DACE

MCTAGGARTS PV3, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES REPORT

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The McTaggarts PV3 Basic Assessment (BA) Process was announced on Wednesday, 09 October 2019, with the release of a Background Information Document (BID) which contained information regarding the proposed development. The announcement letter and BID also served to invite Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) to register their interest in the project and to submit any comments / queries that they might have. The Basic Assessment Report was made available for review and comment from 13 November 2019 until 13 December 2019. All written comments received during the BA process to date have been included in this Comments and Responses Report (C&RR).

NOTE:

In terms of the EIA Regulations of December 2014 (as amended on 07 April 2017, Regulation 44(1)), please note that all comments to be raised, and responses provided at the various Focus Group Meetings to be held will be included in **Appendix C7** of the final BA Report.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS

ВА	Basic Assessment	BAR	Basic Assessment Report
BID	Background Information Document	BGG	Burial Grounds and Graves
C&RR	Comments and Responses Report	DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation	EAP	Environmental Assessment Practitioner
ECO	Environmental Control Officer	EMPr	Environmental Management Programme
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act	NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act
SACAA	South African Civil Aviation Authority	SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
SCC	Species of Conservation Concern	SIA	Social Impact Assessment
WMA	Water Management Area		

1. COMMENTS RECEIVED: Basic Assessment Report

1.1. Organs of State

NO.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	RESPONSE
1.	Good day, please find the SACAA procedure and	Lizell Stroh	The SACAA procedure and process link was forwarded to the
	processes on the CAA website, in providing approval to	Obstacle Inspector	Applicant for attention and an application was subsequently
	the proposed project.	PANS-OPS Section	submitted to SACAA on 3 December 2019.
	e-mail links provided	Air Navigation Services	
		Department	The .kml (Google Earth) was submitted via e-mail on 19 November
	Kindly provide a .kml (Google Earth) file reflecting the	SACAA	2019. Proof of submission in included in Appendix C4 and
	footprint of the proposed development site <u>including</u>		AppendixC6 of the final BA Report.
	the proposed overhead electric power line route that	E-mail: 13-11-2019	
	will evacuate the generated power to the national		The McTaggarts PV3 development will include solar PV panels that
	grid.		will have an installed height of 3.5m. These will be the highest
	Also indicate the highest structure of the project & the Overhead electric power transmission line.		structures for the solar PV project.
	·		The Khunab Solar Grid Connection project, which is being
			assessed as part of a separate Basic Assessment Process, will
			consist of a 132kV powerline with a height of up to 32m.
2.	This letter serves to inform you that the following	Zesipho	Landowner consent from the landowner of the affected
	information must be included to the Final BAR:	Makhosayafana	properties for the McTaggarts PV3 development is included in
	A THE THIRD THE STATE OF THE ST	Case Officer	Appendix 3 of the updated application form submitted with the
	a) The report indicates that the applicant has entered	DEA	Final BA Report to the Department.
	into a notarial lease agreement with the landowner.		
	As such, you are requested to provide written	Letter: 10-12-2019	
	landowner consent.		
3.	b) The 21 digit surveyor general code, physical address/		The 21-digit Surveyor General Code for the properties affected by
	farm names, or the coordinates of the boundary of		the development of the McTaggarts PV3 solar PV facility is
	property for this proposed development have not		included in the updated Application for Environmental
	been included in the application form. You are		Authorisation submitted to the Department with the Final BA
	requested to ensure that these form part of the		Report.
	application form submitted with the final BAR.		

