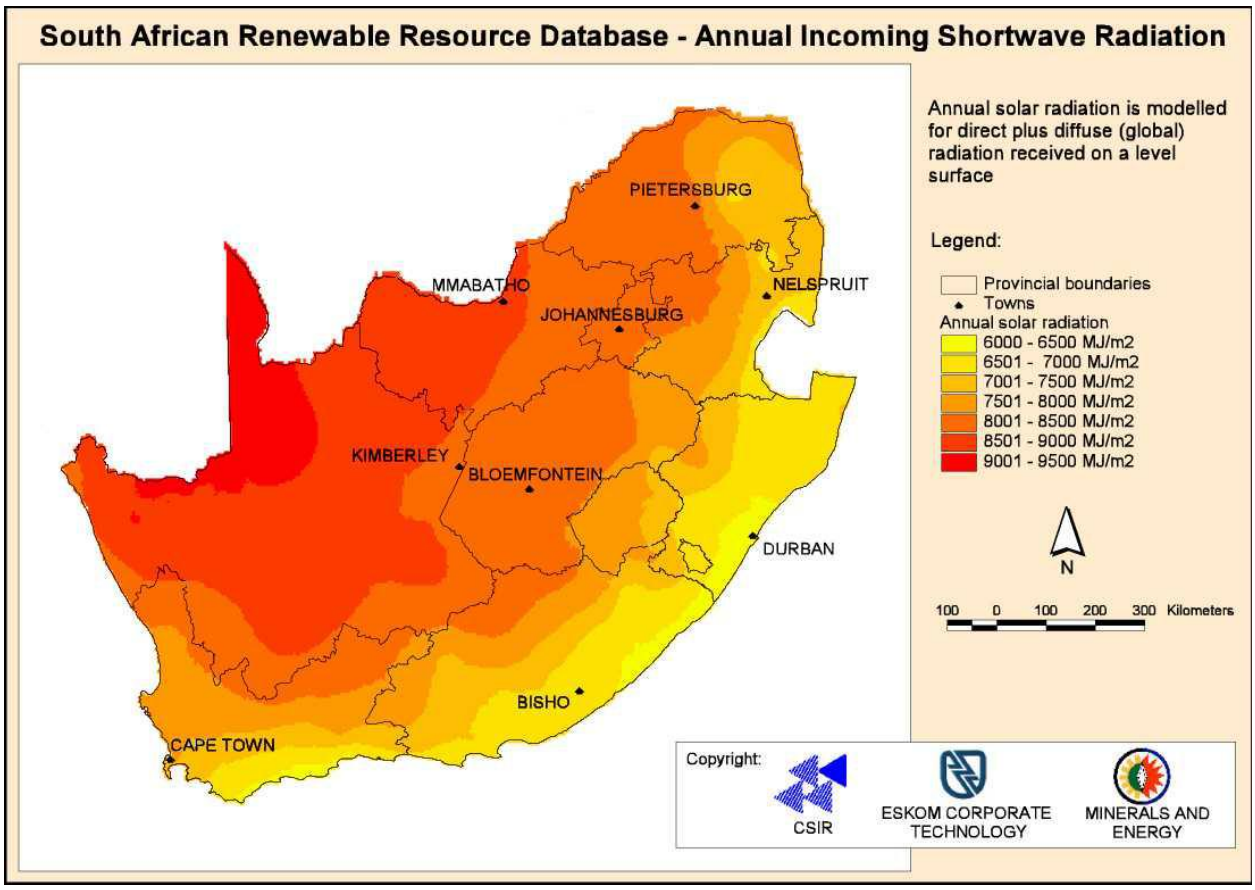


Figure 2-1: Annual solar radiation for South Africa (DME, 2003)

2.1.2 Meeting nationally appropriate emission targets in line with global climate change commitments

The proposed PV plant is considered to be of national importance in anticipation of its contribution to electricity supply and reduced reliance on fossil energy sources. The IRP2010 allows for an additional 14 749 MW of renewable energy in the electricity blend in South Africa by 2030. While there are a number of renewable energy options (including, *inter alia,* wind, solar, and hydropower) being pursued in South Africa, many more renewable energy projects are required to meet the targets set by the IRP2010. Consequently, based on this requirement for renewable energy, Mulilo has identified various projects for PV solar energy generation.

Targets for the promotion of renewable energy now exist in more than 58 countries, of which 13 are developing countries. The South African Government has recognised the country's high level of renewable energy potential and presently has in place targets of 10 000 GWh of renewable energy by 2013 (to be produced mainly from biomass, wind, solar and small-scale hydro). This amounts to approximately 4 % (1 667 MW) of the total estimated electricity demand (41 539 MW) by 2013.

Due to concerns such as climate change, and the on-going exploitation of non-renewable, resources, there is increasing international pressure on countries to increase their share of renewable energy generation. The proposed Hoekplaas PV project is expected to contribute positively towards climate change mitigation.

Solar energy is a source of "green" electricity as for every 1 MWh of "green" electricity used instead of traditional coal powered stations, one can:

- Save 1 290 liters of water;
- Avoid 8.22 kg of Sulphur Dioxide (SO_2)emissions;
- Avoid 1 000 kg of Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) emissions including transmission losses;
- Avoid 142 kg of ash production; and
- Contribute to social upliftment.

2.1.3 Enhancing energy security by diversifying generation

The establishment of the proposed Hoekplaas PV plant will strengthen the existing electricity grid for the area. Moreover, the project will contribute towards meeting the national energy target as set by the Department of Energy (DoE), of a 30 % share of all new power generation being derived from independent power producers (IPPs). Renewable energy is recognized internationally as a major contributor in protecting the climate, nature and the environment, as well as providing a wide range of environmental, economic and social benefits that can contribute towards long-term global sustainability. Should the proposed PV plant identified by Mulilo be acceptable, it is considered viable that long term benefits for the community and society in the Copperton / Prieska area will be realized as highlighted above. The proposed project will also have international significance as it contributes to South Africa being able to meet some of its international obligations by aligning domestic policy with internationally agreed strategies and standards as set by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Kyoto Protocol, and United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) all of which South Africa is a signatory to.

2.1.4 Creating a more sustainable economy

The Northern Cape, and particularly the Copperton area, has large tracts of land which are very dry and the farmers do their best to earn a living from the land. The towns are generally small and operate on a survival socio-economic level. The need to improve the quality of life for all, and especially for the poor, is critical in South Africa. It is expected that the proposed project will contribute directly to the upliftment of the individuals and the societies in which they live.

Skills development and the transfer thereof will be one of the top priorities and local community involvement will be enhanced as far as possible. Up to 900 job opportunities could be created during the construction (installation) phase depending on the procurement method and the primary contractor.

Additional potential benefits include:

- Reducing the demand on scarce resources, such as water;
- Local economic development; and
- Local skills development.

Table 2-1: Specific questions as detailed in the Need and Desirability Guideline

NEED (TIMING) Question	Response
1. Is the land use (associated with the activity being applied for) considered within the timeframe intended by the existing approved SDF agreed to by the relevant environmental authority i.e. is the proposed development in line with the projects and programmes identified as priorities within the IDP?	*The area proposed is currently zoned as Agricultural land. However the farmer has signed a lease agreement with Mulilo for the site. The portion leased has relatively low agricultural potential. Furthermore the additional income will safeguard the economic sustainability of the farm.* *Even though the IDP does not specifically allow for renewable energy projects, solar energy was identified as one of the LMs strong points which should be developed. Other needs that were identified include sustainable developments (economically, socially and environmentally) and job creation.* *The proposed PV plant would create job opportunities for a wide skill level. In addition, Mulilo has committed to developing a training strategy to train and employ people from the local community.*
2. Should development, or if applicable, expansion of the town/ area concerned in terms if this land use (associated with the activity being applied for) occur at this point in time?	*Yes. The activity is in line with the Pixley ka Seme District Spatial Development Framework which recognises the need for sustainable land management, job creation and the development of new skills.*
3. Does the community/ area need the activity and the associated land use concerned (is it a societal priority)?	*Yes. The proposed PV plant would not only be a source of income the landowner, but it would create job opportunities for the local community as the construction and operation of the PV plant require a wide range of skill levels.* *Secondary economic impacts may include an increase demand on the service industry through the demand for accommodation and other services.*
4. Are there necessary services with appropriate capacity currently available (at the time of application), or must additional capacity be created to cater for the development?	*It is anticipated that water requirements during the construction and operational phases would be met via the Alkantpan pipeline. However, the applicant still needs to confirm whether sufficient capacity is available.* *Estimated water requirements:* • *Construction Phase: A 100 MW would require roughly 36 000 kℓ over a period of*

	6 months to a year. • *Operational Phase: 1 kℓ of water per day is required for 10 MW, therefore 100 MW would require 10 kℓ per day.* *The establishment of the proposed Hoekplaas PV plant would strengthen the existing electricity grid for the area resulting in a positive impact on the available electrical services.*
5. Is this development provided for in the infrastructure planning of the municipality, and if not, what will the implication be on the infrastructure planning of the municipality (priority and placements of services)?	*No. It should be noted that once the proposed PV plant is operational, there would be a very limited requirement for municipal services.*
6. Is this project part of a national programme to address an issue of national concern or importance?	*Yes. The establishment of the proposed Hoekplaas plant would strengthen the existing electricity grid for the area. Moreover, the project would contribute towards meeting the national energy target as set by the DoE, of a 30 % share of all new power generation being derived IPPs.*
DESIRABILITY (PLACING) **Question**	**Response**
1. Is the development the best practicable environmental option (BPEO) for this land/ site?	*Copperton is a very arid region and farmers are struggling to make a living from the land. The area being proposed for the PV plant has moderate to low agricultural potential (grazing) and the income generated by the landowners from the proposed PV facility would greatly assist in future agricultural developments and the viability of the property.*
2. Would the approval of this application compromise the integrity of the existing approved Municipal IDP and SDF as agreed to by the relevant authorities.	*No. The activity is in line with the Siyathemba IEMP and Pixley ka Seme District SDF which recognizes the need for:* • *Sustainable developments;* • *New skills development; and* • *Economic development.* *The proposed PV plant would not only be a source of income to farmers, but it would also create job opportunities for the local community as the construction and operation of the PV plant would require a wide range of skill levels.*
3. Would the approval of this application compromise the integrity of the existing	*No. According to the Siyathemba IEMP land degradation, especially from overgrazing, is*

environmental management priorities for the area (e.g. as defined in EMFs), and if so, can it be justified from in terms of sustainability considerations?	*one of the key issues that need attention. The proposed development would provide additional income to the landowner which could be used for sustainable agricultural development practices on his farm.*
4. Do location factors favour this land use (associated with the activity applied for) at this place?	*Yes. The sites were selected based on the following criteria:* • *Solar resource potential based on historic satellite data;* • *Grid connectivity and close proximity to strong grid access;* • *Flat, level, and open land; and* • *Unpopulated and non-arable or low arable potential land.* *Desktop studies furthermore assessed potential sensitivities of fauna, flora, heritage, visual and other technical aspects.* *The area proposed has low agricultural significance and is in close proximity to Eskom's existing transmission lines.*
5. How will the activity or the land use associated with the activity applied for, impact on sensitive natural and cultural areas (built and rural/ natural environment)?	*Potential impacts associated with the proposed PV plant (see Chapter 4) will be discussed and assessed during the EIA phase. Please refer to the Plan of Study for EIA in Chapter 5.*
6. How will the development impact on people's health and wellbeing (e.g. in terms of noise, odours, visual character and sense of place, etc.)?	*Please refer to Chapter 4 which deals with potential impacts that will be further assessed in the EIA Phase. Also see the Plan of Study for EIA in Chapter 5.*
7. Will the proposed activity or the land use associated with the activity applied for, result in unacceptable opportunity costs?	*The socio-economic impacts will be assessed and discussed in the EIA phase. Refer to the Plan of Study for EIA in Chapter 5.*
8. Will the proposed land use result in unacceptable cumulative impacts?	*Please refer to Chapter 4 which deals with potential impacts that will be further assessed in the EIA Phase. Also see the Plan of Study for EIA in Chapter 5.*

2.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY

Mulilo proposes to construct a PV plant to generate approximately 100 MW (preferred alternative) or 150 MW (alternative) on the farm Hoekplaas (Remainder of Farm No. 146) near Copperton in the Northern Cape. The proposed PV plant would cover an area of approximately 300 ha (preferred alternative) or 450 ha (alternative), which is currently used for cattle and

sheep grazing. The location of the proposed site, including the alternative site location, is indicated in **Figure 1-1**.

In terms of associated infrastructures, the following would be required:

- Upgrade of existing internal farm roads and construction of new roads to accommodate the construction vehicles and access the site.
- Construction of a 132 kV transmission line to connect the proposed PV plant with Eskom's grid via the Kronos substation (see **Figure 2-2** for an example of a 132 kV line).
- Electrical fence to prevent illegal trespassing, as well as keeping livestock from roaming between the solar arrays and causing accidental damage.
- Other infrastructure includes an office, connection centre and a guard cabin.

Figure 2-2: Example of an existing 132 kV transmission line (taken 29/09/2011)

The proposed PV plant would convert shortwave radiation (sunlight) directly into electricity via cells through a process known as the Photovoltaic Effect. The PV cells are made of silicone which acts as a semi-conductor. The cells absorb light energy which energises the electrons to produce electricity. Individual solar cells can be connected and packed into standard modules behind a glass sheet to protect the cells from the environment while obtaining desired currents and voltages. These modules are grouped together to form a panel and can last up to 25 years due to the immobility of parts, as well as the sturdiness of the structure. However, the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) is only valid for a period of 20 years after which the plant would most likely be decommissioned and the site rehabilitated.

