MCTAGGARTS PV3 (PTY) LTD

THE PROPOSED MCTAGGARTS PV3, NEAR UPINGTON IN THE NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SEPTEMBER 2019

Prepared by:
Environmental Planning and Design
P.O. Box 50910,
Musgrave Road,
4062

Tel: 083 703 2995
Email: jon@enviroconsult.co.za

Prepared for:
Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd
1st Floor, Block 2, 5 Woodlands Drive
Office Park
Cnr Woodlands Drive & Western Service
Road
Woodmead
2191

Tel: 011 656 3237
Fax: 086 684 0547
Email: lisa.o@savannahsa.com

PREPARED BY

PO BOX 50910, MUSGRAVE ROAD, 4062, SOUTH AFRICA

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL

This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) study forms part of the Basic Assessment process that is being undertaken for the proposed McTaggarts PV3 project by Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd on behalf of McTaggarts PV3 (Pty) Ltd.

In terms of the amended National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) Act No. 107 of 1998, the proposed development requires environmental authorisation. A key impact to be assessed comprises the visual impact that the facility will have on surrounding areas.

This LVIA Report has been prepared for inclusion in the project Basic Assessment Report.

1.2 PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed solar photovoltaic (PV) Facility will be located on the following properties:

- Portion 3 of the Farm McTaggarts Camp No. 453; and
- Portion 12 of the Farm Klip Punt 452.

The site is located approximately 14.5km southwest of Upington within the Ka! Garib Local Municipality and the ZF Mgcawu District Municipality in the Northern Cape Province. The site borders the Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality. **(Map 1: Site Location).**

No site alternatives are under consideration for the development of McTaggarts PV3.

1.3 BACKGROUND OF SPECIALIST

Jon Marshall qualified as a Landscape Architect in 1978. He also has extensive experience of Environmental Impact Assessment. Jon has been involved in Visual Impact Assessment over a period of approximately 30 years. He has developed the necessary computer skills to prepare viewshed analysis and three dimensional modelling to illustrate impact assessments. He has undertaken visual impact assessments for tourism development, major buildings, mining projects, industrial development, infrastructure and renewable energy projects. He has been involved in the preparation of visual guidelines for large scale developments.

A brief Curriculum Vitae outlining relevant projects is included as **Appendix I.**

1.4 BRIEF AND RELEVANT GUIDELINES

The brief is to assess the visual impact of the proposed project.

Visual impact assessment work will be undertaken in accordance with the following guideline documents;

a. The Government of the Western Cape Guideline for Involving Visual and Aesthetic Specialists in EIA Processes (Western Cape Guideline), which is the only local relevant guideline, setting various levels of assessment subject to the nature of the proposed development and surrounding landscape, and

b. The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (UK) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which provides detail of international best practice (UK Guidelines).

Refer to **Appendix II** for the Western Cape Guideline.

Together these documents provide a basis for the level and approach of a VIA as well as the necessary tools for assessment and making an assessment legible to stakeholders.

1.5 LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The following limitations and assumptions should be noted:

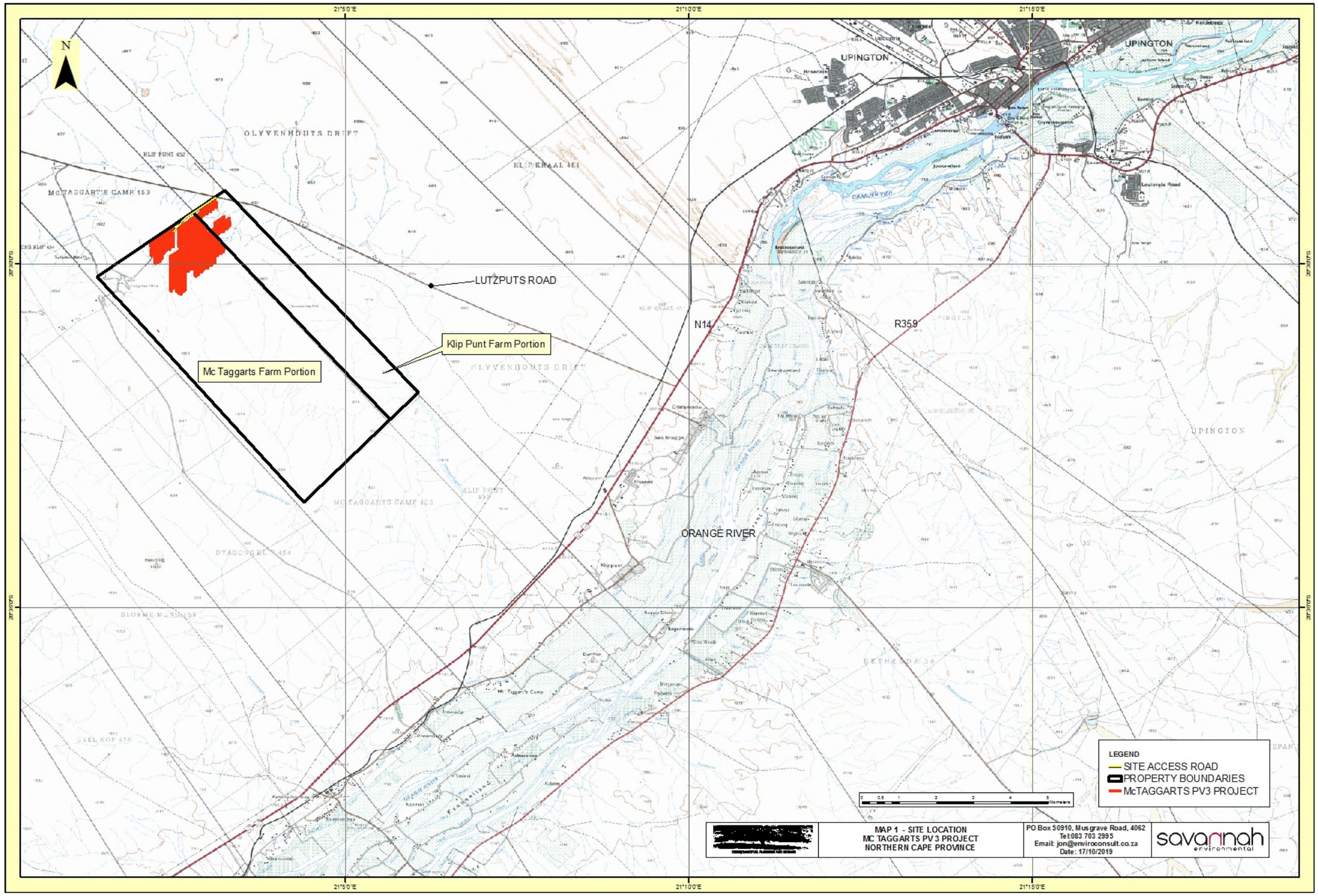
In the assessment tables the subjective judgement as to whether an impact is negative or positive is based on the assumption that the majority of people are likely to prefer to view a natural or a rural landscape than an industrial landscape.