NO.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	RESPONSE
4.	c) Please ensure that the Specialist Declarations for the		The required specialist declarations requested by the Department
	following Specialist studies are submitted:		have been included within Appendix N of the Final BA Report.
	Fauna and Flora Specialist Report (Please submit		
	the declaration by the specialist who prepared		
	the report)		
	Social Impact Assessment study (Independent		
	Review Specialist)		
	Avifauna Specialist Impact Assessment Report		
	Aquatic Impact Assessment report		
5.	d) Details of the Specialist that prepared the Aquatic		The specialist declaration and the curriculum vitae of the specialist
	Impact Assessment study, including a curriculum		that undertook the Aquatic Impact Assessment (Appendix F) has
	vitae must be provided,		been included in Appendix N of the Final BA Report. The details of
			the specialist are included in Table 1.3 of Chapter 1, as well as
			Appendix F and Appendix N.
6.	e) Please ensure that all relevant listed activities are		All relevant listed activities for McTaggarts PV3, including Activity
	applied for, are specific and that it can be linked to		14 of Listing Notice 1 (GN R327) have been described in detail and
	the development activity or infrastructure as		are included within the updated Application for Environmental
	described in the project description. It is noted that		Authorisation which has been submitted with the Final BA Report.
	you have applied for Activity 14 of listing notice 1 (GN		
	R 983, as amended) which includes the storage of		Table 6.1 of Chapter 6 has also been updated to include a
	dangerous goods. Please provide a description of		description of the dangerous goods involved with the proposed
	the dangerous good involved in this case. Please		project.
	note that any significant new information may need		
	to be subject to public consultation. Your attention is		No new significant information has been included in the Final BA
	drawn to Regulation 19(1)(b) of GN R. 982, as		Report therefore no additional Public Participation is required for
	amended, in this regard.		the project.
7.	f) Should the proposed activity not include operational		McTaggarts PV3 will be bid into the REIPPP Programme bidding
	aspects (per the wording of the listed activities),		rounds of the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy which
	please ensure that the BAR includes the period for		are yet to be announced by Government; however, should the
	which the environmental authorisation is required,		project be successful in the bidding process, the project will have
	the date on which the activity will be concluded,		an operational lifespan of 20 years.
	and the post construction monitoring requirements		

NO.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	RESPONSE
	finalised, per Appendix 1(3)(1)(q) of GN R. 982, as		
	amended.		
8.	g) If the activities applied for in the application form		An updated Application for Environmental Authorisation has been
	differ from those mentioned in the final BAR, an		submitted with the Final BA Report. The updated Application
	amended application form must be submitted.		includes the correct listed activities for the project which require
	Please note that the Department's application form		environmental authorisation and are the same listed activities
	template has been amended and can be		included in Table 6.1 of Chapter 6 of the Final BA Report.
	downloaded from the following link		
	https://www.environment.00v.zaidocuments/forms		
9.	h) The Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP)		An adequate motivation of applicability for each listed activity
	must ensure that an adequate motivation on the		that is triggered by the proposed development of McTaggarts PV3
	applicability of each listed activity that triggers the		has been included in the updated Application for Environmental
	proposed development is provided. The		Authorisation submitted with the Final BA Report.
	applicability of each activity against the actual		
	threshold for the proposed development must be		Table 2.1 of Chapter 2 of the Final BA Report includes the
	verified. The Final BAR must be clear on the total		confirmed capacity of the facility on-site substation.
	voltage output for the substation.		
10.	i) Please ensure that all issues raised and comments		Comments received from I&APs and organs of state during the 30-
	received during the circulation of the BAR from		day public review period are included in Appendix C6 of the final
	registered I&APs and organs of state which have		BA Report and these comments have been incorporated into this
	jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are		C&RR attached as Appendix C8 to the Final BA Report. Where
	adequately addressed in the final BAR, (including		applicable, comments received have been utilised in the
	comments from this Department's Biodiversity		preparation and finalisation of the BA Report.
	Section). Proof of correspondence with the various		
	stakeholders must be included in the final BAR.		The letter in which the Department's Biodiversity Section
	Should you be unable to obtain comments, proof of		comments were received is included in Appendix C6 of the Final
	the attempts that were made to obtain comments		BA Report and captured in the C&RR, and Section 1.1. comments
	must be submitted to the Department. The Public		18 to 24 in this C&RR.
	Participation Process must be conducted in terms of		
	Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA		Proof of correspondence with various stakeholders is attached in
	Regulations 2014.		Appendix C4 (organs of state correspondence) and Appendix C5
			(I&AP correspondence) of the Final BA Report. Proof of attempts

NO.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	RESPONSE
			that were made to obtain comments is attached in Appendix C4
			(organs of state correspondence) and Appendix C5 (I&AP
			correspondence) of the Final BA Report.
			The Public Participation Process undertaken for McTaggarts PV2 is complaint with regulations, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (GNR326). It can be confirmed that the public participation process has been undertaken in accordance with the relevant regulations of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended).
			» Regulation 39 (GNR326):
			The applicant has entered into a notarial lease agreement with
			the landowner of the properties where the McTaggarts PV3
			development will be located. The proof of landowner consent is
			included in Appendix 3 of the updated application form
			submitted to the Department with the Final BA Report.
			» Regulation 40 (GNR326):
			The BA Report was made available for a 30-day review period
			from, 13 November to 13 December 2019. The BA Report was also
			distributed to the Competent Authority and Commenting
			Authority, relevant Organs of State and State Departments and
			the Report was made available for all potential and registered
			Interested and Affected Parties at the Dawid Kruiper Public Library in Upington and at the Keimoes Libary Hall in Keimoes. The BA
			Report was also made available to potential interested and
			affected parties for download from Savannah Environmental's
			website:
			» https://www.savannahsa.com/public-documents/energy-
			generation/01khunab-solar-development-mctaggarts-pv3/