Grid-connected PV Power Systems (PVPS) are made up of a variety of components, which aside from the PV modules, include conductors, fuses, disconnect controls, trackers, and power conditioning units (i.e. inverters). The PVPS requires transmission infrastructure to feed electricity into the grid, unlike the Stand-alone PV Power System that requires batteries to store electricity for use later[17]. The electricity is generated from solar energy which is transformed by the PV modules (arranged in arrays). The maximum power point tracker (MPPT) ensures that

[17] Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stand-alone_photovoltaic_power_system (Accessed on: 28/10/2011)

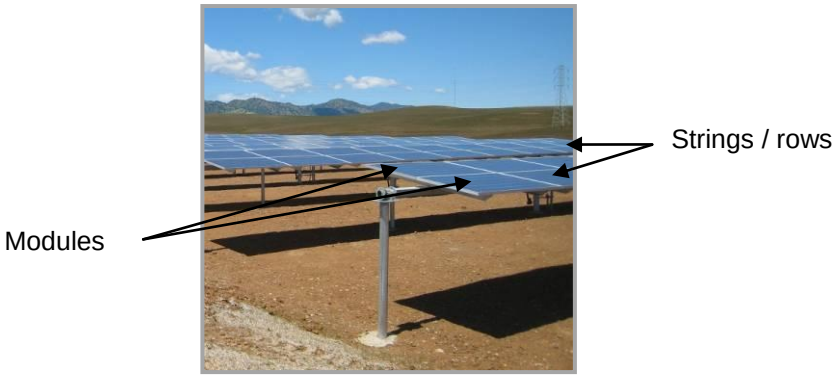


Figure 2-3: Typical layout of panel structures

power coming from the PVs are maximised by determining the current that the inverter should draw from the PV panel[18]. The inverter converts the direct current (DC) to an alternating current (AC) to allow the electricity to be fed into the grid. **Figure 2-4** below illustrates the components of the process of generating electricity from solar energy (sun) and fed into the grid.

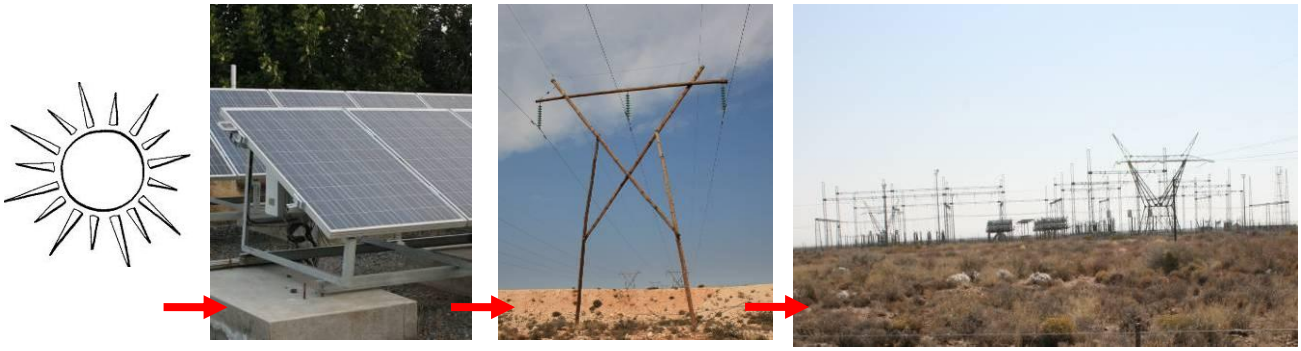


Figure 2-4: Basic PV system layout

2.2.1 Construction phase

The proposed facility will be constructed over a period between 18 and 30 months. During the Construction Phase between 200 and 900 individuals would be employed depending on the procurement method used as well as the primary contractor. If non-locals are employed they would be housed in temporary dwellings on site or in accommodation within Copperton and Prieska.

Between two and five digger loaders/ bulldozers would be required for land clearing and five to ten trucks with cranes for the assembly of the facility. Approximately 450 truck deliveries conveying ± 900 forty foot container loads will be required to construct the PV plant. These deliveries would be distributed over the construction period.

[18] Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maximum_power_point_tracker (Accessed on: 28/10/2011)

2.2.2 Operational phase

The project is expected to last the full period of the PPA which is approximately 20 years. Regular cleaning of the panels to remove dust, dirt, pollen, and bird excretions would be required to ensure that the maximum quantity of sunrays can be captured by the PV panels (Ibrahim, 2010). The frequency of panel cleaning would depend on the site conditions. Panels would be washed with water and a mild, organic, and non-abrasive detergent.

2.2.3 Decommissioning phase

The PV site would be decommissioned at the end of the PPA (20 years from the date of commissioning). The decommissioning is expected to take between 6 to 12 months. The module components would be removed and recycled as the silicon and aluminum can be re-used in the production of new modules.

2.3 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

2.3.1 Introduction

NEMA requires that alternatives are considered during the EIA process. An important function of the Scoping Phase is to screen alternatives to derive a list of feasible alternatives that need to be assessed in further detail in the EIA Phase. An alternative can be defined as a possible course of action, in place of another, that would meet the same purpose and need (DEAT, 2004).

"alternatives", in relation to a proposed activity, means different means of meeting the general purpose and requirements of the activity, which may include alternatives to -

a) the property on which or **location** where it is proposed to undertake the activity;
b) the type of **activity** to be undertaken;
c) the design or **layout** of the activity;
d) the **technology** to be used in the activity;
e) the **operational** aspects of the activity; and
f) the option of not implementing the activity.

The alternatives most pertinent to the proposed project include the following:

- Location alternatives - alternative locations for the entire project proposal or for components of the project proposal;
- Activity (type) alternatives - also referred to as project alternatives. Requires a change in the nature of the proposed activity. This category of alternatives is most appropriate at a strategic decision-making level;
- Layout alternatives - site layout alternatives permit consideration of different spatial configurations of an activity on a particular site; and

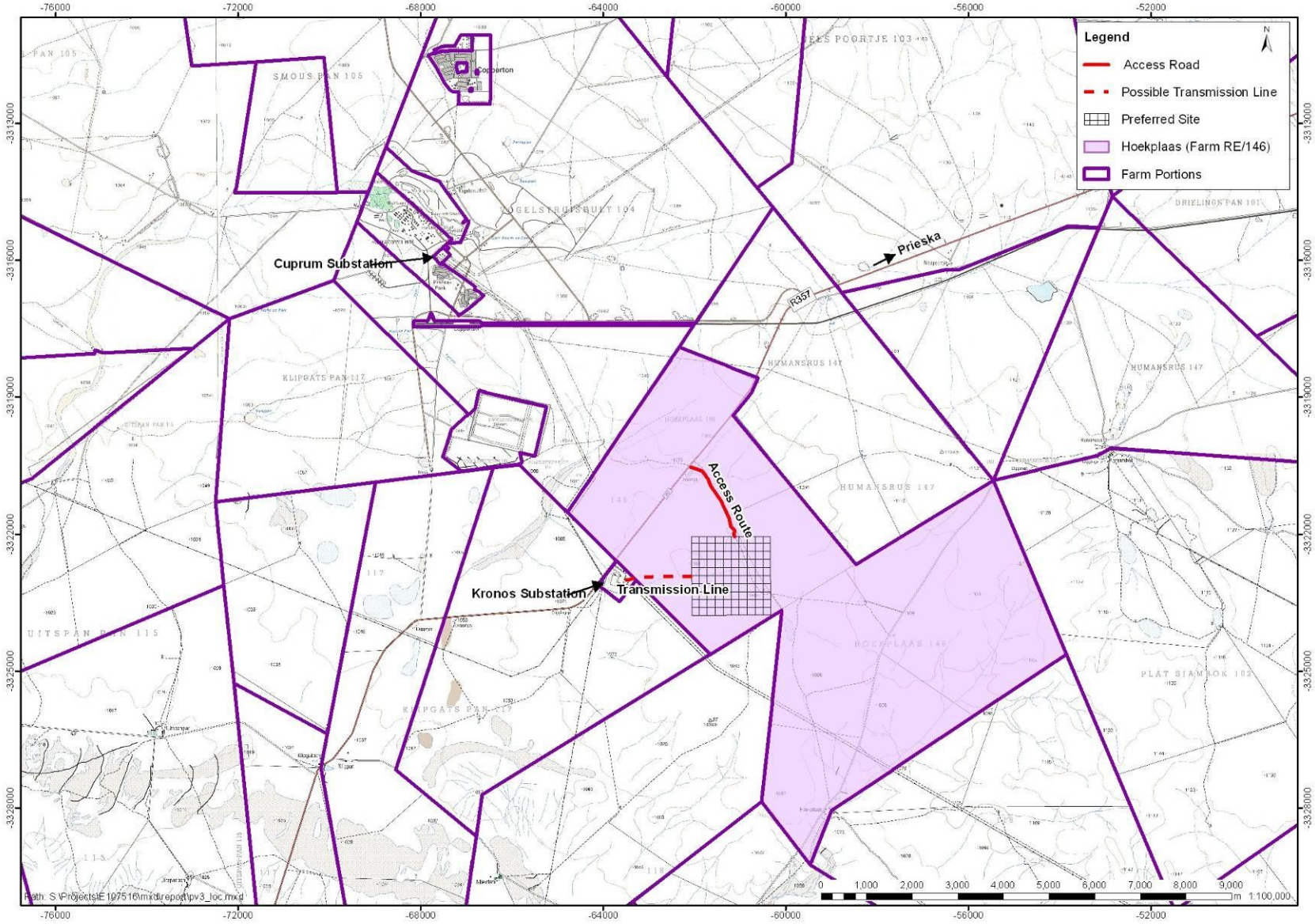


Figure 2-5: Map showing the preferred and alternative locations for the proposed PV plant on Farm Hoekplaas, near Copperton

- Technology alternatives - technology alternatives permit consideration of different types of technology used in the project.

The above categories of alternatives are the ones most pertinent to this EIA process, and will be explored in detail below. The purpose of this section of the report is to identify (scope) and describe all potential alternatives and determine which alternatives should be carried through to the EIA Phase of the project for further assessment.

2.3.2 Location alternatives

Mulilo has considered the option to develop large scale PV power generation in South Africa over the last three years, given the good solar resource which is available over a large portion of the western part of the country. Aspects that were taken into consideration included, but were not limited to, irradiation levels, distance to the grid, site accessibility, founding conditions, topography, fire risk and current land use. Three potential sites[19] were identified by Mulilo for PV plants in the near vicinity of Copperton, including the proposed project discussed in this document (PV3). The two additional sites are of 100 MW each and located on the farms Struisbult (Farm 104/1) (PV2) and Klipgats Pan (Farm 117/4) (PV4) respectively. Mulilo further has received an Environmental Authorisation for a 20 MW PV plant (PV1) located on the Struisbult farm (Farm 104/1). The locations of these sites, as well as the approved site are given in **Figure 2-6**.

The proposed sites were selected based on the following criteria:

- Solar radiation based on historic satellite data;
- Grid connectivity and close proximity to strong grid access points;
- Availability of flat, level and open land;
- Land use in terms of population numbers and non-arable / low potential agricultural land;
- Potential sensitive receptors and features, such as fauna, flora, heritage, visual and other technical aspects such as the SKA.

Originally Mulilo proposed to install a plant with an electricity generation output of 150 MW with a footprint area of 450 ha on Hoekplaas. However recent changes to the bidding process in terms of the National Energy Regulator Act (No. 40 of 2004) and REFIT (see Section 1.2.5(f)) has resulted in a reduction of the plant size to 100 MW[20] and a footprint area of 300 ha.

The shortest route was identified for the proposed 132 kV transmission line to the Kronos Substation to limit the visual impact and area of disturbance (see **Figure 2-6**). The transmission line would cover a distance of approximately 1.64 km.

[19] Please refer to *Proposed Photovoltaic Energy Plant on the Farm Klipgats Pan near Copperton in the Northern Cape (DEA Ref. No: 12/12/20/2501 / NEAS Ref. No: DEAT/EIA/0000611/2011)* and *Proposed Photovoltaic Energy Plant on Struisbult Farm near Copperton, Northern Cape* (*DEA Ref. No: 12/12/20/2502 / NEAS Ref. No: DEAT/EIA/0000605/2011),* which is available on the Aurecon website (www.aurecongroup.com – indicate "Current Location" as "South Africa" and follow the Public Participation link) for comment.

[20] Note that even though the IPP procurement process only allows for one 75 MW solar plant per farm portion, the decision was made to request authorisation for a 100 MW sites. This would allow Mulilo to increase the electricity output of the plant without having to go through a second environmental authorisation process should the decision be made to increase the allowable output per farm portion.

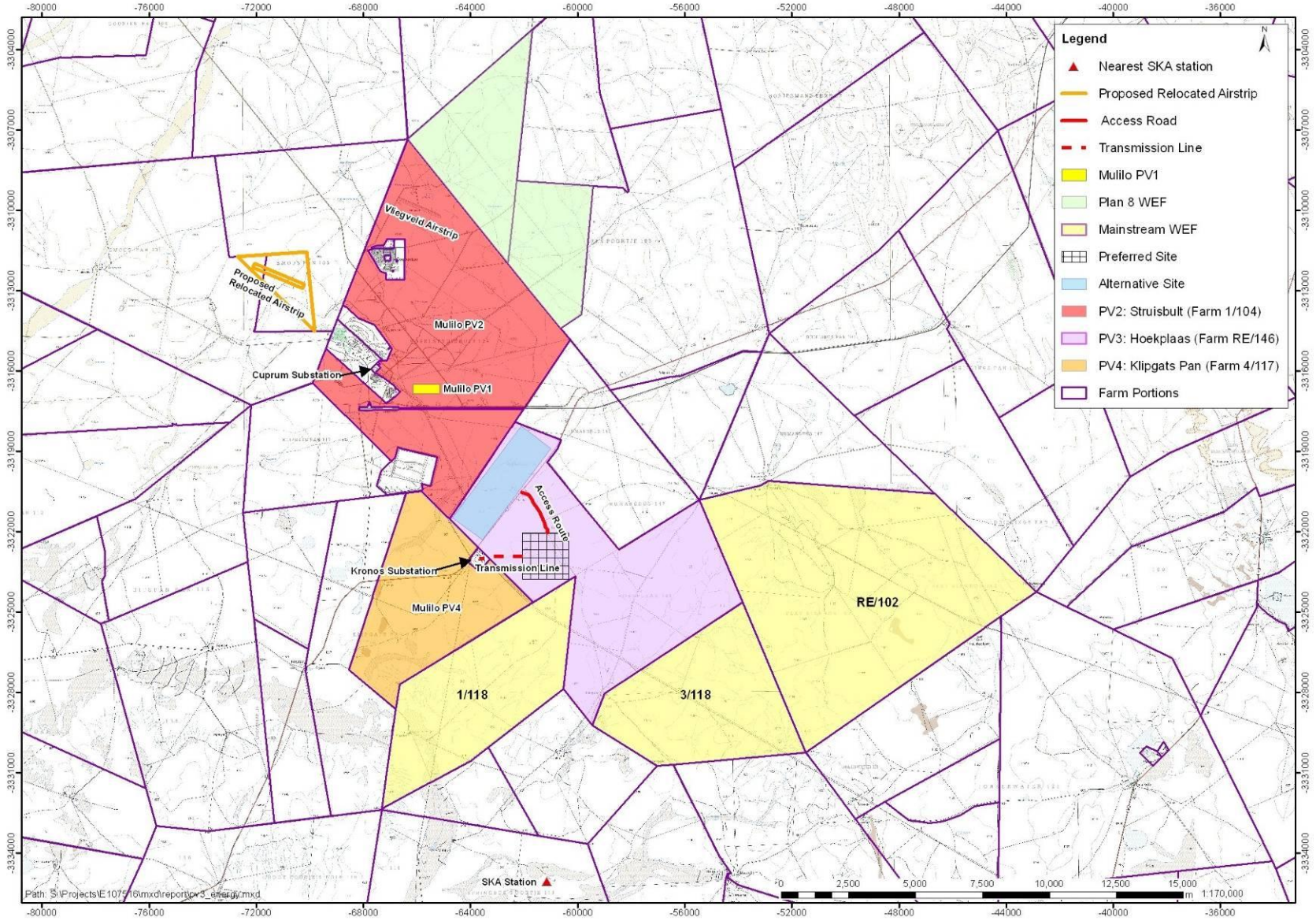


Figure 2-6: Other renewable energy projects (solar and wind) proposed for the Copperton area