A site visit was undertaken over a two day period (24th – 25th June 2019) to verify the likely visibility of the proposed development, the nature of the affected landscape and affected receptors.

The site visit was planned to ensure that weather conditions were clear providing maximum visibility.

The timing of photography was planned to ensure that the sun was as far as possible behind the photographer to ensure that as much detail as possible was recorded in the photographs.

The approximate extent of the development visible from each viewpoint as indicated in Section 5.3 has been approximated by measuring on plan the angle of the view that the development occupies given that each view was taken with a 28mm lens which has an approximate angle of vision of just over 74°. This has been cross referenced with known land marks.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OLYVENHOUTS DRIFT
KLIP PUNT 452
MC TAGGARTS CAMP 453
KLIP KRAAL 451
LUTZPUTS ROAD
Klip Punt Farm Portion
Mc Taggarts Farm Portion
N14
R359
ORANGE RIVER
DYASONSKLOOF 454
BLOMME MUNDJES 458
GEEL KOP 456
Louisvale Road
Mc Taggart's Camp
LEGEND
SITE ACCESS ROAD
PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
McTAGGARTS PV3 PROJECT
MAP 1 - SITE LOCATION
MC TAGGARTS PV 3 PROJECT
NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE
PO Box 50910, Musgrave Road, 4062
Tel:083 703 2995
Email: jon@enviroconsult.co.za
Date: 17/10/2019
savannah environmental

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 MOTIVATION AND PROJECT CONTEXT

Refer to **Map 2, Project Context**

In response to the Department of Energy's requirement for renewable energy generation projects, the applicant is proposing the establishment of a PV solar energy generation facility with a generating capacity of up to 75MW.

Considering the impact that carbon emissions from existing coal-fired power stations have on the environment, PV panels are designed to operate with low maintenance and no ongoing carbon emissions for more than 20 years.

The project is proposed to be part of the Department of Energy's (DoE) Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP).

The area within which the project is proposed has been identified as a key area for renewable energy generation by the South African Department of Environmental Affairs in their strategic assessment which identifies seven Renewable Energy Development Zones (REDZ). The area in which this project is located is the Upington REDZ (Zone 7).

The objective of this strategic assessment is to focus renewable energy projects within the most suitable areas. This also has the benefit of ensuring that less suitable areas are likely to be relatively undeveloped.

Currently within a 30km radius of the proposed project property there are fourteen other properties on which renewable energy projects are proposed. These consist of both Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) Projects as well as solar photovoltaic (PV) projects.

There is one existing CSP project (Khi Solar One) immediately to the southwest of the development area.

There are two other currently proposed projects that cross the broader study area (McTaggarts PV 1 and McTaggarts PV 2). In addition, there is one solar project currently proposed on the adjacent site to the east (Portion 12 of Farm Klip Punt 452), known as Klip Punt PV1.

There are also two authorised projects (Sirius Solar PV Projects 1 and 2) on an adjacent property to the south (Remaining Extent of Farm Tungsten Lodge 6) one of which (Sirius PV Project 1) was under construction at the time of reporting. There are an additional two projects (Sirius PV Projects 3 and 4) on the same site that at the time of reporting were undergoing a BA process.

The number of renewable energy projects in the vicinity of the proposed project has resulted in the development of both strategic high voltage electrical infrastructure including the Upington MTS as well as power line connections to individual renewable energy projects.

2.2 DESCRIPTION

Refer to **Map 3, Site Layout**

A development area (located within the briader study area which consists of the Portion 12 of the Farm Klip Punt 452 and Portion 3 of the Farm McTaggarts Camp) with an extent of ~260ha has been identified by McTaggarts PV3 (Pty) Ltd as a technically suitable site for the development of a solar PV facility with a contracted capacity of up to 75MW.

The development area is located within Portion 3 of McTaggarts Camp No. 453 and Portion 12 of Klip Punt 452. The entire broader study area and the development area are located within Focus Area 7 of the Renewable Energy Development Zones (REDZ), which is known as the Upington REDZ. Due to the location of the broader study area and development area within a REDZ, a Basic Assessment (BA) process will be undertaken in accordance with GN R114 as formally gazetted on 16 February 2018.

McTaggarts PV3 is proposed to accommodate the following infrastructure, which will enable the solar PV facility to supply a contracted capacity of up to 75MW:

» Fixed-tilt or tracking solar PV panels with a maximum height of 3.5m;
» Centralised inverter stations or string inverters;
» A temporary laydown area;
» Cabling between the panels, to be laid underground where practical;
» A 22kV or 33kV/132kV on-site substation of up to 1ha in extent to facilitate the connection between the solar PV facility and the electricity grid;
» An access road to the development area with a maximum width of 6m;
» Internal access roads within the PV panel array area with a maximum width of 5m; and
» Operation and Maintenance buildings including a gate house and security building, control centre, offices, warehouses, a workshop and visitors centre.

The power generated from the project will be sold to Eskom and will feed into the national electricity grid. Ultimately, the project is intended to be a part of the renewable energy projects portfolio for South Africa, as contemplated in the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP).

A separate basic assessment process will be undertaken for the grid connection infrastructure to connect McTaggarts PV3 to the Upington Main Transmission Substation (MTS).

It is possible that the facility could either be developed as static, fixed mounted PV system or tracking PV systems.

Tracking systems can utilise single axis of dual access trackers. A 'single axis tracker' will track the sun from east to west, while a dual axis tracker will in addition be equipped to account for the seasonal waning of the sun. These systems utilise moving parts and complex technology, including solar irradiation sensors to optimise the exposure of PV panels to sunlight.

2.3 MAIN PROJECT COMPONENTS

A solar energy facility typically uses the following primary components:

2.3.1 Photovoltaic Panels

Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels consist primarily of glass and various semiconductor materials and in a typical solar PV project, will be arranged in rows to form solar arrays. The PV panels are designed to operate continuously for more than 20 years with minimal maintenance required. It is envisaged that the plant will operate after this design lifetime

2.3.2 Support Structure

The photovoltaic (PV) modules will be mounted to steel support structures. As indicated above, these can either be mounted at a fixed tilt angle, optimised to receive the maximum amount of solar radiation and dependent on the latitude of the proposed facility, or a tracking mechanism with a maximum tilt angle of 45°.