NO.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	RESPONSE
			 Regulation 41 (GNR326): Site Notices were placed around conspicuous locations of the boundaries of the affected property on 16 October 2019 and a newspaper advert was placed in the Gemsbok newspaper on 13 November 2019. The newspaper tear sheet and proof of the site notice placement is included in Appendix C2 of the Final BA Report. Regulation 42 (GNR326): Appendix C1 of the Final BA Report contains a database of Interested and Affected Parties, Organs of State and State Departments which were registered on the project and issued comments included in Appendix C6 of the Final BA Report.
			» Regulation 43 (GNR 326): All comments received from registered Interested and Affected Parties including Organs of State and State Departments that had jurisdiction on the project are included in Appendix C6 of the Final BA Report.
			» Regulation 44 (GNR 326): Comments received from registered Interested and Affected Parties included in Appendix C6 of the Final BA Report have been captured verbatim and responded to within this Comments and Responses Report (CR&R) which is included in the Final BA Report as Appendix C8. In addition, minutes from the Focus Group and Public Meeting held in Upington and Kalksloot on 28 November 2019 are included in the Final BA Report as Appendix C7.

NO.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	RESPONSE
11.	j) A Comments and Response (C&R) report must be submitted with the final BAR. The C&R report must incorporate all comments received for this development. Please note that a response such as "Noted" is not regarded as an adequate response to I&APs' comments.		Comments from Organs of State and I&APs received, with the responses from the EAP and/or Applicant (as applicable) are included in this C&RR and attached as Appendix C8 to the final BA Report. Comments captured are <i>verbatim</i> and have not been summarised. Detailed responses to the comments have been provided by the EAP, Applicant and/or Specialists as dictated by the comment.
12.	k) Please ensure that a copy of the newspaper advertisement is included in the final BAR, as indicated in the draft BAR.		The tear sheet announcing the BAR availability and invitation to the public meeting is included in Appendix C2 of the Final BA Report.
13.	I) Please ensure that a description of all identified alternatives for the proposed activity that are feasible and reasonable, including the advantages and disadvantages that the proposed activity or alternatives will have on the environment and on the community that may be affected by the activity as per Appendix 1 (2) (e) and 3 (1) (h) (i) of GN R.982 of 2014. Alternatively, you should submit written proof of an investigation and motivation if no reasonable or		Chapter 3 of the Final BA Report includes a detailed description of the alternatives taken into consideration and assessed for the development of McTaggarts PV3. Where no feasible alternatives are applicable to the project, motivation has been provided in Chapter 3 of the final BA Report. The advantages and disadvantages of the project are discussed in Chapter 8 and Chapter 10 of the final BA Report.
14.	feasible alternatives exist in terms of Appendix 1. m) The final BAR must provide an assessment of the impacts and mitigation measures for each of the listed activities applied for.		Chapter 8 of the Final BA Report includes an impact assessment of the identified environmental and social impacts and mitigation measures applicable to each of the listed activities applied for within the BA process. Furthermore, the EMPr (Appendix M of the Final BA Report) includes mitigation measures and actions that the applicant will be required to implement during each of the project phases of the McTaggarts PV3 development in order to ensure that all impacts are managed at acceptable levels.

NO.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	RESPONSE
15.	n) Cumulative impacts of similar type of developments in the area must form part of the studies that must be assessed as part of the final BAR process.		Chapter 9 of the Final BA Report contains an assessment of the cumulative impacts of similar developments (i.e. solar energy developments) within the vicinity of the broader study area assessed for the development of McTaggarts PV3. Furthermore, the specialist studies included in the Final BA Report (Appendix D-K) includes an assessment of cumulative impacts through the consideration of the development of McTaggarts PV3 and other similar type developments in the area.
			A cumulative map indicating the locations of similar development within a 30km radius of McTaggarts PV3 is included as Figure 9.1 of the Final BA Report.
16.	 o) In terms of Appendix 1 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, the report must include an undertaking under oath or affirmation by the EAP in relation to: the correctness of the information provided in the reports; the inclusion of comments and inputs from stakeholders and I&APs the inclusion of inputs and recommendations from the specialist reports where relevant; any information provided by the EAP to interested and affected parties; and responses by the EAP to comments or inputs made by interested or affected parties. 		Appendix N of the Final BA Report includes an undertaking under oath and affirmation from Jo-Anne Thomas, who is the EAP on the McTaggarts PV3 project.
17.	p) In terms of Appendix 1 (3) (1) (a) of the EIA Regulations 2014, the details of: (i) the EAP who prepared the report; and (ii) the expertise of the EAP to carry out Scoping and Environmental Impact assessment procedures; must be submitted.		The details of the EAP, Jo-Anne Thomas and her expertise to carry out Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment procedures is included in section 1.4 of Chapter 1 of the Final BA Report. Furthermore, a comprehensive curriculum vitae detailing the projects Jo-Anne Thomas has worked on as an EAP is included as Appendix N of the Final BA Report.