2.3.3 Activity alternatives

As can be seen by the numerous policies and legislation described in **Section 1.2.4** the need for additional energy generation in South Africa is well documented. Furthermore, these policies and legislation also indicate the mixture of renewable and non-renewable energy which South Africa wishes to pursue. These strategic documents provide the road map for the activity alternatives available to South Africa. The final IRP2010 allows for an additional 14 749 MW of renewable energy in the electricity mix in South Africa by 2030 and based on this requirement for renewable energy Mulilo has identified a number of projects for solar energy generation.

A project for wind power, currently at the EIA Phase[21] (see **Figure 2-6**) is located approximately 9 km to the northeast of the proposed Hoekplaas PV plant. This indicates that the proposed site could also be suitable for wind power. However, the selection of the site was based on the requirements for solar energy. As such the only activity alternative, other than the no-go alternative, which will be investigated in this project specific EIA is solar energy.

The no-go alternative is the baseline against which all alternatives are assessed. It consists of the *status quo*, and as such will not be explicitly assessed.

2.3.4 Site layout alternatives

Originally a site was identified to the south of the preferred site for a 150 MW PV plant (see **Figure 2.5**), but was reduced to 100 MW after the recent changes to the bidding process (as explained in **Section 2.3.2**. The layout for this site, as well as the preferred site for the 100 MW PV plant, will be presented and assessed in the EIAR phase. The development of these layouts will be based on *inter alia* the following criteria:

- Technical constraints
    - Spatial orientation requirements of solar panels and associated infrastructure (e.g. roads); and
    - Layout relative to other existing infrastructure, such as power lines.
- Environmental constraints
    - Topographical constraints, including surface and groundwater;
    - Botanical and avifaunal constraints (presence of sensitive or protected plant communities or avifauna); and
    - Aesthetics.

2.3.5 Technology alternatives

Various technology alternatives were considered in terms of the following:

- Solar panel type: PV vs. Concentrating Solar Thermal Power (CSP);
- Mounting system: trackers vs. fixed mount; and

[21] Proposed Wind Energy Facility near Copperton, Northern Cape (DEA Ref. No. 12/12/20/2099). This document is available for comment on the Aurecon website (www.aurecongroup.com – indicate "Current Location" as "South Africa" and follow the Public Participation link).

- Foundation options: isolated concrete bases vs. continues concrete bases vs. concrete pile vs. thrusted supporting structures.

a) Solar panel type

Two solar panel types, i.e. PV solar cells and CSP, were considered for the proposed solar plant. The CSP technology use mirrors or lenses to concentrate sunlight onto a small area to generate electricity directly via a heat engine, e.g. a steam turbine. The PV technology on the other hand generates electricity by converting solar radiation energy into a DC current which then needs to be converted to an AC current to connect to the grid (see **Figure 2-7**)[22]. The PV option requires less water than the CSP system which needs approximately 3 420 ℓ / MWh of water per day compared to 19 ℓ / MWh of water required for a PV system during the operational period. Also see **Figure 2-8** which indicates the daily water requirements of different electricity generating technologies.

Due to the scarcity of water in this area, and the large volume of water required for the CSP system, the preferred technology that will be considered for the proposed solar plant is PV technology.

Figure 2-7: Photovoltaic solar cells (left)[23] and a CPS system (right)[24] were considered for the proposed PV plant

[22] Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photovoltaics#Optimum_orientation_of_solar_panels and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concentrated_solar_power (Accessed on: 24/10/2011).

[23] Photo of a test solar plant constructed by Mulilo on the town border of Copperton (Taken on: 29/09/2011)

[24] Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:PS10_solar_power_tower.jpg (Accessed on: 24/10/2011)

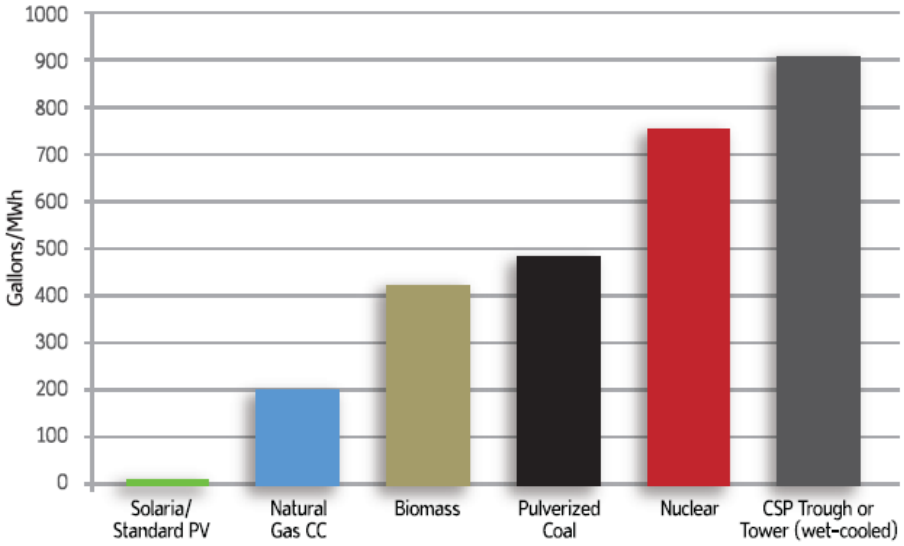


Figure 2-8: Diagram showing daily water usage for different 10 MW plants[25]

b) Mounting system

Solar panels can be mounted in various ways to ensure maximum exposure of the PV panels to sunlight. In a fixed axis system the PV panels are installed at a set tilt and cannot move, whereas in a one or two (dual) axes tracking system the panels follow the sun to ensure maximum exposure to sunlight[26]. These systems are illustrated in **Figure 2-9**.

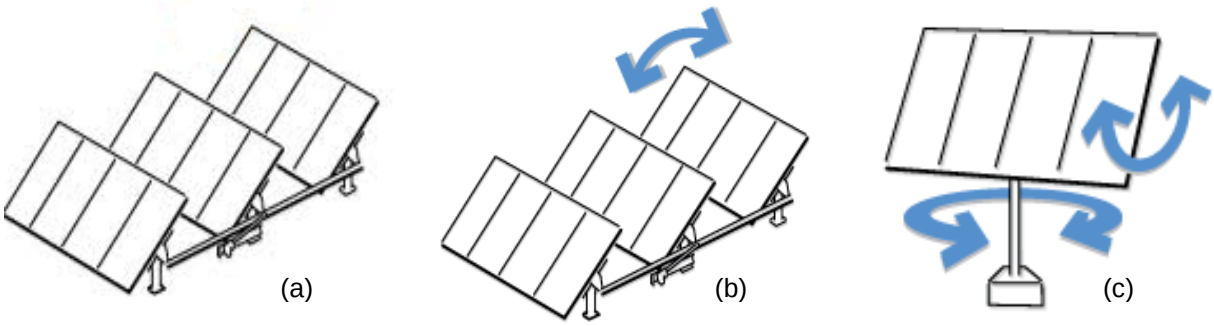


Figure 2-9: Solar panels can be mounted via (a) fixed axis photovoltaic systems, (b) single axis tracking PV systems and (c) dual axis tracking systems[27]

Mulilo will investigate all three these alternative mounting options for the PV panels.

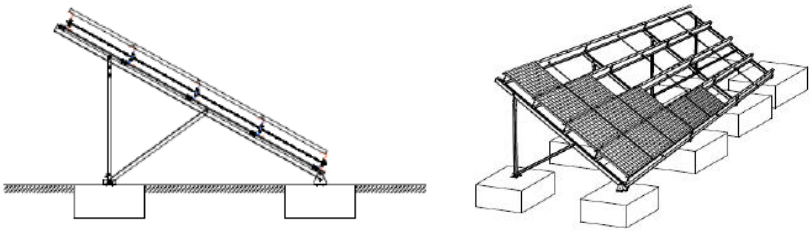
c) Foundation options

There are various methods for anchoring PV panels. However the preferred foundation option would be dependent on the soil characteristics of the area, as these anchoring structures would need to withstand climatic conditions, as well as the response of the soil to these changes, to prolong the lifespan of the panels. A geotechnical assessment would however be required to determine the soil conditions and the type of anchoring required. As this study will only be

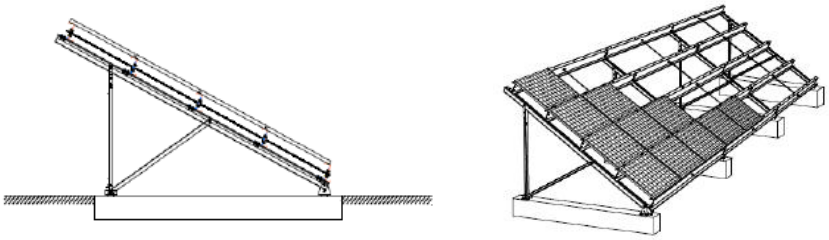
[25] Source: http://www.solaria.com/products/docs/US_Whitepaper_Water.pdf (Accessed on: 2/11/2011)
[26] Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_tracker#Tracker_type_selection (Accessed on: 24 October 2011)
[27] Source: www.solar-tracking.com/ (Accessed on: 24/10/2011)

completed during the EIA Phase, the following anchoring options will be considered (see **Figure 2-10**):

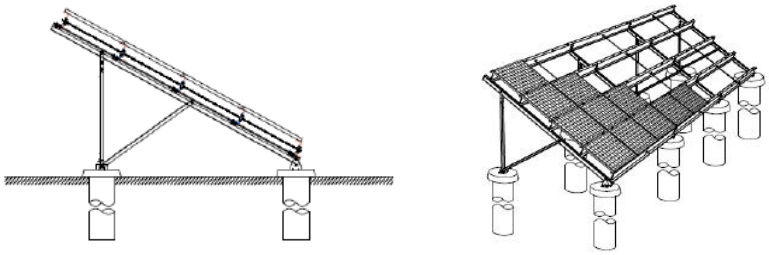
- Isolated concrete bases;
- Continuous concrete bases; and
- Concrete pile;
- Thrusted supporting structures.



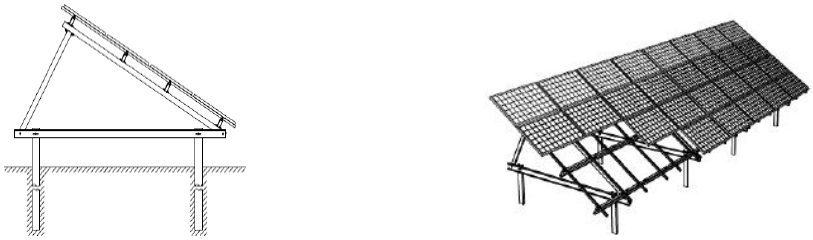
(a) Isolated concrete bases



(b) Continuous concrete bases



(c) Concrete pile



(d) Thrusted supporting structure

Figure 2-10: Illustrations of various anchoring options to be considered for the proposed PV plant (Courtesy: Mulilo)

2.3.6 Summary of alternatives

To summarise, the feasible alternatives which will be assessed in the EIAR include the following:

- Location alternatives:
  - One location for the proposed Hoekplaas PV plant; and
  - Electricity distribution via a 1.64 km 132 kV connection to Kronos substation.
- Activity alternatives:
  - Solar energy generation via a PV plant; and
  - "No-go" alternative to solar energy production.
- Site layout alternatives:
  - Two layout alternatives (100 MW with 300 ha footprint and 150 MW with 450 ha footprint).
- Technology alternatives:
  - One technology alternative in terms of the solar panel type (PV);
  - Single or Dual or Concentrated Dual axis tracking systems to mount the panels; and
  - Four foundation options.

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3 THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide an outline of the Public Participation Process, a summary of the process undertaken to date, and the way forward with respect to public participation as part of the EIA Phase of this project.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Consultation with I&APs forms an integral component of an EIA process (see **Figure 1-2**) and enables *inter alia* directly affected landowners, neighbouring landowners, stakeholders, communities and interested parties to identify the issues and concerns relating to the proposed activity, which they feel should be addressed in the process. The approach to this public participation process, summarised in the Plan of Study for EIA (Chapter 5), has taken cognisance of the DEAT Guideline on Stakeholder Engagement (2002).

Public participation, as required in terms of the EIA Regulations can, in general, be separated into the following phases:

Comment on Draft and Final Reports
During the Scoping and EIA Phases, registered I&APs are provided with an opportunity to comment on draft and final versions of the reports. This is enabled by the lodging of the reports at suitable locations for review and invitations to public meetings/open houses to discuss the content of the relevant report.