2.3.3 Inverters

The photovoltaic effect produces electricity in direct current (DC). Inverters must be used to change DC to alternating current (AC) for transmission in the national grid. The PV combining switchgear (PVCS), which is dispersed among the arrays, collects the power from the arrays for transmission to the project's substation.

The inverters generally have a height similar to the surrounding PV panels.

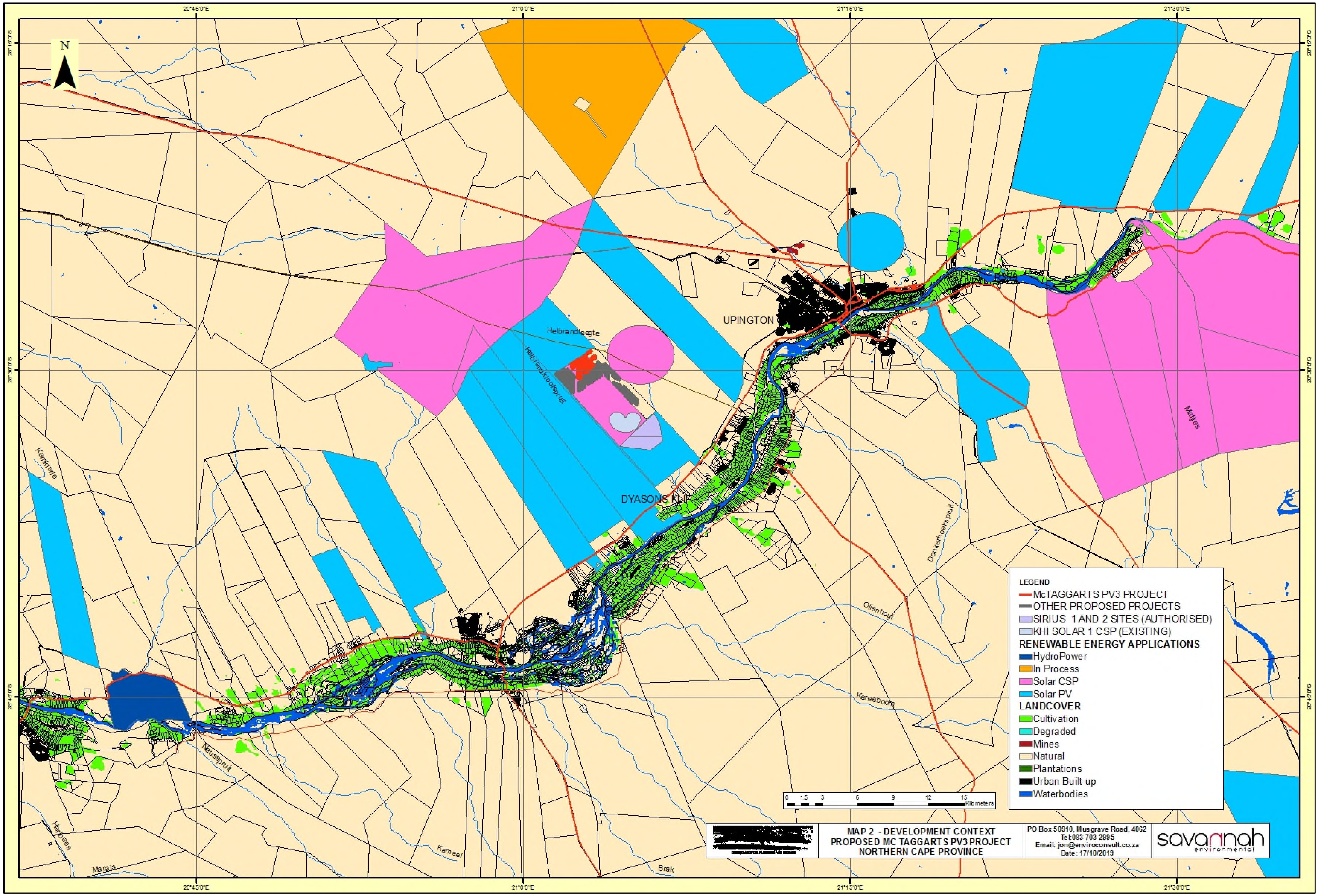
2.3.4 Transformer and On-Site Substation

The inverters feed AC current to the on-site substation which steps it up for transmission of the power to the national grid. The main infrastructure within the substation is comprised of transformers that will stand approximately 10m high.

It is anticipated that the electrical cables between inverters and the onsite substation will be below ground.

The on-site substation will be located immediately adjacent to a proposed Collector Substation which will further step up the produced power to 132kV for onward transmission to the Upington MTS. The Collector Substation is part of a separate assessment of grid connection infrastructure which is being assessed as a separate Basic Assessment Process.