NO.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	RESPONSE
18.	General The final BAR must comply with the requirements of this letter and Appendix 1, 4 and 6 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended. Should the BAR fail to comply with the requirements of this comment letter, Appendix 1, 4 and 6 of the EIA Regulations as amended, environmental authorisation may be refused.		The Final BA Report submitted to the Department has been undertaken in line with the scope of assessment and content of a BA Report as detailed in Appendix 1 of the EIA Regulations, 2014. Refer to sections 1.2, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, 8.1, 9.1 and 10.1 of the Final BA Report. The EMPr and the Specialist submitted with Final BA Report to the Department are compliant with Appendix 4 and 6 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended.
19.	Should you fail to meet any of the timeframes stipulated in Regulation 19 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, your application will lapse.		The EAP acknowledges the prescribed timeframes in terms of Regulation 45 of the EIA Regulations, 2014. It is noted that should the applicant fail to meet any of the timeframes prescribed the application will lapse. The Final BA Report will be submitted to the Department well within the prescribed timeframe.
20.	You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an environmental authorisation being granted by the Department.		The applicant acknowledged Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act and penalties thereof should it not be adhered to.
21.	The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation has reviewed and evaluated the aforementioned report and its specialist's studies. The Directorate does not have any objections to the proposed development and in order to achieve the overall objective of minimizing the loss of Biodiversity the following recommendations must be included in the Final Basic Assessment Report (FBAR): • A pre-construction walk-through of the final development footprint must be undertaken in order to locate and identify species of conservation concern that can be translocated;	Mmatlala Rabothata Control Biodiversity Officer: Biodiversity Conservation DEA Letter: 13-12-2019	Objective 2 (ensure that the relevant permits and plans are in place to manage impacts on the environment) of the Planning and Design Phase EMPr (Appendix M) includes the undertaking of a pre-construction walk through of the facility layout and the main access road for the identification and translocation of species of conservation concern.

NO.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	RESPONSE
22.	A detailed site Rehabilitation Plan must be developed and all disturbed and cleared areas be rehabilitated with indigenous perennial shrubs and grasses from the local area;		Objective 7 (minimise impacts on surface water features) of the Construction Phase EMPr (Appendix M) requires the Contractor to implement a comprehensive rehabilitation plan.
			Objective 1 (ensure appropriate rehabilitation of disturbed areas such that residual environmental impacts are remedied or curtailed) of the Rehabilitation EMPr (Appendix M) provides for the implementation of a Revegetation and Rehabilitation which requires the use of indigenous vegetation during the rehabilitation phase of the project (refer to Appendix E of the EMPr submitted with the Final BA Report).
23.	If several plant Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) which are protected are identified in the study area, a search and rescue exercise to remove and relocate them must be undertaken by a professional and qualified ecologist;		Objective 2 (ensure that the relevant permits and plans are in place to manage impacts on the environment) of the Design and Planning Phase EMPr (Appendix M) requires the undertaking of a search and rescue operation for species of concern prior to the commencement of construction activities. The requirement also states that should there be any affected species that cannot be avoided, these must be translocated to a suitable area; however, this does not include woody plant species listed under the National Forest Act (Act No. 84 of 1989) which will require a permit from DAFF prior to their destruction or removal.
24.	An Alien Invasive Species Eradication Plan must be implemented, in order to reduce the establishment and spread of alien plant species within the development footprint;		Objective 2 (ensure that the relevant permits and plans are in place to manage impacts on the environment) of the Design and Planning Phase EMPr (Appendix M) requires the development and implementation of the invasive alien plants eradication control plan as included as Appendix C of the EMPr. Objective 6 (minimise the establishment and spread of alien invasive plants) of the Construction Phase EMPr provides for the eradication of all weeds and alien invasive plants as far as practically possible.