Decision and Appeal period
This is the final phase of the public participation process. Once the competent authority has made their decision and issued an Environmental Authorisation, the applicant and I&APs are notified of the decision and have the opportunity to appeal to the national Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, within the stipulated timeframes.

Progress with respect to these various stages for the current project is discussed in more detail below. It should be noted that the public participation process developed for this investigation meets the minimum requirements of NEMA.

3.2 INITIATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The approach adopted for the current investigation was to identify as many I&APs as possible initially, through a suite of activities, as follows:

- Placing advertisements in local newspapers (the Gemsbok);
- Placing a notice board at the site;
- Providing written notice and an Executive Summary to potential I&APs, including surrounding landowners, organs of state, ward councillors and relevant authorities;

- Informing I&APs registered for existing projects in the area on which Aurecon is involved with about the project and providing them with an opportunity to register for this project as well; and
- Requesting potential I&APs to recommend other potential I&APs to include on the database (chain referral process).

Thereafter, the remainder of the communications will be focused on registered I&APs and on local advertising. Consequently, the initial advertising campaign was broad and thorough and invited the members of the public to register as I&APs.

3.2.1 Compilation of I&AP database

The initial database of I&APs was compiled using an existing database for the proposed wind energy facility on an adjacent site, through identification of neighbours and through liaison with the local municipality and other organisations in the area. The initial database included the landowner, neighbouring landowners, relevant district and local municipal officials, relevant national and provincial government officials, and organisations in the area. This database is augmented via chain referral, and is continually updated as new I&APs are identified throughout the project lifecycle. The current list of I&APs, comprising approximately 57 individuals and organisations, is included in **Annexure C**. The sectors of society represented by I&APs on the database are listed below.

(i) Provincial government (Northern Cape);
(ii) Local government (Siyathemba LM and Pixly ka Seme District Municipality);
(iii) Organised agriculture;
(iv) Business/Commerce;
(v) Industry;
(vi) Scientific and research based organisations
(vii) Local landowners; and
(viii) Local communities and other community based organisations in the project area.

3.2.2 Advertising in local newspapers

Advertisements for the EIA process appeared in a local newspaper, the Gemsbok, on 2 November 2011. Copies of the advertisements will be included in the Final Scoping Report.

3.2.3 Site notices

A site notice was placed on site at the site entrance. The notice provided a description of the proposed activities and EIA process, and invited members of the public to register as I&APs, and raise any initial issues or concerns. The content of the site notice is included **Annexure B**.

3.3 ISSUES AND CONCERNS RAISED

I&APs are invited to submit comments or concerns on the Draft Scoping Report to the environmental consultants. Issues can be submitted via telephone, mail, fax and e-mail during the comment period from **8 November 2011** until **5 January 2012**. Comments and concerns raised by I&APs (with regards to the proposed activities) will be incorporated into a CRR which will summarise all the issues and concerns raised by I&APs during the Scoping Process, and provide the project team and proponent's response thereto.

3.4 COMMENT ON THE DRAFT SCOPING REPORT

This stage of the public participation process involves the lodging of this Draft Scoping Report (DSR) in Prieska (Elizabeth Vermeulen) Public Library, Ietznietz Guest House in Copperton and on the Aurecon website(www.aurecongroup.com - indicate "Current Location" as "South Africa" and follow the Public Participation link).

All registered I&APs were notified of the availability of the DSR by means of a letter sent by post, fax or e-mail on 7 November 2011. The notification letters also included a copy of the Executive Summary in English and Afrikaans.

I&APs have 40 days, from **8 November 2011** until **5 January 2011**, to submit their written comments on the DSR. Cognisance will be taken of all comments in compiling the final report, and the comments, together with the project team and proponent's responses thereto, will be included in the final report. Where appropriate, the report will be updated.

Comments should be directed to:

Aurecon
Franci Gresse or Louise Corbett
P O Box 494, Cape Town, 8000
Tel: (021) 526 6022
Fax: 086 723 1750
Email: franci.gresse@aurecongroup.com

3.5 COMMENT ON THE FINAL SCOPING REPORT

As is required by the NEMA EIA Regulations, I&APs must be given the opportunity to comment on all draft and final reports. Consequently, once the Scoping Report has been finalised, it will made available for a 21 day comment period. The report will be made available in the same locations in which the DSR was made available, and I&APs will be notified of the availability of the FSR in writing.

3.6 REVIEW AND DECISION PERIOD

On completion, the Final Scoping Report will be submitted to DEA for their review and decision regarding acceptance of the report and related Plan of Study for EIA. DEA will thereafter issue a letter accepting the Scoping Report and Plan of Study for EIA and advise the EAP to proceed with the tasks contemplated in the Plan of Study, or request amendments or reject the Scoping Report and Plan of Study for EIA.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide a brief description of the affected environment and the potential impacts that could result from the proposed project. Where additional information is required for detailed assessment in the EIAR, the Terms of Reference for specialist studies are given.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The description of the affected environment provided below draws on existing knowledge from published data, previous studies, site visits to the area and discussions with various role-players. The identification of potential impacts which may occur as a result of the proposed activities described in **Chapter 2** of this report is broad, to cover the operational phase as well as the construction phase of the project. In cases where there is currently inadequate information to facilitate assessment of the potential impact, a draft Terms of Reference (ToR) and proposed specialist consultant is provided. Impacts of lesser importance are also screened out, with reasons provided, to ensure that the EIAR is focused on the potentially significant impacts.

4.2 BROAD DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED BIOPHYSICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

4.2.1 Description of site

The site consists of the farm Hoekplaas (Farm 146/RE) (see **Figure 1-1**). This portion is privately owned Mr H.G. Human and Mrs M.J. Human, who has entered into a long term agreement with Mulilo for the proposed project. The corner point co-ordinates, moving in a clockwise manner, starting at the top left corner, are given in **Table 4-1**.

Table 4-1: Co-ordinates of corner points of the site

Latitude	Longitude
29°58'43.68"S	22°21'16.92"E
29°59'4.59"S	22°22'16.82"E
29°59'30.82"S	22°21'59.56"E
30° 1'18.98"S	22°23'39.46"E
30° 2'21.57"S	22°21'38.66"E
30° 0'38.61"S	22°19'45.22"E

Hoekplaas lies approximately 7.8 km to the south of Copperton and borders to the Kronos substation. The farm is approximately 5 014 ha in size and split into two portions by the R357.

4.2.2 Climate

The Northern Cape experiences typical semi-desert and desert climatic conditions. The summers are hot and dry and the winters cold and frosty. Records from the nearest weather station at Upington (196 km north east of Copperton) show an average daily maximum of 36^{o}C in summer (January) and an average daily minimum of 4^{o}C in winter (July). The average annual rainfall is 189 mm, with the most rain falling in March[28]. According to the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality (DM) SDF (2007) Prieska (51 km north east of Copperton) has an annual rainfall of 205 mm per annum.

4.2.3 Topography

The topography of the area is relatively flat, although a few ridges are present in the landscape, as can be seen in **Figure 4-1**. Although the Pixley ka Seme IEMP (2007) notes that ridges and koppies must be conserved and kept clear of transformation or development of any kind, only an area ± 15 km east of the site is highlighted as a ridge.

Figure 4-1: Photograph from a low point (a pan) within the site (taken 28/9/2011)

4.2.4 Flora

According to Mucina and Rutherford (2006) the site lies within the Bushmanland Basin Shrubland vegetation type in the Nama-Karoo biome (see **Figure 4-2**). The Bushmanland Basin Shrubland vegetation type is considered to be Least Threatened, although it is not well conserved (currently this vegetation type is unprotected, however only 1 % has been transformed). The conservation target is 21 %. Bushmanland Basin Shrubland occurs on slightly irregular plains with dwarf shrubland dominated by a mixture of low sturdy and spiny shrubs such as *Rhigozum* (Three thorn), *Salsola* (Tumbleweed), *Pentzia* (African sheepbush)

[28] http://196.25.43.195/Climat/Climstats/UpingtonStats.jsp (Accessed on: 17/11/10)

and *Eriocephalus* (Kapokbos) and white grasses such as *Stipagrostis* (Bushman grass). In years of high rainfall annuals are abundant and common species include *Gazania* (Treasure flowers) and *Leysera* (Teebos)(Mucina and Rutherford, 2006). During a botanical assessment completed for a PV plant on the same farm portion, three protected species were found on a calcrete rise, namely *Ruschia spinosa* (Beesvygie)*, Avonia albissima* (Marloth) and *Lithops hallii* (Green Soapstone) (DJEC, 2010). The vegetation was found to be dominated by a mixture of grasses and dwarf shrubs, with patches of mostly grass species on lower lying areas with deeper red apedal soils. Dominant shrubs include *Phaeoptilum spinosum* (Bloudoringbos)*, Salsola* (Tumbleweed)*, Pentzia* (African sheepbush)*, Rhigozum trichotomum* (Three thorn)*, Eriocephalus* (Kapokbos)*, Pteronia* and *Barleria* (Violet) species. Scattered individuals of mesquite *Prosopis glandulosa* (Mesquite) occur. Common grasses include *Stipagrostis ciliata* (Tall bushman grass)*, Eragrostis lehmanniana* (Lehmann lovegrass), *Aristida congesta* (Tassel three-awn grass) and *Enneapogon desvauxii* (Nine-awn pappusgrass)(DJEC, 2010).

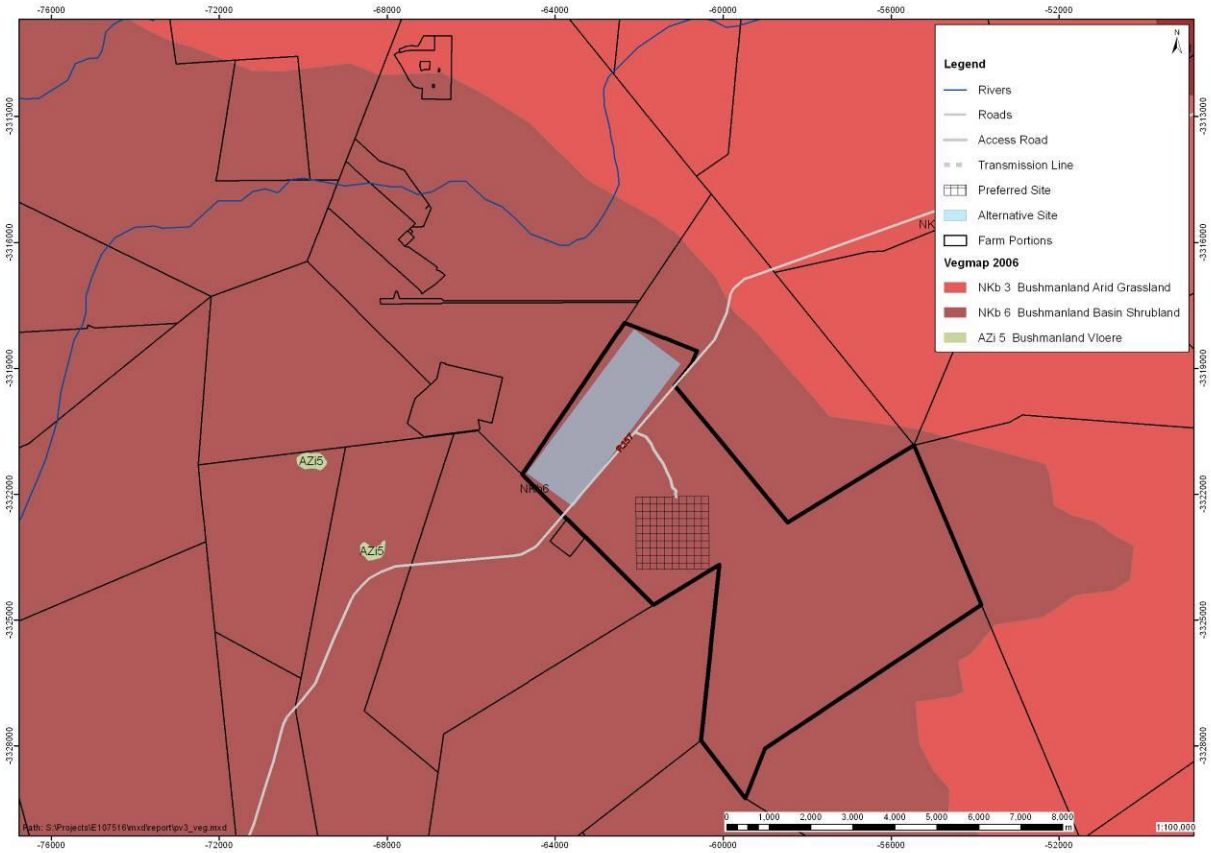

Figure 4-2: Vegetation types occurring within the area of investigation

A botanical study undertaken on a site immediately east of the proposed site found that the majority of vegetation was of low sensitivity and that drainage lines, with higher shrubs and diversity, were of moderate sensitivity.

It is likely that the vegetation on site consists of an interspersion of the above-mentioned vegetation types. A few invasive mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) bushes were also seen on the site.

Figure 4-3: Different vegetation forms found on site (taken 24/9/2011)

4.2.5 Fauna (including avifauna)

Animals likely to be found on site and the surrounding environment are likely to include small antelope, mongoose, Black-backed Jackals, Caracal, snakes, etc. Various faunal species, or evidence of these animals, were observed during a site visit on 24 September 2011, namely Black Korhaan, Meerkat, Pied Crow, Steenbok and various pipits and larks. The farmer also indicated that Black-backed Jackal, Aardvark, Aardwolf, Brown Hyaena (*Parahyaena brunnea*) and Small Spotted Cat (*Felis nigripes*) occur in the area. The Small Spotted Cat is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List[29], whilst the Brown Hyaena is listed as Near Threatened[30].

[29] http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/8542/0 (Accessed on: 31/10/2011)

Agricultural developments (habitat degradation) and predator eradication or control programmes are considered to be the main threats to these species.

As the vegetation type is considered to be Least Threatened it is unlikely that the animals occurring within this vegetation type would be rare or endangered, as large areas of habitat remain.