Plate 1, Existing Upington Main Transmission Substation viewed from the Lutzputs Road.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McTAGGARTS PV3 PROJECT
OTHER PROPOSED PROJECTS
SIRIUS 1 AND 2 SITES (AUTHORISED)
KHI SOLAR 1 CSP (EXISTING)
RENEWABLE ENERGY APPLICATIONS
HydroPower
In Process
Solar CSP
Solar PV
LANDCOVER
Cultivation
Degraded
Mines
Natural
Plantations
Urban Built-up
Waterbodies
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MAP 2 - DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT
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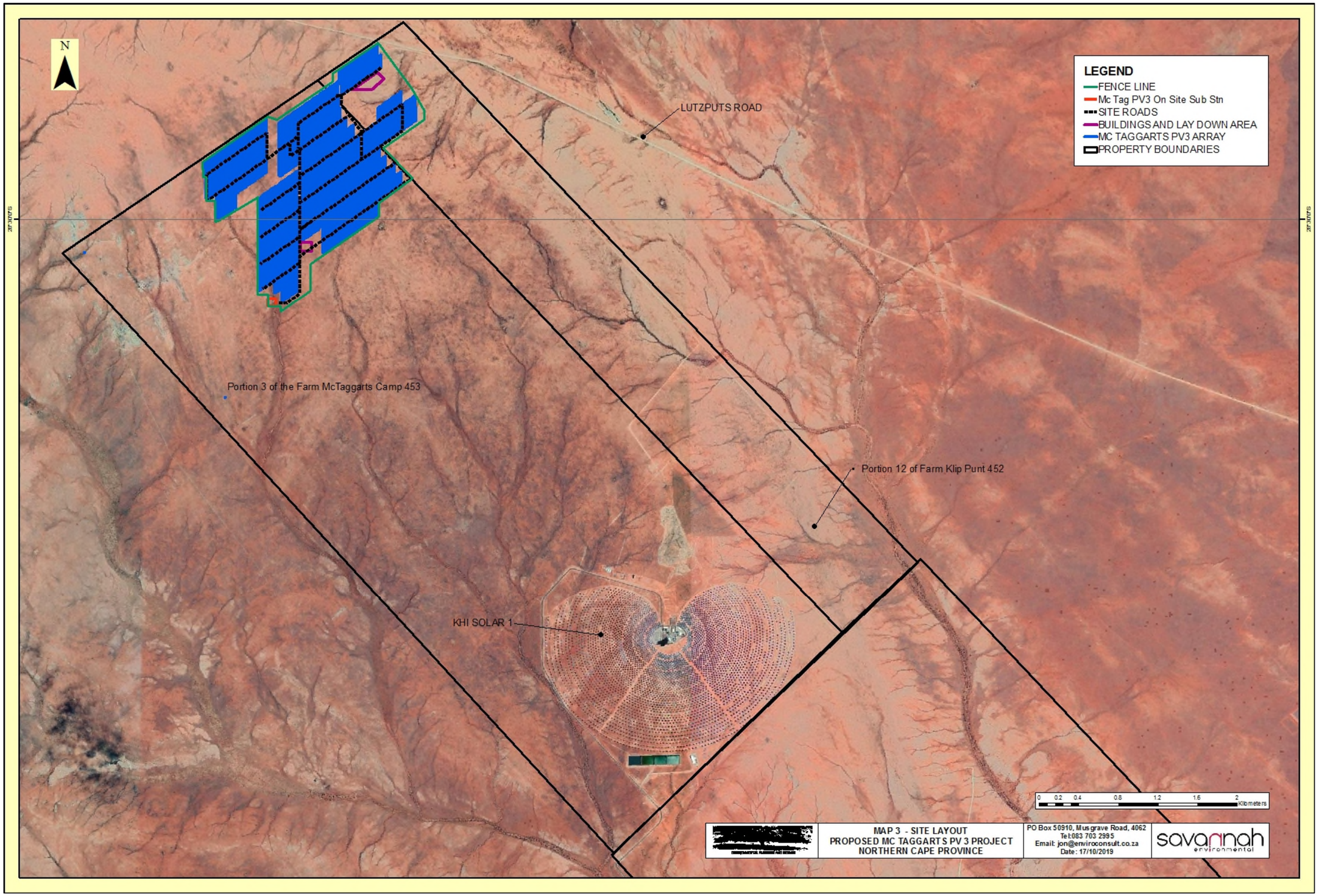
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Mc Tag PV3 On Site Sub Stn
SITE ROADS
BUILDINGS AND LAY DOWN AREA
MC TAGGARTS PV3 ARRAY
PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
LUTZPUTS ROAD
Portion 3 of the Farm McTaggarts Camp 453
Portion 12 of Farm Klip Punt 452
KHI SOLAR 1
0 0.2 0.4 0.8 1.2 1.6 2
Kilometers
MAP 3 - SITE LAYOUT
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3 DESCRIPTION OF RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT AND RECEPTORS

3.1 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Landscape character is defined as "a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another".

Landscape Character is a composite of influencing factors including;

- Landform and drainage
- Nature and density of development
- Vegetation patterns

3.1.1 Landform and Drainage

The topography of the region is relatively homogenous and is described pre-dominantly as lowlands with hills and dune hills to the north. Relatively prominent small hills occur towards the west and south-west of the broader study area.

The terrain surrounding the broader study area is predominantly flat with an even south-eastern slope towards the Orange River valley that forms a distinct hydrological feature in the region.

The proposed broader study area and development area is located within an area of relatively flat topography approximately 11.5km to the north-west of the Orange River Valley.

There are two minor non-perennial water courses, the Helbrandkloofspruit and the Helbrandleegte, that run to the north and south of the property respectively before they flow into the Orange River Valley.

Whilst the region surrounding the broader study area is relatively flat, a degree of relief is provided by minor ridgelines that formed by an historic dune field that runs in a general north-west to south-east direction at regular intervals. From the air, these minor ridgelines appear as a series of waves in the arid landscape. These ridgelines rise between three and five metres above the valley floor. Whilst they are minor they are likely to have a visual influence in that they will provide a degree of screening.

There is also a series of non-perennial water courses that flow into the Orange River at intervals. As these fall from the undulating plain into the shallow river valley they have created larger and slightly deeper valleys. This is particularly obvious driving along the N14 which is located on the edge of the river valley. This section of road runs through valleys that are approximately 15m deep from the floor to the crest of the ridgelines. These valley lines are likely to have significant influence over the visibility of the project from the road.

Refer to Map 4, Landform & Drainage.

Plate 2, View from the N14 approximately 10km to the south-east of the broader study area looking along the road.
The gently undulating nature of the landform on the edge of the Orange River Valley is clear from the road profile. When in one of the valleys, visibility over the surrounding landscape is restricted.

Plate 3, View from close to the N14 looking down into the Orange River Valley. The shallow valley sides slope gently down to the river.

3.1.2 Landcover

The Orange River has, to a large degree, dictated the settlement pattern in this arid region by providing a source of perennial water for the cultivation of grapes and cotton. This and the associated production of wine and dried fruit (raisins and sultanas) are the primary agricultural activity of this district.

The majority of cultivation and settlement in the region occurs around the Orange River.

Upington is a major regional centre that lies approximately 14.5km to the north-east of the broader study area. Due to distance and the relatively flat terrain, it is highly unlikely that the proposed project will have any visual impact on this area.

In the vicinity of the proposed project there are extensive vineyards within the Orange River Valley.

Settlement in the form of small townships and groups of farm buildings are located on the edges of the river valley and within the cultivated areas. This cultivation and settlements generally extend to the N14 which runs along the upper edge of the River Valley. Because the majority of settlement is within the River Valley and at a lower level than the broader study area, it is likely that the proposed development will be largely screened, particularly from the settlements located on the northern side of the Orange River.

Other than areas located around the Orange River, settlements in the region are sparse.

From the site visit only one tourism landuse was obvious. This was the Bezalel Wine Farm, the entrance to which is located on the N14 approximately 12km to the south of the broader study area. The farm itself including accommodation, a restaurant and a wine tasting area is located within the River Valley. Views of the proposed project will not be possible from this facility.