NO.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	RESPONSE
25.	Alien plants species within the development footprint must be regularly monitored and regular alien clearing must be conducted using the best-practice methods for the species concerned;		Objective 6 (minimise the establishment and spread of alien invasive plants) of the Construction Phase EMPr requires on-going monitoring of disturbed areas by the Contractor's EO for invasive alien plant species for the duration of the Construction Phase. Objective 6 further makes provision for the undertaking of an annual audit of the development footprint and immediate surroundings by a qualified botanist for the presence of invasive alien plant species.
26.	Any protected plant species must not be removed or damaged prior to obtaining permit from relevant National or Provincial Authorities; and		Objective 2 (ensure that the relevant permits and plans are in place to manage impacts on the environment) of the Design and Planning Phase EMPr (Appendix M) requires the applicant to obtain the relevant permits required for the removal of plant species protected under the relevant National and Provincial legislations.
27.	High sensitivity habitats such as major drainage lines must be avoided and buffered.		The layout assessed for McTaggarts PV3 takes into consideration the receiving environment present in the development area. Prior to the finalisation of the layout assessed in this BA Report, the proponent consulted the ecological, avifauna and freshwater specialists to delineate areas of environmental sensitivity within the broader study area in order ensure that the placement of the solar PV facility and the associated infrastructure does not have a significant and negative impact on the environment and is appropriately placed within the broader study area. Where infringement occurs within areas of a high sensitivity, these infringements have been considered acceptable by the relevant specialists.
28.	I have noted two new cases on SAHRIS from this profile.	Natasha Higgitt Heritage Officer	The project team encountered technical difficulties in submitting the BA Report and appendices on SAHRIS as a result of the website
	Case ID 14645 - I note that the Public Review period is from the 13 November to the 13 December 2019. As the application has only been submitted today, 3 December	SAHRA E-mail: 03-12-2019	being down; however, SAHRA's message was acknowledged and informed that once the team receives SAHRA's final written

NO.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	RESPONSE
	2019, as per the NEMA EIA regulations, SAHRA has 30		comments before or on 24 January 2019, it will be submitted to the
	days in which to provide comment. Additionally, the 15		DEA after the submission of the Final BA Report.
	December to the 5 January are to be excluded from the		
	Public Review period as per NEMA regulations.		
	Case ID 14590 - I note that the application was created		
	on the 19 November 2019, however, the status of the		
	case was only changed to SUBMITTED today the 3		
	December 2019.		
	Thus, SAHRA will provide comments on both of these		
	cases before the 24 January 2020. SAHRA recommends		
	that you apply for an extension of the EA process in terms		
	of section 19(1)b of the NEMA regulations in order for		
	SAHRA to provide comment.		
	Please acknowledge receipt of this message and		
	confirm the process going forward. This message is kept		
	on permanent record linked to the case tracker of the		
	cases.		

2. COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING BASIC ASSESSMENT ANNOUNCEMENT PHASE

2.1. Organs of State

NO.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	RESPONSE
1.	Water use authorisation required if within regulated	Pieter Ackermann	It was determined that the proposed project falls within the Lower
	area.	Chief Landscape	Orange WMA (WMA 14) and the relevant commenting Official has
		Architect	been identified and has received a copy of the BA Report for
		DWS	review and written comments.
		E-mail: 15-10-2019	

2.2. Stakeholders and I&APs

NO.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	RESPONSE
1.	Requested locality map.	Francois Theron	The locality map was submitted to the I&AP via email on 05
		Manager: Blue Dot	September 2019, as requested.
		Properties 567 (Pty) Ltd	
		Telephonic: 04-09-2019	
2.	Awaiting BID before submitting comments regarding	Francois Theron	The BID and BA process notification was submitted via email to the
	the proposed project or on the SIA. In principle, no	Manager: Blue Dot	I&AP on 09 October 2019 (refer to Appendix C5). The project team
	issues.	Properties 567 (Pty) Ltd	await submission of written comment.
		Telephonic: 09-09-2019	
3.	No problem with proposed project and no inputs into	Botha du Toit	It is acknowledged that the adjacent landowner has no objection
	the SIA.	Landowner	to the proposed project or any comments pertaining thereto.
		Farm Dyson's Klip	
		Telephonic: 09-09-2019	
4.	No problem with proposed project and no inputs into	Willem Louw	It is acknowledged that the adjacent landowner has no objection
	the SIA.	Landowner	to the proposed project or any comments pertaining thereto.
		Tungsten Lodge	
		Telephonic: 09-09-2019	