According to DJEC (2010) at least 215 bird species are likely to occur in the area, of which 18 red listed species and five species which are red listed and endemic were identified (see **Table 4-2**). The following birds were noted in DJEC (2010) for the site: the near endemic Ludwig Bustard, the Lanner Falcon as well as the endemic Karoo Bustard *Eupodotis vigorsii*, Northern Black Korhaan (*Afrotis Afraoides*) and Black-eared Sparrowlark (*Eremopterix australis*). The farmer has indicated that large flocks of flamingo's used to visit the pans located on his property before the rehabilitation of the Campher Dam at Kimberley.

Table 4-2: Red-listed bird species which could occur on site (endemic species are highlighted in grey)

Common name	Conservation status	Regional endemicity	Relative importance of local population[1]
Ludwig's Bustard	Vulnerable	Near-endemic	Moderate
Kori Bustard	Vulnerable	-	Moderate
Blue Crane	Vulnerable	Endemic	Low
Chestnut-banded Plover	Near-threatened	-	Low
White-backed Vulture	Vulnerable	-	Low
Black Harrier	Near-threatened	Endemic	Low
Tawny Eagle	Vulnerable	-	Moderate
Martial Eagle	Vulnerable	-	Moderate
Secretarybird	Near-threatened	-	Moderate
Lanner Falcon	Near-threatened	-	Moderate
Peregrine Falcon	Near-threatened	-	Low
Greater Flamingo	Near-threatened	-	Low
Lesser Flamingo	Near-threatened	-	Low
Black Stork	Near-threatened	-	Low
Red Lark	Vulnerabe	Endemic	Low
Sclater's Lark	Near-threatened	Endemic	Low

Source: DJEC (2010)

[30] http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/10276/0 (Accessed on: 31/10/2011)

4.2.6 Surface and groundwater

The study area falls within the arid region of South Africa. Average annual rainfall is low (189 mm) and as such it is expected that few rivers and low groundwater tables will be found in the area. The site is located within the D54D quartenary catchment of the Lower Orange River (see **Figure 4-4**). With few rivers draining the area, apart from the Orange River 42 km east of the site, endorheic (inward flowing) pans occur. Pans are an important wildlife habitat, particularly for birds (especially migratory birds), mammal species and invertebrates. Numerous small pans are located on the site (see **Figure 4-1** and **Figure 4-4**). Numerous small dry drainage lines cross the area.

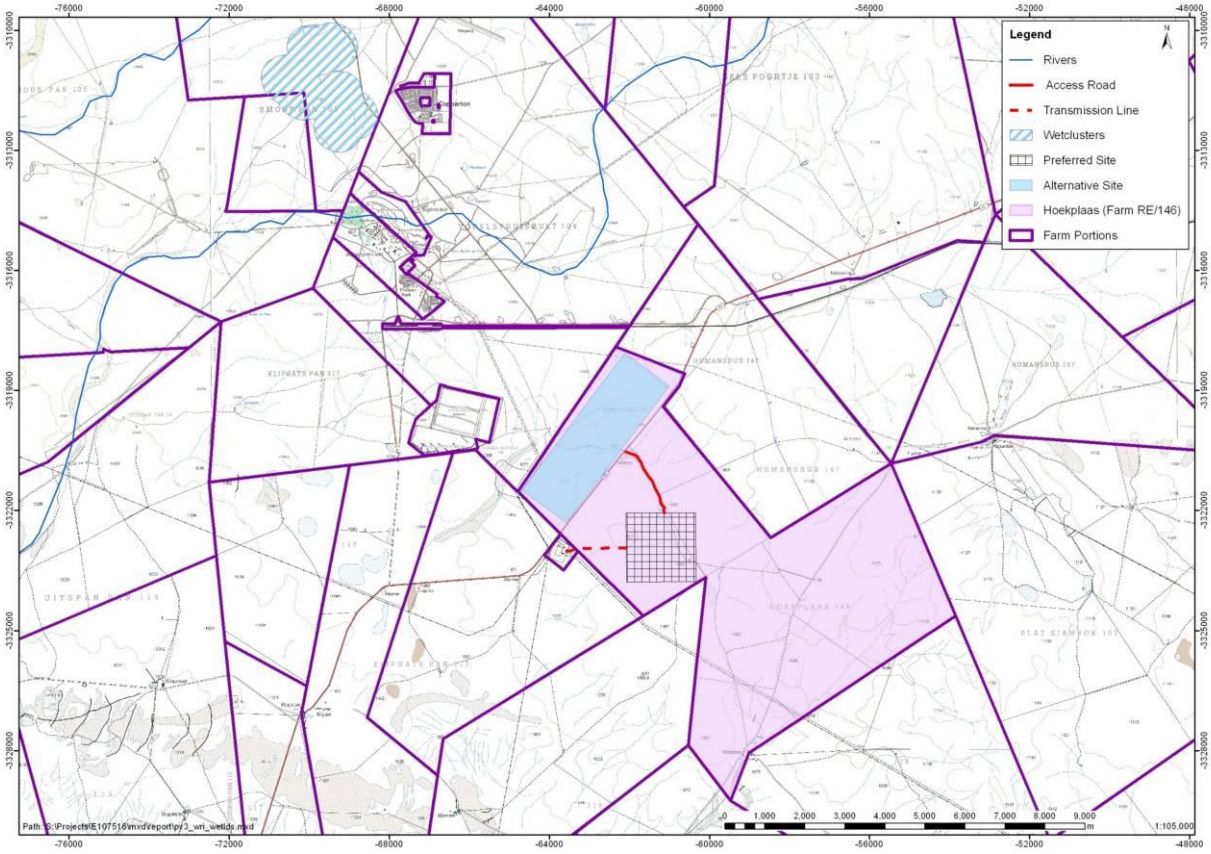

Figure 4-4: Map indicating pans and dry rivers on site and in the surrounding environment[31]

According to the Orange-Senqu River Awareness Kit website[32], groundwater forms the only source of water over much of the Lower Orange water management area (WMA), which is true of the site and surrounds. It is mainly used for rural domestic supplies, stock watering and supply to inland towns. The recharge of this groundwater is limited as a result of the afore-mentioned low annual rainfall and due to high evaporation levels (2200-2600 mm per year according to Pixley ka Sema DM IEMP, 2007). Due to the geological formations underlying the broader area borehole yields tend to be low. Anecdotal evidence indicates that for the most part

[31] Source http://196.21.45.151/imf-aims50/imf.jsp?config=http://196.21.45.151/imf-aims50/sites/BGIS/site-config_vegmap.xml&extent=14.257861964670585,-34.8363425409694,33.607737638261014,-22.000833 (Accessed on: 03/02/11)
[32] http://www.orangesenqurak.org/river/subbasins/lowerorange.aspx (accessed 02/01/11)

groundwater on the site is brak and 60-70 m deep, although shallower groundwater has also been located at 30 m[33].

4.2.7 Geology

A palaeontology report (Almond, 2011) for the adjacent proposed wind energy facility notes that the Copperton area is largely covered by aeolian sands of the Kalahari Group (Quaternary to Recent Gordonia Formation). Permocarboniferous glacially-related rocks of the Dwyka Group (Mbizane Formation) may be present locally in the subsurface. Several rocky inliers of metamorphic rocks assigned to the Proterozoic (Late Precambrian) Uitdraai Formation (Brulpan Group) and the Archaean (Early Precambrian) Spioenkop Formation (Marydale Group) also crop out in the area. The palaeontological sensitivity of all these rock units ranges from zero to low.

The main geological units in the Copperton area are:

- Precambrian basement rocks (igneous / metamorphic);
- Karoo Supergroup sediments; and
- Late Caenozoic (Quaternary to Recent) superficial deposits.

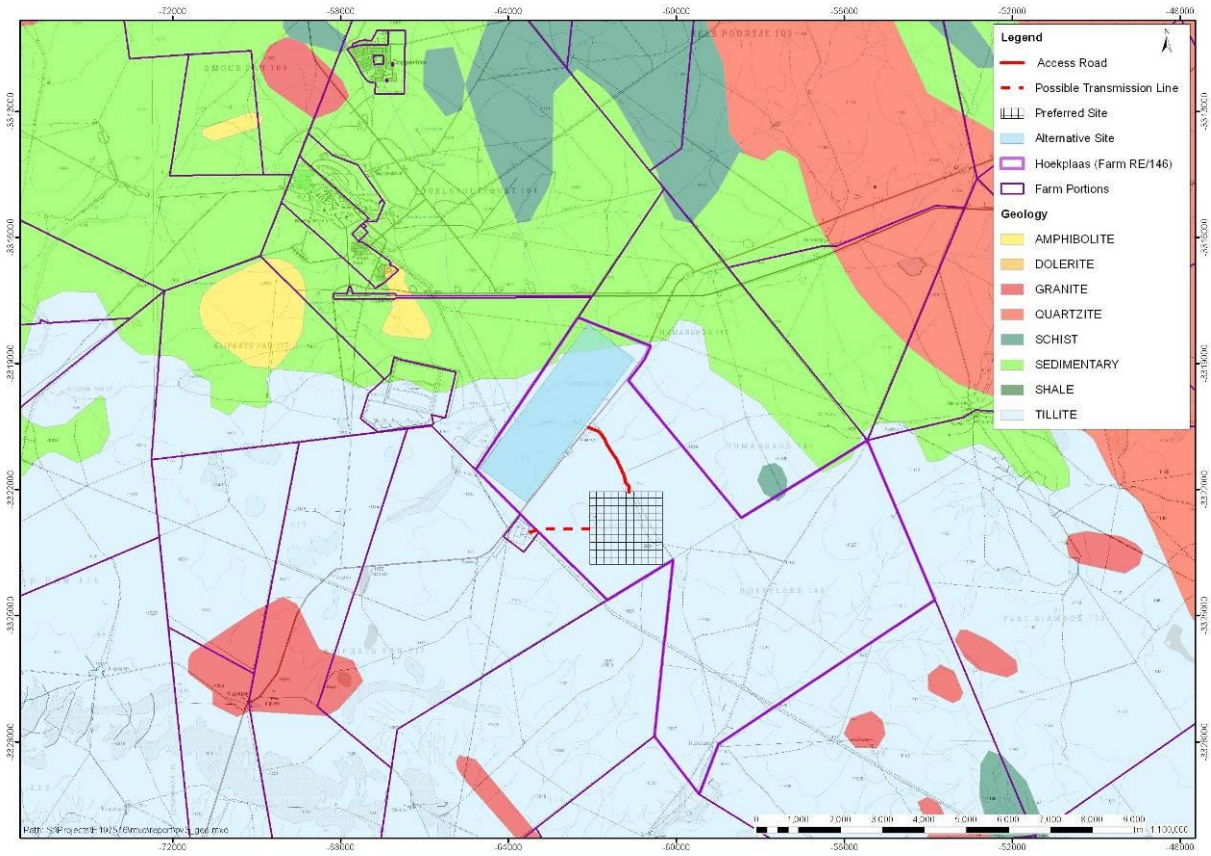

Figure 4-5: General geology of the Copperton area

[33] Pers. Comm. Mr M Meyer (landowner) and Miss L Corbett (Aurecon) 01/11/10.

Soils in the Copperton area are classified as “Soils not suitable for arable agriculture; suitable for forestry or grazing where climate permits” and Land Capability is also considered to be Poor (Pixley ka Sema DM IEMP, 2007).

According to DJEC (2010) the area consists of Karoo Sequence sandstones and shales which give rise to weak and structure-less clayey and sandy soils. Clay deposits are indicated by green-grey, blue-grey or red and purple mudstone, while the sand deposits comprise dirty sandstone in which cross-layering is characteristic. Upwards fining fluvial cycles are common in the group and fossils of reptiles are abundant, which indicate the transition to a land environment.

DJEC (2010) notes that gahnite, a dark green to yellowish zinc mineral, is found in the near area and it is thought to be a good indicator mineral for zinc mineralization. A report by Roussouw (2003) notes however, that tourmaline is more abundant in the Copperton area, rather than gahnite.

The copper-zinc mine at Copperton (opened 1972 (Roussouw, 2003) and closed 1991 by Anglovaal Mining Group), is situated in Precambrian gneisses of the Copperton Formation which is partly covered by Dwyka tillite (Aurecon, 2011).

4.2.8 Heritage and cultural material

An archaeology study undertaken for the approved proposed PV plant (PV1) (DJEC, 2010) approximately 3 km to the north of the site found large numbers of Middle Stone Age and Late Stone Age tools. These included, *inter alia*, tools in weathered chalcedony, including adzes, scrapers, retouched flakes, cores, bladelets, flakes and chunks. No evidence of any factory or workshop site, or the result of any human settlement was identified. A palaeontology study undertaken for the same project indicated that it was unlikely that fossils would be found due to the underlying geological groups.

The study also noted that no channelled views were present due to the open landscape and little vertical relief (DJEC, 2010). The heritage study stated that there were no areas of unique or rare scenic value.

An archaeological study undertaken for the proposed wind energy site (ACRM, 2011) also found artefacts from the Early, Middle and Later Stone Age in high quantities of more than 50 artefacts per square metre in places. Localised Stone Age quarries exploiting the quartzitic bedrock and boulders of vein quartz were found. Two stone kraals of approximately 6 x 5 m were also found. A pan, Modderpan, was considered to have high heritage significance due to the density of Stone Age tools and because these were still in context spatially and temporally (i.e. could be dated based on the soil layers in which they are found).

Figure 4-6: A large numbers of Middle Stone Age and Late Stone Age tools were found on the adjacent PV site. Stone age tools were also evident during a site visit in September 2011 (taken 24/9/2011)

4.2.9 Population demographics

Copperton falls within the Siyathemba Local Municipality (LM). The population of Siyathemba LM is 19 360 and this is split into 74 % Coloured, 14 % African, 11 % White and 1 % Other. The total number of households is 4 542. The main employment industry is farming, followed by mining. Agricultural activities extend to sheep, wheat, maize, lucerne, cotton, beans, vineyards and peanuts. There are 12 schools in the LM and, four clinics (one of which is in Prieska) and one hospital (taken from http://www.siyathemba.co.za/demographics.htm (accessed on 24/10/11).The site is located in a rural area and as such the population density is very low, with neighbours located kilometres away. Whilst Copperton itself was once a populated town, providing accommodation for the mine workers, this is no longer the case and the majority of houses have been demolished. A few houses are however still rented to retired farmers. According to the Pixley ka Seme DM SDF (2007) the 2001 population of Copperton (which fell under the DM's management, prior to be assimilated into the Siyathemba LM) was 37, with nine households. Employment opportunities in the immediate area stem from farming, the local accommodation lodge, Ietznietz, and Alkantpan (a weapons testing facility located to the west of Copperton).