As can be seen from **Map 2 (Project Context)**, there are a significant number of solar power projects planned for the region in the vicinity of the proposed project. These include:

- Sirius Solar PV Projects 1 and 2 located on a property immediately to the south of the subject property. These projects have been authorised and Sirius Solar PV Project One was under construction at the time of reporting; and
- Khi Solar One which is a Concentrated Solar Power project (solar tower technology) that has been developed in the southern portion of the broader study area, specifically Portion 3 of the Farm McTaggarts Camp. This project provides a major landmark that is visible for a significant distance.

Refer to Map 5, Landcover.

Plate 4, View of the Bezalel Wine Farm within the Orange River Valley
Because of its location within the River Valley, this tourism operation is unlikely to have a view of the solar projects.

Plate 5, View of Khi Solar One from the Lutzputs Road to the north-east
Other planned solar power projects are likely to change the landscape surrounding the proposed broader study area.

Plate 6, View of Sirius Solar PV Project One, currenlty under construction (centre picture) from the Lutzputs Road.

3.1.3 Vegetation Patterns

The following vegetation types are evident within the broader study area and its surrounds;

a) Natural vegetation that is generally associated with the rural landscape; and
b) Vegetation within the Orange River Valley that is generally associated with agricultural operations.

These vegetation types are indicated on **Map 6, Vegetation Types**.

a) Natural Vegetation

Mucina and Rutherford[1] indicate that the natural vegetation of the area includes:

- Bushmanland Arid Grassland;
- Kalahari Karroid Shrubland; and
- Gordonia Dunveld.

Mucina and Rutherford's description of Bushmanland Arid Grassland includes;

Extensive to irregular plains on a slightly sloping plateau sparsely vegetated by grassland dominated by white grasses (Stipagrostis species) giving this vegetation type the character of semidesert 'steppe'. In places low shrubs of Salsola change the

[1] The Vegetation of South Africa, Losotho and Swaziland, 2015

vegetation structure. In years of abundant rainfall rich displays of annual herbs can be expected.

Mucina and Rutherford's description of Kalahari Karroid Shrubland includes;

Low karroid shrubland on flat, gravel plains. Karoo-related elements (shrubs) meet here with northern floristic elements, indicating a transition to the Kalahari region and sandy soils.

Mucina and Rutherford's description of Gordonia Dunveld includes;

Parallel dunes about 3–8 m above the plains. Open shrubland with ridges of grassland dominated by Stipagrostis amabilis on the dune crests and Acacia haematoxylon on the dune slopes, also with A. mellifera on lower slopes and Rhigozum trichotomum in the interdune straaten.

Whilst botanically these vegetation types may be very different, in visual terms the most important characteristics include:

- They are key components of the natural, semi-desert, landscape of the region;
- The description of Gordonia Duneveld picks up on the regular, wave like, dunes that are a dominant feature of the landscape surrounding Upington; and
- All the descriptions highlight the fact that vegetation in the area is low and provides little screening potential for development.

b) Vegetation within the Orange River Valley

Vegetation within this area is comprised of a matrix of:

- Crop vegetation that is largely comprised of grapes for wine making and fruit;
- Patches of low natural vegetation particularly on the upper valley slopes;
- Ornamental vegetation including large trees around homesteads and small settlements; and
- Patches of largely alien vegetation particularly on the edges of cultivation.

3.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

3.2.1 Landscape Character Area and Visual Absorption Capacity

Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are defined as "single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type"[2].

Visual Absorption Capacity (VAC) is *defined* as the landscape's ability to absorb physical changes without transformation in its visual character and quality. Where elements that contrast with existing landscape character are proposed, VAC is dependent on elements such as landform, vegetation and other development to provide screening of a new element. The scale and texture of a landscape is also critical in providing VAC, for example; a new large scale industrial development located within a rural small scale field pattern is likely to be all the more obvious due to its scale.

[2] UK Guidelines.

The affected landscape can generally be divided into the following LCAs that are largely defined by vegetation and drainage patterns.

- **Plateau LCA** which includes the gently undulating, arid plateau above the Orange River Valley. This area is generally natural in character with very little settlement. It is obvious from **Map 2 (Project Context)** that the character of this area is in transition in that solar projects are likely to create an industrial aesthetic within a matrix of natural vegetation. VAC within this area is only provided by the regular, low, dune formation as well as slopes of the slightly larger minor valleys that are associated with the non-perennial water courses that flow into the Orange River Valley.
- **The River Corridor LCA** which is comprised of the shallow valley area surrounding the Orange River. This area is generally inward looking drawing little character influence from the surrounding plateau. Landform, vegetation and development all play a role in screening views of surrounding areas and contribute to significant VAC.

These LCAs are indicated on **Map 7, Landscape Character Areas**.

3.3 VISUAL RECEPTORS

Visual Receptors are defined as "individuals and / or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by the proposal"[3].

3.3.1 Identified visual receptors

It is possible that an area might be sensitive due to an existing use. The nature of an outlook is generally more critical to areas that are associated with recreation, tourism and in areas where outlook is critical to land values.

This section highlights possible Receptors within the landscape, which, due to their use could be sensitive to landscape change. They include:

- Area Receptors which include the minor urban settlement areas that are located within the Orange River Corridor LCA. From the site visit, it appears that the majority of settlement areas relate to agricultural use of the River Valley. It is likely that the residents of these minor settlements are predominantly focused on agricultural production of the area. As these settlements are located within the River Valley LCA, it is likely that views of McTaggarts PV2 particularly from the northern side of the valley will be difficult. It is also likely that vegetation within the River Valley will help screen views of McTaggarts PV2 that may be possible from the valley;
- Linear Receptors or routes through the area include the N14, the R359, the Lutzputs Road and the Upington to Kakamas Spur Railway Line. Both of the N14 and the R359 roads have tourism significance, although the N14 is possibly the most important in this regard due to its strategic significance. The Lutzputs Road is an

[3] UK Guidelines

unsurfaced road that runs approximately 100m to the east of the broader study area, this road is likely to be mainly used by local people. The Upington to Kakamas Spur Railway Line is used for transporting goods and so is not considered further; and

- Point Receptors that include individual homesteads that are located both within the River Valley LCA and the Plateau LCA. From the site visit, it is unlikely that settlements on the northern side of the Orange River will have views over McTaggarts PV3. It is however possible that settlements on the higher sections on the southern side of the valley could have views of the proposed development. These however will be distance views and are likely to be softened by vegetation on the fringes of the River Valley.

Visual receptors that include places and routes that may be sensitive to landscape change are indicated on **Map 7.**

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Plate 7, Plateau LCA

Plate 8, River Corridor LCA

SENSITIVE VISUAL RECEPTORS

Plate 9, View from the R359 across the River Valley LCA.

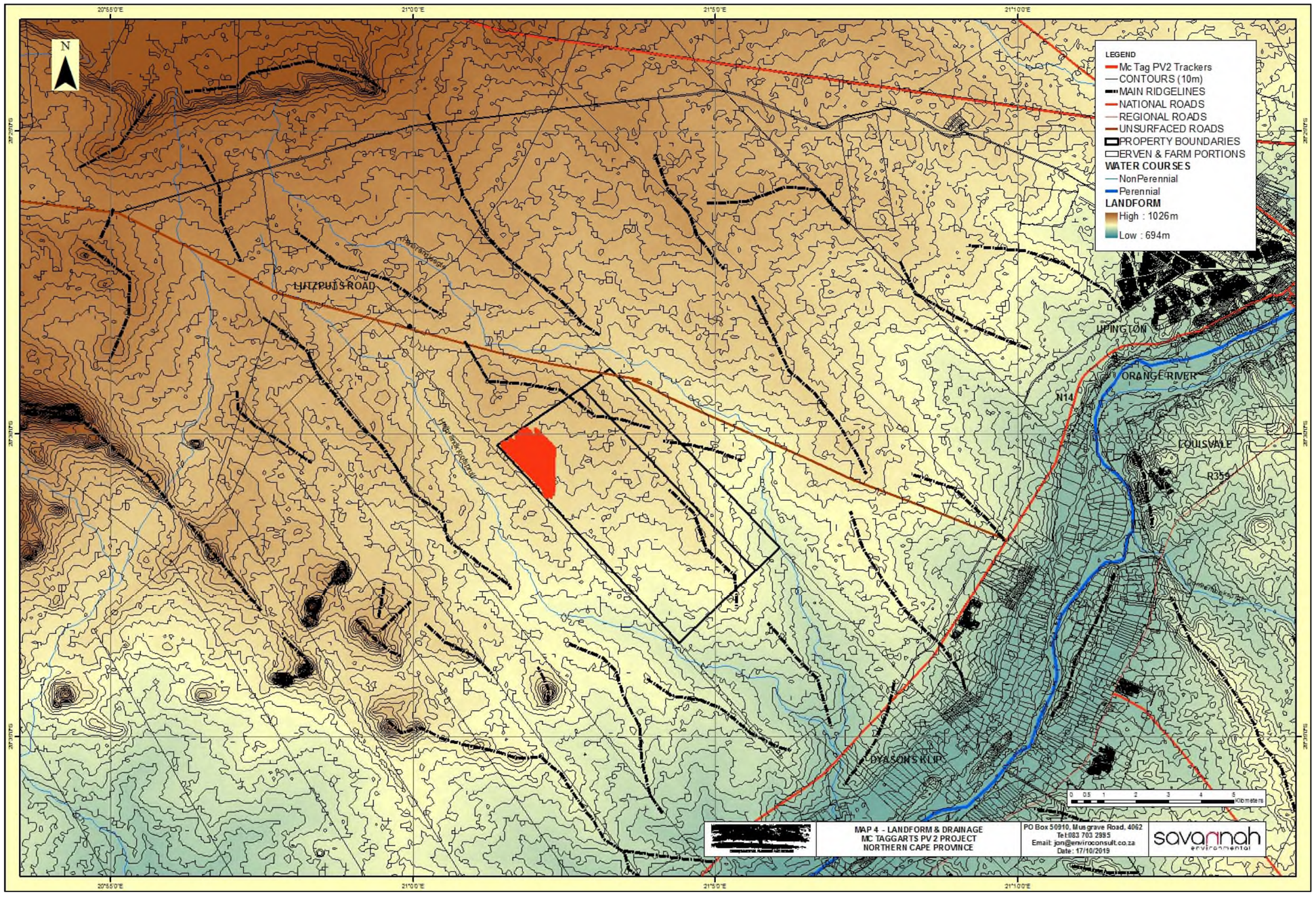
Plate 10, Settlement and homesteads within the River Valley LCA

Plate 11, The N14. This is a major regional route that runs close to the southern edge of the broader study area and is important for tourism.

Plate 12, Homesteads within the Plateau LCA.

Plate 13, The Lutzputs Road. This is an un-surfaced local road that runs to the north and east of McTaggarts PV3. It is likely to be largely used by local people.