4.2.10 Surrounding land uses

The surrounding land uses are mainly agricultural, consisting mostly of sheep grazing. At the abandoned Copperton mine a PV power generation facility is proposed by Mulilo and recently received an Environmental Authorisation (DEA Ref. No. 12/12/20/1722). Further west of the site is Alkantpan, a weapons testing range, used by many countries for weapons testing. Other proposed activities in the area include a wind energy facility to the east proposed by Plan 8 (Pty) Ltd (DEA Ref. No. 12/12/20/2099), two PV plants to the west and north of the site on farms Klipgats Pan (DEA Ref. No. 12/12/20/2501) and Struisbult (DEA Ref. No.12/12/20/2502) and wind and solar energy facilities proposed by Mainstream Renewable Energy (Pty) Ltd (DEA Ref. No. 12/12/20/2320/1 and 12/12/20/2320/2) on three of the adjacent farms (Farms 102/RE, 118/1 and 118/3) to the east, south and west.

A 1.7 km airstrip, owned by the site landowner, is also located to the north of the site and is used by a number of aeroclubs (e.g. Aeroclub SA). Copperton town, consisting of a few dwellings and a small shop is also located immediately west of the site (see **Figure 1-1**). It is proposed to move this airstrip approximately 7 km east of its current location as part of the Plan 8 wind energy facility. The site itself is used for agriculture (grazing).

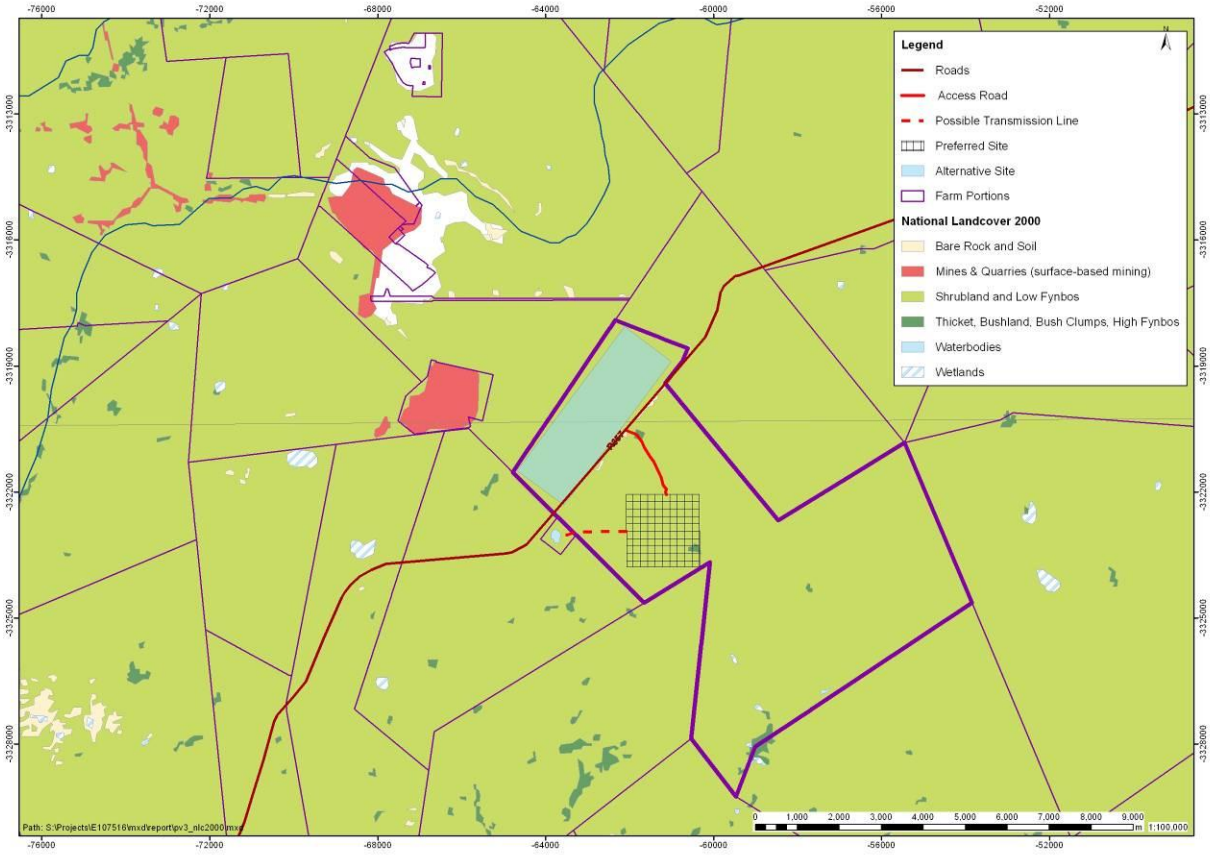

Figure 4-7: Different landuses within the vicinity of the proposed Hoekplaas PV plant

4.3 OPERATIONAL PHASE IMPACTS ON THE BIOPHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

This section of the report describes the biophysical environment and considers the long-term or operational phase impacts on the biophysical environment that may be associated with the proposed activities, including the following:

- Impact on the flora;
- Impact on fauna (including avifauna); and
- Impact on freshwater resources.

Long-term impacts on the socio-economic environment are described in **Section 4.4**, while the construction phase impacts are outlined in **Section 4.5**.

4.3.1 Impact on flora

As noted in **Section 4.2.4** the vegetation type found in the vicinity of the site, Bushmanland Basin Shrubland, is considered to be Least Threatened. Furthermore, grazing of the site is likely to have impacted on the biodiversity of the site negatively. No conservation areas are located within 10 km of the site.

The proposed project could have impacts on flora through the footprint of its infrastructure, including access roads, which would be approximately 300 ha. Disturbance to the site could also result in the increase spread of invasive vegetation such as mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*). Although the vegetation on site is not considered sensitive it is recommended that a specialist botanical assessment be undertaken, focused within the site, due to the possible extent of potential impact. The proposed ToR for this specialist study are as follows:

Undertake the requisite field work and compile a report which includes the following aspects:

- A broad description of the botanical characteristics of the site and surrounds;
- Identification and description of biodiversity patterns at community and ecosystem level (main vegetation type, plant communities in vicinity and threatened/ vulnerable ecosystems species), at species level (Red Data Book species, presence of alien species) and in terms of significant landscape features;
- An assessment of the potential direct and indirect and cumulative impacts resulting from the proposed development (including the associated infrastructure e.g. access roads and transmission lines), both on the footprint and the immediate surrounding area during construction and operation;
- Comment on whether or not biodiversity processes would be affected by the proposed project, and if so, how these would be affected;
- A detailed description of appropriate mitigation measures that can be adopted to reduce negative impacts and improve positive impacts for each phase of the project, where required; and
- Cognisance must be taken of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning guideline: “Guideline for involving biodiversity specialists in EIA processes” (Brownlie, 2005) as well as the requirements of the Botanical Society of South Africa

(BotSoc) and CapeNature in developing an approach to the botanical investigation.

It is proposed that Dr Dave MacDonald of Bergwind Botanical Surveys and Tours cc undertake the requisite assessment. Dr MacDonald is a botanical ecologist with 30 years of experience in the field of vegetation science. Dr McDonald is registered as an Ecological Scientist with the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNASP), Registration No. 400094/06.

4.3.2 Impact on fauna (including avifauna)

As noted in **Section 4.2.5** a number of small to medium sized animals are found in the vicinity of the site. These animals are likely to breed and forage on the site and surrounds. Furthermore, as noted in **Section 4.2.5**, a large number of red listed birds may be found on site.

The proposed project could disturb animals through physical barriers, and may cause animals to leave the area. Impacts from the associated infrastructure such as the transmission line could also impact on avifauna.

It is suggested that the botanical study form a proxy for the potential impact on fauna. This is based on the assumption that impacts on the botanical environment, which forms the habitat of the fauna are indicative of the impacts on fauna. As such the EAP will use the botanical study and available literature to assess the impacts on fauna. It is however recommended that a specialist avifaunal study be undertaken to ascertain potential impacts on avifauna. The proposed ToR for this specialist study are as follows:

- Undertake the requisite field work to directly assess the habitats present within the inclusive impact zone, and to determine the in situ avifauna and identify any significant bird flight corridors present in the area;
- Integrate the-site information with bird atlas (SABAP 1 & 2) and any other relevant bird data available for the general area to develop an inclusive, annotated list of the avifauna expected to occur on the site;
- Highlight Red Data species, endemic, restricted-range or other species of particular concern which may be present in the study area;
- Identify, describe and assess potential direct and indirect and cumulative impacts resulting from the proposed development both on the footprint and the immediate surrounding area during construction and operation; and
- Recommend mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate potential negative impacts on avifauna and improve positive impacts.

It is proposed that Dr Andrew Jenkins of Avisense Consulting cc undertakes the requisite assessment. He is an avifaunal specialist with a doctorate in behavioural ecology. He has extensive knowledge of energy and power line projects and experience in undertaking similar assessments.

4.3.3 Impact on surface water resources

As noted in **Section 4.2.6** surface water drains into endorheic (inward flowing) pans which are very common in the area. These pans are an important wildlife habitat, particularly for birds (especially migratory birds), mammal species and invertebrates.

The proposed project could disturb these pans and/or cause erosion to occur in sensitive areas such as these pans or drainage lines. This in turn could have an impact on the distribution of fauna and flora, as well as agricultural use. As such it is recommended that specialist Aquatic and Hydrology Impact Assessments be undertaken to ascertain potential impacts on surface water resources and features. The proposed ToR for the aquatic specialist study are as follows:

- Study all available information pertaining to surface water (streams, dams and wetlands) in close vicinity of the property;
- Undertake a site visit;
- Evaluate (a) magnitude, frequency of occurrence, duration and probability of impacts, (b) the local, regional, and national significance of predicted impacts, (c) the level of confidence in findings relating to potential impacts, (d) the degree to which the impact can be reversed, and (e) cumulative impacts that may occur as a result of the activities which include mining and associated overburden dumping;
- Recommend mitigating measures aimed at minimising the predicted negative impacts and conflicts while retaining reasonable operational efficiencies. In the event that mitigating measures are required, determine the levels of responsibility and/or financial accountability;
- Assess the potential impact of the change in site hydrology (quantity) and water chemistry (quality) on the streams, dams and wetlands during the construction and operational phases;
- List additional or required permitting and/or licensing requirements; and
- Take cognisance of the Wetland Delineation Guideline Document of the Department of Water, and if applicable the DEA&DP draft guideline: “Guideline for involving biodiversity specialists in EIA processes”[34].

The proposed ToR for the Hydrology specialist study are as follows:

- Determine the floodline through a detailed hydrological (design flood) analysis, and a detailed hydraulic (floodline) analysis to determine the extent and impact of the design floods; and
- Provide a stormwater Management Report that includes a proposed / preliminary stormwater system layout and details.

It is proposed that Richard Hirst of SiVEST undertakes the requisite assessment. Mr Hirst is the Divisional Director of the Engineering Division and has extensive experience in stormwater management. His field of specialisation includes stormwater hydrology.

[34] Brownlie, S. 2005. Guideline for involving biodiversity specialists in EIA processes: Edition 1. CSIR Report No ENV-S-C 053 F. Republic of South Africa, Provincial Government of the Western Cape, Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning.

4.4 OPERATIONAL PHASE IMPACTS ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

This section of the report describes the socio-economic environment and considers the long-term or operational phase impacts on the socio-economic environment that may be associated with the proposed activities, including the following:

- Impact on heritage resources (including palaeontology);
- Visual impacts;
- Impact on energy production;
- Impact on local economy (employment) and social conditions;
- Impact on agricultural land; and
- Impact on surrounding land uses.

4.4.1 Impact on heritage resources

Heritage resources include archaeological material (e.g. rock paintings, stone tools), palaeontological material (e.g. fossilised materials) and cultural heritage material (e.g. old graveyards, fences or ruins of buildings). Since some potential heritage material is buried, it is often only found during the construction phase of a project.

As a result of the relatively undisturbed nature of the site, and the findings of the archaeology study on an adjacent property, it is likely that archaeological or cultural material would be found on site. Furthermore, due to the underlying geology of the area there is a low possibility of finding palaeontological material. A large scale development such as the proposed project could have a negative impact on the archaeological and cultural heritage resources (including visual, landscape and sense of place impacts) by damaging or destroying such material or by requiring the material to be removed and stored *in situ*. It is therefore necessary to assess the potential impacts of the proposed development at an early stage in order to best determine the course of action for heritage resources on site. It is therefore recommended that a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), including input on archaeological, heritage and visual considerations be undertaken. Furthermore, as noted in **Section 1.2.2** "*any development … which will change the character of a site exceeding 5 000 m^2 in extent*", *"the construction of a road…powerline, pipeline…exceeding 300 m in length"* or *"the rezoning of site larger than 10 000 m^2 in extent…"* must be subjected to a heritage study in terms of NHRA, and be approved prior to the commencement of the construction process. The ToR for the assessments are provided below.

Undertake a Heritage and Archaeological Impact assessment of the site in accordance with the requirements of Section 38(3) of the NHRA which would include:

- Conducting a detailed desk-top level investigation to identify all archaeological, cultural and historic sites in the proposed development areas;
- Undertaking field work to verify results of desktop investigation;
- Document (GPS coordinates and map) all sites, objects and structures identified on the candidate sites;
- Submit the relevant application form, as required by South African Heritage Resources

Agency and Northern Cape Provincial Heritage (Boswa ya Kapa Bokone);

- Compile a report which would include:
  - Identification of archaeological, cultural and historic sites within the proposed development areas;
  - Assess the sensitivity and significance of archaeological remains in the site;
  - Evaluation of the potential impacts of construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed development on archaeological, cultural and historical resources, in terms of the scale of impact (local, regional, national), magnitude of impact (low, medium or high) and the duration of the impact (construction, up to 10 years after construction (medium term), more than 10 years after construction (long term));
  - Recommendation of mitigation measures to ameliorate any negative impacts on areas of archaeological, cultural or historical importance;
- The preparation of a heritage resources management plan which includes recommendations on the management of the objects, sites or features, and also guidelines on procedures to be implemented if previously unidentified cultural resources are uncovered during later developments in the area;
- Consideration of relevant guidelines; and
- Cognisance must be taken of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning guideline: "Guideline for involving heritage specialists in EIA processes"[35].

The HIA will be undertaken by ACO Associates which was established in late 2008 as an allied operation to the Archaeology Contracts Office at the University of Cape Town. With 22 years of accumulated experience, and having completed over 800 projects, members of ACO Associates cc are equipped to handle assignments ranging from detailed, sensitive excavations, to large-scale field surveys and assessments of historic places.

Dr John Almond of Natura Viva cc will be appointed to undertake the palaeontology desktop study. Dr Almond has a doctorate in Earth Sciences (Palaeontology) and over 25 years' experience in the palaeontology.

4.4.2 Visual impacts

The area surrounding the site is located at some 1 100 – 1 200 metres above mean sea level. The area is gently undulating to flat, with a very gradual slope east to west.

The landscape is covered in shrubs with a few sparse trees. Any tall structures, such as existing powerlines, are visible for many kilometres. The potential therefore exists that the proposed PV plant and associated infrastructure would be visible from many kilometres away. As such it is recommended that a specialist Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) be undertaken to ascertain potential impacts on visual aesthetics. The proposed ToR for this specialist study are as follows:

- Source and review baseline information and participate in the finalisation of these ToR;

[35] Winter, S. & Baumann, N. 2005. Guideline for involving heritage specialists in EIA processes: Edition 1. CSIR Report No ENV-S-C 053 E. Republic of South Africa, Provincial Government of the Western Cape, DEA&DP.

- Undertake a level 3 impact assessment to include the following areas of study for the preferred layout, Alternatives, and the 'No-go' Alternative in a Visual Impact Assessment report:
    - Identify issues raised relating to visual, aesthetic and scenic resources through any existing reports, baseline studies and framework plans, any public scoping phase, and site visits. The study must take into account the expected community response as well as the applicable South African standards;
    - Describe the receiving environment and the proposed project in terms of landscape types, landscape character and land use patterns;
    - Describe the sense of place and contributing factors, (spatial and non-spatial);
    - Establish the view catchment area, view corridors, viewpoints and receptors;
    - Determine the relative visibility or visual intrusion of the proposed project;
    - Determine the relative compatibility or conflict of the project with the surrounding land uses in terms of visibility;
    - Determine significant/sensitive receptors;
    - Indicate potential visual impacts using established criteria and including:
        - Potential lighting impacts at night;
        - Consideration of impacts at the construction phase; and
        - Consideration of the implications of the phased development.
    - Describe alternatives, mitigation measures and monitoring programs; and
    - Describe the opportunities and constraints of the alternatives.
- Use mapping and photo-montage techniques as appropriate; and
- In terms of evaluation criteria, use the criteria specific for Visual Impact Assessments listed in the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning guideline document "Guideline for involving visual and aesthetic specialists in EIA processes"[14].

It is recommended that the VIA be undertaken by Mrs Karen Hansen, a private consultant. Mrs Hansen has over 19 years' experience undertaking VIA's for various developments, including a VIA done for a site in Copperton.

4.4.3 Impact on energy production

Historical trends in electricity demand in South Africa have shown a consistent increase in demand. There are some years where the demand levels off or decreases but over the long term there is still an increase. Such a decrease in demand was seen in 2009 in line with the global recession, demand growth has since resumed. As a result, the reserve margin still remains low and Eskom is still short of capacity, a situation that is expected to continue until new base load capacity can be brought online from 2012 onwards. The reserve margin will again be constrained after 2018 should no new base load power stations be constructed. The proposed PV plant would be able to provide power to assist in meeting the energy demand within South Africa as it would come online by 2016.

Given that there is a large body of literature with regards to energy demand in South Africa, it is proposed that the EAP assess the potential impact of the proposed project on energy production in South Africa.

4.4.4 Impact on local economy (employment) and social conditions

As noted in **Section 4.2.9** the site is located in a rural area and as such the population density is very low, with neighbours located kilometres away. Employment opportunities in the immediate area stem from farming, the local accommodation lodge, Ietznietz, and Alkantpan (a weapons testing facility).

The establishment of the proposed PV plant would provide a number of direct, indirect and induced jobs. Direct jobs are created during manufacturing, construction and installation, operation and maintenance. Increased employment opportunities would allow for an improvement in social conditions for those who obtain employment. The project would also result in an increase in the revenue of the Local Municipality through increased rates and taxes. This in turn could result in an increase in municipal spending on social programmes. Due to the number of local, direct jobs which would be created and the limited additional income into the area this potential impact will be assessed by the EAP.

4.4.5 Impact on agricultural land

As noted in **Section 4.2.10** the site is used for agricultural purposes, consisting mostly of cattle grazing. The proposed PV plant would however cover a footprint area of ± 300 ha which would be fenced off to prevent damage to the panels by cattle leaning/rubbing against it. Thus 300 ha of the farm would not be available for agricultural use. However, the revenue that the landowner would receive from the proponent could be used for future agricultural improvements on the farm. As such it is recommended that a specialist Agricultural Impact Assessment be undertaken to ascertain potential impacts on agricultural potential. The proposed ToR for this specialist study are as follows:

- Compile a detailed desktop assessment for the proposed development areas;
- Broadly assess the soil and agricultural potential of the sites and receiving environment by interrogating relevant spatial and numerical datasets;
- Undertake field verification which includes a soil survey. Describe each soil sample point to form and family level according to "Soil Classification - A Taxonomic System for South Africa" as well as noting relevant soil characteristics such as clay content, depth and limiting layers.
- Combine the information gained during the soil survey with verified climate, water resource, topographic, local agricultural practices and crop data in order to provide a spatial classification of the sites based on its soil characteristics and associated agricultural potential.
- Compile a detailed soil and land use impact assessment based on the predicted impacts resulting from the proposed activities.
- Investigate direct and indirect impacts, ecosystem functionality impacts as well as the effect of cumulative impacts on the receiving environment. Describe detailed mitigation measures where necessary, in order to reduce potential impacts identified during the impact assessment.

- Compile an agricultural potential report to meet DEA and the Department of Agriculture's requirements and which will encompass the findings of the desktop assessment, soil survey, agricultural evaluation and impact assessment.

The Agricultural Impact Assessment will be undertaken by Mr Kurt Barichievy of Sivest. Mr Barichievy is a registered Professional Natural Scientist (Registration No. 400129/11) and holds a MSc. Degree in Hydrology. Mr Barichievy has undertaken a number of soil surveys and agricultural assessments, including an agricultural assessment for wind farms near Prieska.

4.4.6 Impact on surrounding land uses

As noted in **Section 4.2.10** the surrounding land is used for agricultural purposes. Two wind energy facilities and three solar energy plants (one approved) are also proposed in the vicinity (see **Section 4.2.10**). Furthermore, a 1.7 km airstrip, is located to the west of the site and is used by a number of aeroclubs (e.g. Aeroclub SA). The airstrip would however need to be relocated to Alkantpan should the Plan 8 wind energy facility receive approval.

Also, the proposed site falls within the general astronomy advantage area and is located approximately 9 km north of a SKA station (see **Figure 2-6**). The proposed development could potentially impact on the SKA project as a result of radio frequency interference and would require consultation with the SKA project team. It is proposed that this potential impact be assessed by the EAP, in consultation with SKA.

4.5 CONSTRUCTION PHASE IMPACTS ON THE BIOPHYSICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENTS

The construction phase is likely to result in a number of negative impacts on the biophysical and the social environment. These could potentially include:

- Disturbance of flora and fauna;
- Sedimentation and erosion of water ways;
- Impact on traffic;
- Storage of hazardous substances on site;
- Noise pollution; and
- Dust impact.

The significance of construction phase impacts is likely to be limited by their relatively short duration, since the construction phase should last approximately 18 - 30 months. Many of the construction phase impacts could be mitigated through the implementation of an appropriate EMP. During the EIA Phase, the construction phase impacts on the biophysical and socio-economic environment will be assessed, in terms of the methodology outlined in the Plan of Study for EIA (see **Chapter 5**). Furthermore, an EMP will be compiled as part of the EIA process, and submitted as part of the EIAR, to provide mitigation and ascribe responsibilities for many of the construction phase impacts.

4.5.1 Disturbance of flora and fauna

A number of small to medium sized animals are found in the Copperton area. These animals are likely to breed and forage on the site and surrounds.

During the construction phase the vegetation within the footprint of the activity would be cleared in order to construct the PV facility. This might result in a loss of habitat and or habitat fragmentation. It should be borne in mind that the site is currently being used for grazing which would over time have had an impact on the biodiversity.

The proposed project could disturb animals through physical barriers, which may cause animals to leave the area. It is expected that any affected fauna or avifauna would generally be mobile and would relocate during the construction phase and are likely to recolonise the area, once the construction phase has been completed and the disturbed areas rehabilitated. The significance of this impact must nonetheless be considered beyond the permanent footprint of the proposed PV plant.

4.5.2 Sedimentation and erosion

The sediment loads of any drainage depressions or pans may increase due to the excavations on the site, the laying of linear infrastructure across drainage lines and other construction related activities. This would be exacerbated during the wet season and during any intense rainfall events.

4.5.3 Impact on traffic

Construction vehicles are likely to make use of the existing roads to transport equipment and material to the construction site. These vehicles would include:

- 450 truckloads transporting 900 40-foot containers;
- Two to five digger loaders for land clearing; and
- Five to ten trucks with cranes to assemble the plant.

The impact on traffic is however not expected to be significant as these truckloads would be distributed throughout the construction period.

4.5.4 Storage of hazardous substances on site

As at any construction site, various hazardous substances are likely to be used and stored on site. These substances may include amongst other things, diesel, curing compounds, shutter oil and cement. Utilisation of such substances in close proximity to aquatic environments such as pans is of greater concern than when used in a terrestrial environment.

Use of hazardous substances at a construction site is controlled by various pieces of legislation. The management and protection of the environment would however be achieved through the implementation of an EMP, which would *inter alia* specify the storage details of hazardous compounds and the emergency procedures to follow in the event of a spillage.

4.5.5 Noise pollution

An increase in noise pollution would be expected from the operation of heavy machinery during the construction period, as well as due to the increased traffic. The severity of this impact is likely to be reduced due to the low numbers of people in close proximity to the site.

4.5.6 Dust impacts

Construction vehicles are likely to make use of the existing farm roads to transport equipment and material to the construction site. Earthworks would also be undertaken. These activities would exacerbate dust especially in the dry winter months. The dust impact would be managed through the EMP, which would include procedures for dealing with dust pollution events including watering of roads, etc.

5 PLAN OF STUDY FOR EIA

The purpose of this Chapter is to detail the Plan of Study for the EIA Phase to ensure that this EIA process satisfies the requirements of NEMA.

5.1 PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN OF STUDY FOR EIA

The Scoping process has been documented in this Scoping Report, which has identified various potential environmental impacts and project alternatives that require detailed investigation. This Plan of Study is the culmination of the Scoping Phase and its purpose is to ensure that the EIA Phase of this EIA process satisfies the requirements of NEMA. Accordingly, this Plan of Study for EIA outlines the anticipated process and products for the EIA Phase.

This Plan of Study for EIA has been compiled in terms of GN No R.33306 of 18 June 2010 of NEMA and will be submitted to DEA for their consideration.

5.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

The nature of the activity is described in detail in **Chapter 2**, but in brief includes the following:

- Construction of a 100 MW (preferred alternative) or 300 MW (alternative) PV plant;
- Associated infrastructure including:
    - Upgrade of existing internal farm roads to accommodate the construction vehicles.
    - Construction of a 132 kV transmission line to connect the proposed PV plant with Eskom's grid via the Kronos substation.

5.3 DESCRIPTION OF TASKS TO BE PERFORMED

5.3.1 Potential environmental impacts identified during Scoping

Chapter 4 has reviewed the range of potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed PV plant near Copperton in the Northern Cape. Pursuant to this scoping exercise, which was based on available literature, input from the authorities, I&APs and various specialists, a shortlist of potentially significant environmental impacts was identified for further, more detailed investigation during the EIA Phase. Specifically the following potential environmental impacts have been identified:

- Operational phase impacts on the biophysical environment:
    - Impact on the flora;
    - Impact on fauna (including avifauna); and
    - Impact on freshwater resources.
- Operational phase impacts on the socio-economic environment:
    - Impact on heritage resources (including palaeontology);

  - Visual impacts;
  - Impact on energy production;
  - Impact on local economy (employment) and social conditions;
  - Impact on agricultural land; and
  - Impact on surrounding land uses.
- Construction phase impacts on the biophysical and socio-economic environments:
  - Disturbance of flora and fauna;
  - Sedimentation and erosion of water ways;
  - Impact on traffic;
  - Storage of hazardous substances on site;
  - Noise pollution; and
  - Dust impact.

5.3.2 Method of assessing the significance of potential environmental impacts

This section outlines the proposed method for assessing the significance of the potential environmental impacts outlined above. As indicated, these include both operational and construction phase impacts.

For each impact, the EXTENT (spatial scale), MAGNITUDE and DURATION (time scale) would be described (see **Table 5-1**). These criteria would be used to ascertain the SIGNIFICANCE of the impact, firstly in the case of no mitigation and then with the most effective mitigation measure(s) in place (see **Table 5-2**). The mitigation described in the EIAR would represent the full range of plausible and pragmatic measures but does not necessarily imply that they would be implemented.[36]

The tables on the following pages show the scale used to assess these variables, and defines each of the rating categories.

[36] The applicant will be requested to indicate at the Draft EIAR stage which alternative and mitigation measures they are prepared to implement.

Table 5-1Assessment criteria for the evaluation of impacts

CRITERIA	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Extent or spatial influence of impact	**Regional**	Beyond a 10 km radius of the candidate site.
	Local	Within a 10 km radius of the candidate site.
	Site specific	On site or within 100 m of the candidate site.
Magnitude of impact (at the indicated spatial scale)	**High**	Natural and/ or social functions and/ or processes are *severely* altered
	Medium	Natural and/ or social functions and/ or processes are *notably* altered
	Low	Natural and/ or social functions and/ or processes are *slightly* altered
	Very Low	Natural and/ or social functions and/ or processes are *negligibly* altered
	Zero	Natural and/ or social functions and/ or processes remain *unaltered*
Duration of impact	**Construction period**	Up to 2 years
	Short Term	Up to 5 years after construction
	Medium Term	5-15 years after construction
	Long Term	More than 15 years after construction

The SIGNIFICANCE of an impact is derived by taking into account the temporal and spatial scales and magnitude. The means of arriving at the different significance ratings is explained in **Table 5-2**.

Table 5-2: Definition of significance ratings

SIGNIFICANCE RATINGS	LEVEL OF CRITERIA REQUIRED
High	• High magnitude with a regional extent and long term duration • High magnitude with either a regional extent and medium term duration or a local extent and long term duration • Medium magnitude with a regional extent and long term duration
Medium	• High magnitude with a local extent and medium term duration • High magnitude with a regional extent and construction period or a site specific extent and long term duration • High magnitude with either a local extent and construction period duration or a site specific extent and medium term duration • Medium magnitude with any combination of extent and duration except site specific and construction period or regional and long term • Low magnitude with a regional extent and long term duration
Low	• High magnitude with a site specific extent and construction period duration • Medium magnitude with a site specific extent and construction period duration • Low magnitude with any combination of extent and duration except site specific and construction period or regional and long term • Very low magnitude with a regional extent and long term duration
Very low	• Low magnitude with a site specific extent and construction period duration • Very low magnitude with any combination of extent and duration except regional and long term
Neutral	• Zero magnitude with any combination of extent and duration

Once the significance of an impact has been determined, the PROBABILITY of this impact occurring as well as the CONFIDENCE in the assessment of the impact would be determined using the rating systems outlined in **Table 5-3** and **Table 5-4** respectively. It is important to note that the significance of an impact should always be considered in concert with the probability of that impact occurring. Lastly, the REVERSIBILITY of the impact is estimated using the rating system outlined in **Table 5-5**.

Table 5-3: Definition of probability ratings

PROBABILITY RATINGS	CRITERIA
Definite	Estimated greater than 95 % chance of the impact occurring.
Probable	Estimated 5 to 95 % chance of the impact occurring.
Unlikely	Estimated less than 5 % chance of the impact occurring.

Table 5-4: Definition of confidence ratings

CONFIDENCE RATINGS	CRITERIA
Certain	Wealth of information on and sound understanding of the environmental factors potentially influencing the impact.
Sure	Reasonable amount of useful information on and relatively sound understanding of the environmental factors potentially influencing the impact.
Unsure	Limited useful information on and understanding of the environmental factors potentially influencing this impact.

Table 5-5: Definition of reversibility ratings

REVERSIBILITY RATINGS	CRITERIA
Irreversible	The activity will lead to an impact that is in all practical terms permanent.
Reversible	The impact is reversible within 2 years after the cause or stress is removed.

5.4 NEED FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: SPECIALIST STUDIES

In reviewing the potential environmental impacts, all impacts initially identified during the Scoping Phase have been identified as being of concern and requiring further investigation. Accordingly, it is proposed to undertake the following specialist studies, in order to address a suite of potential environmental impacts.

Study	Consultant and Organisation
Botanical assessment	Dr Dave MacDonald, Bergwind Botanical Tours and Surveys
Agriculture potential assessment	Mr Kurt Barichievy of SiVEST
Aquatic assessment Hydrology	Mr James Mackenzie, Mackenzie Ecological & Development Services Mr Richard Hirst, SiVEST
Avifauna assessment	Dr Andrew Jenkins of Avisense Consulting

HIA Archaeology Cultural heritage Palaeontology	Mr Jayson Orton of ACO Dr John Almond of Natura Viva
VIA	Mrs Karen Hansen

The ToR for these investigations as well as the identified specialists are outlined **Chapter 4**. A short summary of the various specialist consultants is given below the ToR in **Chapter 4**. CVs are available upon request.

5.5 REASONABLE PROJECT ALTERNATIVES IDENTIFIED DURING SCOPING

Chapter 2 reviewed a range of project alternatives associated with the proposed activities. Pursuant to this Scoping exercise, which was based on input from the authorities, I&APs and various specialists, a shortlist of reasonable project alternatives has been identified for further, more detailed investigation during the EIA Phase, namely:

- Location alternatives:
  - One location for the proposed wind energy facility; and
  - Electricity distribution via a 1.64 km 132 kV connection to Kronos substation.
- Activity alternatives:
  - Solar energy generation via a PV plant; and
  - "No-go" alternative to solar energy production.
- Site layout alternatives:
  - Two layout alternatives (100 MW with 300 ha footprint and 150 MW with 450 ha footprint).
- Technology alternatives:
  - One technology alternative in terms of the solar panel type (PV);
  - Single or Dual or Concentrated Dual axis tracking systems to mount the panels; and
  - Four foundation options.

Other potential alternatives were considered and screened out in **Chapter 2**. These are documented in **Section 2.3**.

5.6 THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

The purpose of the EIAR would be to undertake a comparative assessment of the relative significance of the potential environmental impacts for the proposed PV plant location and activity alternatives. The EIAR would thus include the following:

- A brief overview of the potential environmental impacts and reasonable alternatives identified during the Scoping investigation.
- A summary of the key findings of the various specialist studies as they pertain to the affected environment.

- An overview of the public participation process conducted during the compilation of the EIAR.
- A detailed assessment of the significance of the potential environmental impacts for the various project alternatives. This assessment, which would use the methodology outlined in **Section 5.3.2**, would be informed by the findings of the specialist studies, and professional judgement.
- An overview of the full range of mitigation measures including an indication of how these would influence the significance of any potential environmental impacts, together with a lifecycle EMP. The mitigation measures would be informed by the specialist studies, professional experience and comment received from the I&APs.
- A set of recommendations regarding the way forward would be provided, should any of the proposed alternatives be authorised in terms of NEMA.

5.7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The purpose of the public participation process would be to provide I&APs with adequate opportunity to have input into the environmental process. The public participation process would include the following:

5.7.1 Public comment on the Draft EIAR

Following the completion of the Draft EIAR (refer to **Section 5.6** above), it will be lodged at the Prieska (Elizabeth Vermeulen) Public Library, Ietznietz in Copperton and on Aurecon's website (www.aurecongroup.com[37]). Registered I&APs will be notified of the lodging by means of letters, and given 40 days in which to comment on the report.

All written correspondence would be in English and Afrikaans.

The public comments would be consolidated into an annexure of the EIAR. This would take the form of a CRR, which would summarise the issues raised and provide the project team's responses thereto. The draft report would also be revised in light of feedback from the public, where necessary.

5.7.2 Public comment on the Final EIAR

Once the EIAR has been finalised, it will be made available for a 21 day comment period. The report will be made available in the same locations in which the Draft EAIR was made available, and I&APs will be notified of the availability of the Final EIAR in writing. Any comments received will not be included in a CRR but will instead be collated and forwarded directly to DEA.

[37] Indicate "Current Location" as "South Africa" and follow the public participation links.

5.7.3 Opportunity for appeal

All registered I&APs would be notified in writing of the issuing of the Environmental Authorisation. They would be reminded of their right to appeal against DEA's decision to the Minister of Environmental Affairs in terms of NEMA.

5.8 PROPOSED PROGRAMME

A summary of the proposed programme is given in the table below.

Table 5-6: Proposed EIA programme

Activity	Proposed date	Deliverable
1st round of public engagement:		
• Letter to I&APs	07/11/2011	Informed I&APs
• Lodge draft SR in public venues and with Authorities	07/11/2011	DSR in libraries, websites etc.
• Focus group meeting	29/11/2011	Public engagement
• Public comment period ends	05/01/2012	Updated CRR
Submit final SR (incl. Plan of Study for EIA) to environmental authority	09/01/2012	Approved SR & Plan of Study EIA
Specialist studies	11/2012 – 02/2012	Specialist reports
2nd round of public engagement:		
• Letter to I&APs & adverts	02/2012	Informed I&APs
• Lodge draft EIAR in public venues	02/2012	Draft EIAR in libraries, website etc.
• Focus group meeting, if necessary	03/2012	Public engagement
• Public comment period ends	04/2012	Updated CRR
Submit final EIAR to environmental authority	04/2012	Environmental Authorisation

5.9 PERSONNEL

As for the Scoping phase, Aurecon's Brett Lawson would provide strategic guidance to the EIA process and Louise Corbett would undertake the management of the EIA process and, together with Franci Gresse, the requisite reporting. Mr Lawson is a certified EAPSA, while both Mr Lawson and Miss Corbett are registered as a Professional Natural Scientists with the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNSP). A short summary of these consultants is given below. CVs are available upon request.

Mr Brett Lawson spent 12 years in wildlife management and research with conservation agencies in southern and South Africa, and nine years in the more holistic field of environmental management in the National Lake Areas and with Eskom. Thereafter, Mr Lawson was one of

the founders in 1995 of Bohlweki Environmental, the first emergent environmental consultancy established in South Africa, and later started The Environmental Partnership which he relinquished in 2004 as a fully empowered environmental consultancy. He thus has considerable multi-disciplinary experience across the range of environmental sciences.

As a Project Manager, ***Miss Louise Corbett*** has a Bachelor's of Science (Hons) degree in Environmental and Geographical Science, specialising in Environmental Management, from the University of Cape Town. Miss Corbett has over five years' experience in the environmental field and has compiled and managed numerous environmental investigations including EIAs, Environmental Management Plans and Programmes throughout South Africa, including in Copperton and De Aar in the Northern Cape. Miss Corbett is the treasurer of the South African affiliate of the International Association for Impact Assessment (Western Cape Branch) and is a registered Professional Natural Scientist. Miss Corbett is currently working on, amongst other projects, three proposed wind energy facilities near Koekenaap and Komsberg in the Western Cape and Copperton in the Northern Cape.

Miss Franci Gresse is an Environmental Practitioner in the Cape Town Office. She completed a Bachelor of Science and Honours Degree in Conservation Ecology at the University of Stellenbosch. Miss Gresse has been exposed to a variety of projects, including a 24G application, basic and full environmental impact assessments, environmental sensitivity studies, environmental management plans, environmental control officer (ECO) work, pre-feasibility and feasibility studies and a catchment management strategy. Miss Gresse is currently working on, amongst other projects, a proposed PV development near Aurora, Western Cape.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

The purpose of this Chapter is to briefly summarise and conclude the Scoping Report and describe the way forward.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

As per the requirements of NEMA, this Scoping investigation has reviewed a range of project alternatives and contemplated the array of potential environmental impacts associated with the following proposed activities in Copperton, namely:

- Construction of a 100 MW (preferred alternative) or 300 MW (alternative) PV plant;
- Associated infrastructure including:
    - Upgrade of existing internal farm roads to accommodate the construction vehicles.
    - Construction of a 132 kV transmission line to connect the proposed PV plant with Eskom's grid via the Kronos substation.

The following feasible alternatives have been identified for further consideration in the EIAR:

- Location alternatives:
    - One location for the proposed wind energy facility; and
    - Electricity distribution via a 1.64 km 132 kV connection to Kronos substation.
- Activity alternatives:
    - Solar energy generation via a PV plant; and
    - "No-go" alternative to solar energy production.
- Site layout alternatives:
    - Two layout alternatives (100 MW with 300 ha footprint and 150 MW with 450 ha footprint).
- Technology alternatives:
    - One technology alternative in terms of the solar panel type (PV);
    - Single or Dual or Concentrated Dual axis tracking systems to mount the panels; and
    - Four foundation options.

Specifically the following potential environmental impacts have been identified for further consideration in the EIAR:

- Operational phase impacts on the biophysical environment:
    - Impact on flora;
    - Impact on fauna (including avifauna); and
    - Impact on freshwater resources.
- Operational phase impacts on the socio-economic environment:
    - Impact on heritage resources (including palaeontology);
    - Visual impacts;
    - Impact on energy production;
    - Impact on local economy (employment) and social conditions;

  - Impact on agricultural land; and
  - Impact on surrounding land uses.
- Construction phase impacts on the biophysical and socio-economic environments:
  - Disturbance of flora and fauna;
  - Sedimentation and erosion of water ways;
  - Impact on traffic;
  - Storage of hazardous substances on site;
  - Noise pollution; and
  - Dust impact.

The following specialist studies and specialists will be commissioned to provide more detailed information on those environmental impacts which have been identified as potentially being of most concern, and/or where insufficient information is available, namely:

Study	Consultant and Organisation
Botanical assessment	Dr Dave MacDonald, Bergwind Botanical Tours and Surveys
Agriculture potential assessment	Mr Kurt Barichievy of SiVEST
Aquatic assessment Hydrology	Mr James Mackenzie, Mackenzie Ecological & Development Services Mr Richard Hirst, SiVEST
Avifauna assessment	Dr Andrew Jenkins of Avisense Consulting
HIA Archaeology Cultural heritage Palaeontology	Mr Jayson Orton of ACO Dr John Almond of Natura Viva
VIA	Mrs Karen Hansen

The rationale for these specialist investigations and the ToR has been outlined under the relevant impacts in **Chapter 4** of this report.

The approach to the EIA Phase should be conducted in terms of the guidelines outlined in the Plan of Study for EIA in **Chapter 5**.

6.2 THE WAY FORWARD

I&APs have 40 days, until 5 January 2012, to submit their written comments on the DSR. Cognisance will be taken of all comments in compiling the final report, and the comments, together with the project team and proponent's responses thereto, will be included in the final report. Where appropriate, the report will be updated.

As is required by the NEMA EIA Regulations, I&APs must be given the opportunity to comment on all draft and final reports. Consequently, the FSR will be made available for a 21 day comment period in the same locations in which the DSR was made available. I&APs will be notified of the availability of the Final Scoping Report in writing.

Once the Final Scoping Report has been completed and all I&AP comments have been incorporated into the report, as necessary, and the client has approved the report, the report will be submitted to DEA and the Northern Cape DEANC for their review and comment, respectively. DEA will either reject the application or instruct the applicant to proceed to the EIA Phase, either as proposed in the Plan of Study for EIAR, or direct that amendments are made before continuing.

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