Plate 14, The Upington to Kakamas Branch Line. This railway line is used for the transport of fruit and goods from Kakamas.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UPINGTON
ORANGE RIVER
N14
LOUISVALE
R359
DYASON'S KLIP
LEGEND
Mc Tag PV2 Trackers
CONTOURS (10m)
MAIN RIDGELINES
NATIONAL ROADS
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PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
ERVEN & FARM PORTIONS
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NonPerennial
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MAP 4 - LANDFORM & DRAINAGE
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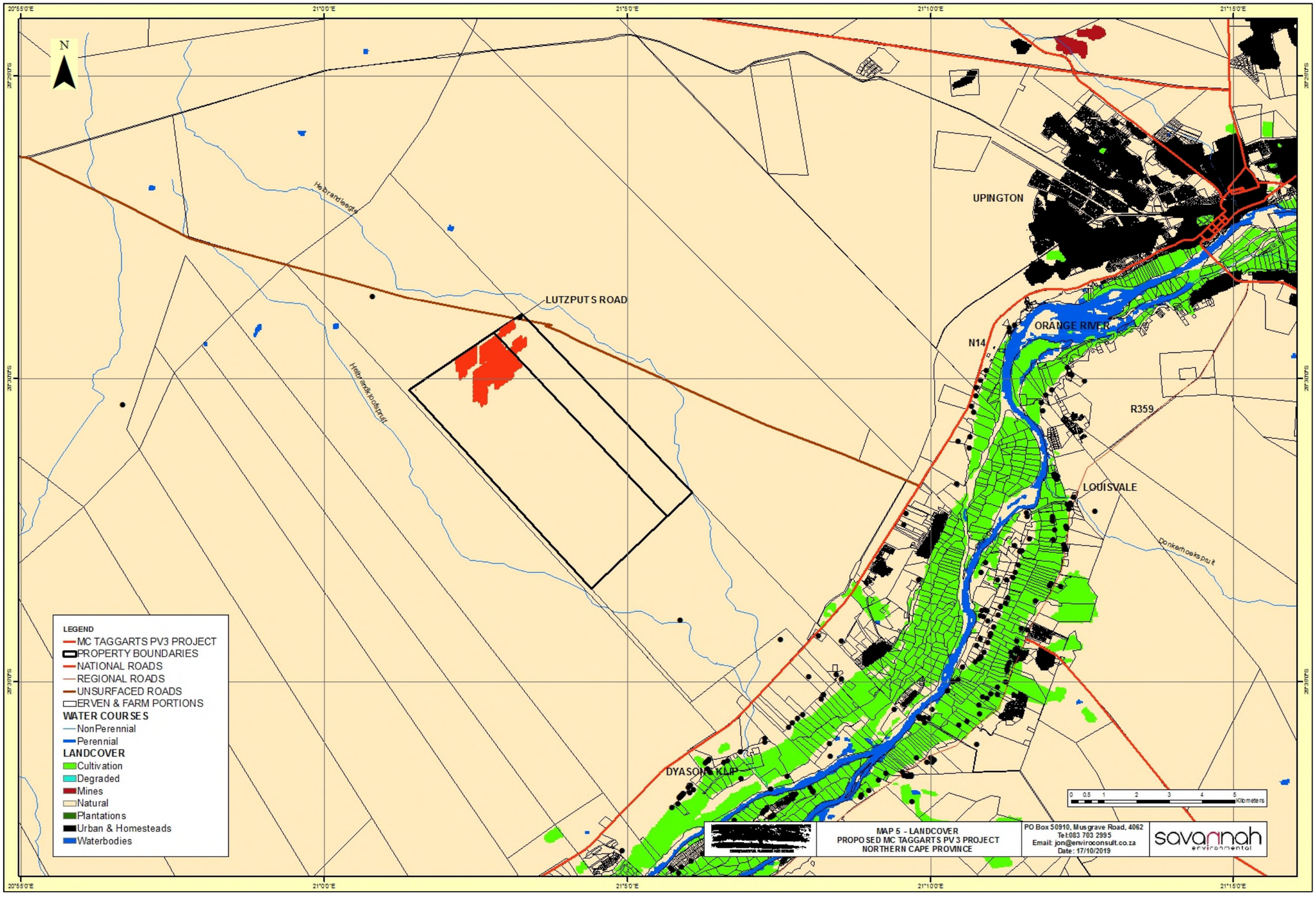
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MAP 5 - LANDCOVER
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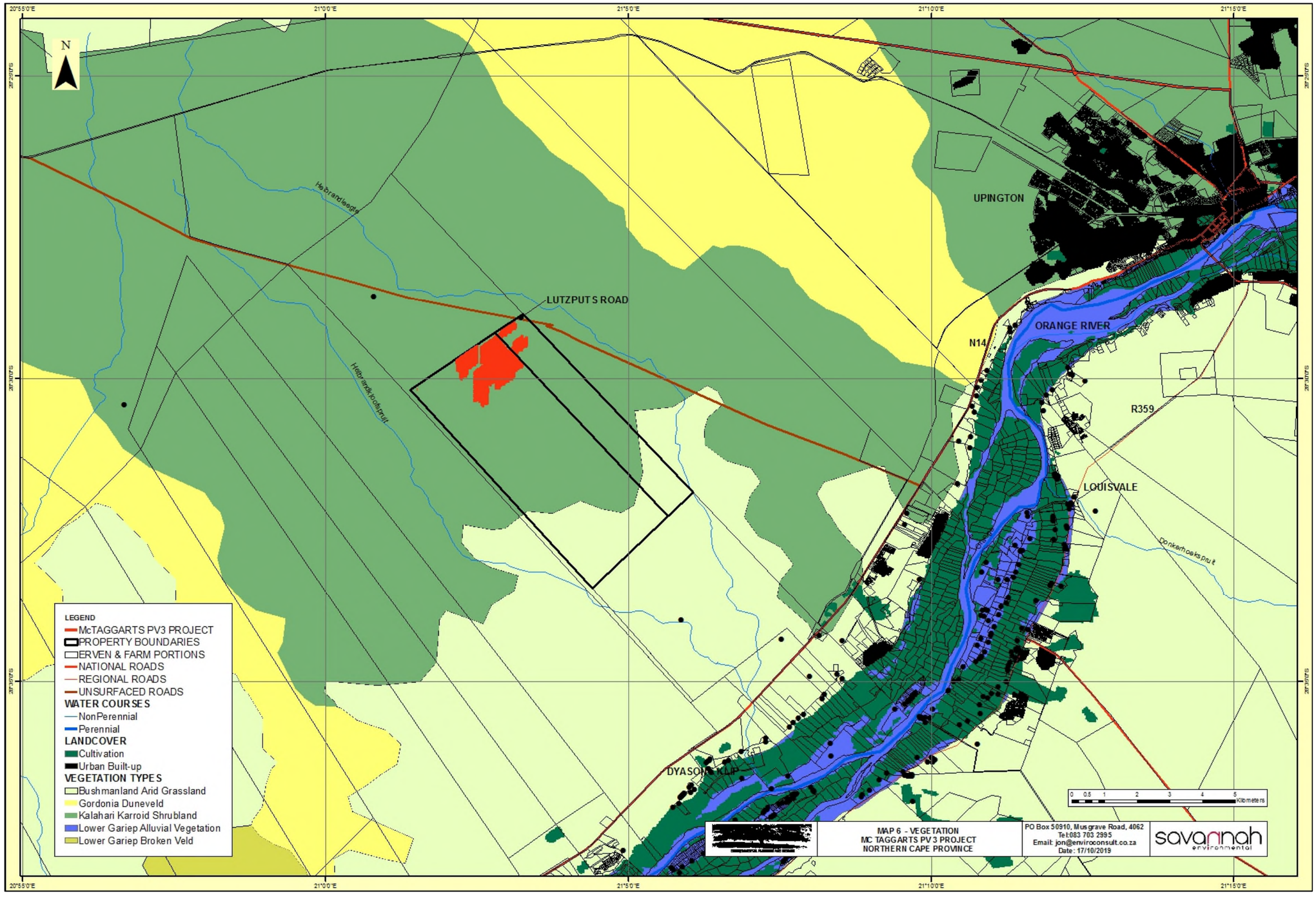
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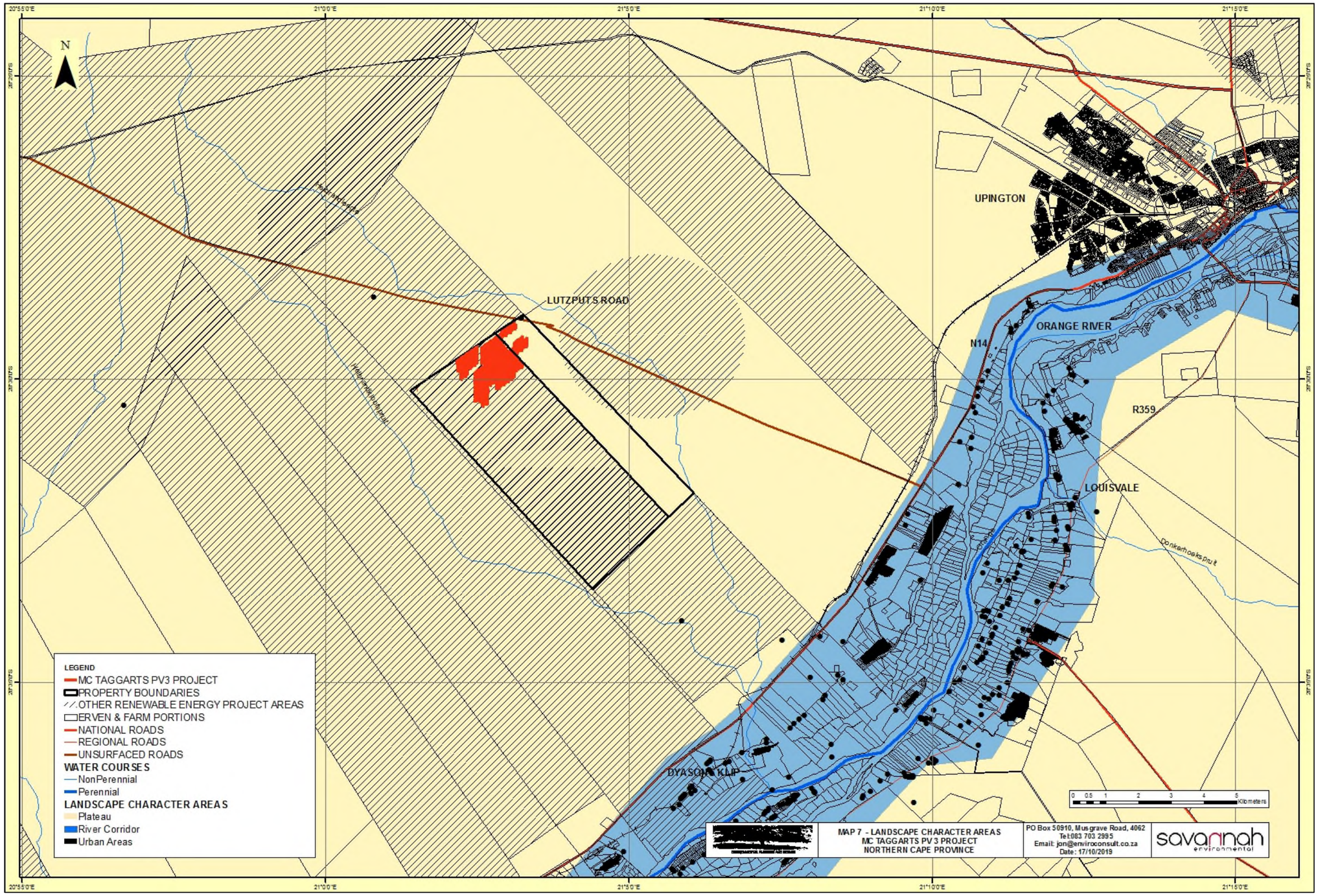
VEGETATION TYPES
Bushmanland Arid Grassland
Gordonia Duneveld
Kalahari Karroid Shrubland
Lower Gariep Alluvial Vegetation
Lower Gariep Broken Veld
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5
Kilometers
MAP 6 - VEGETATION
MC TAGGARTS PV 3 PROJECT
NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE
PO Box 50910, Musgrave Road, 4062
Tel:083 703 2995
Email: jon@enviroconsult.co.za
Date: 17/10/2019
savannah
environmental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N
LUTZPUTS ROAD
UPINGTON
ORANGE RIVER
N14
R359
LOUISVALE
Donkerhoeks pruit
DYASONS KLIP
LEGEND
MC TAGGARTS PV3 PROJECT
PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
OTHER RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT AREAS
ERVEN & FARM PORTIONS
NATIONAL ROADS
REGIONAL ROADS
UNSURFACED ROADS
WATER COURSES
NonPerennial
Perennial
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS
Plateau
River Corridor
Urban Areas
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 Kilometers
MAP 7 - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS
MC TAGGARTS PV 3 PROJECT
NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE
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4 THE GENERAL NATURE OF POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACTS

4.1 GENERAL

Impacts could include general degradation of the relatively natural landscape in which the development is proposed as well as change of view for affected people and / or activities;

a. General landscape change or degradation. This is particularly important for protected areas where the landscape character might be deemed to be exceptional or rare. However, it can also be important in non-protected areas particularly where landscape character is critical to a specific broad-scale use such as tourism areas or for the general enjoyment of an area. This is generally assessed by the breaking down of a landscape into components that make up the overall character and understanding of how proposed elements may change the balance of the various elements that are visible. The height, mass, form and colour of new elements all help to make new elements more or less obvious as does the structure of an existing landscape which can provide screening ability or texture that helps to assimilate new elements.
b. Change in specific views for specific receptors for which the character of a view may be important for a specific use or enjoyment of the area.
    - Visual intrusion is a change in a view of a landscape that reduces the quality of the view. This can be a highly subjective judgement. Subjectivity has however been removed as far as is possible by classifying the landscape character of each area and providing a description of the change in the landscape that will occur due to the proposed development. The subjective part of the assessment is to define whether the impact is negative or positive. Again, to make the assessment as objective as possible, the judgement is based on the level of dependency of the use in question on existing landscape characteristics.
    - Visual obstruction is the blocking of views or foreshortening of views. This can generally be measured in terms of extent.

Due to the nature of the proposed development, visual impacts for receptors are expected to relate largely to intrusion. However this is likely to be limited by the fact that the existing Khi Solar One CSP facility has largely altered views in the vicinity of the proposed facility.

4.2 THE NATURE OF LIKELY VIEWS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

4.2.1 Timing of Impacts

During the construction phase, it is expected that traffic will be slightly higher than normal as trucks will be required to transport materials and equipment such as PV panels and frames to the development area.

Site preparation will generally include the following activities:

- vegetation clearance – removal or cutting of any vegetation present (bush cutting);

- levelling and grading of areas where the array will be sited would normally occur; the assessment indicates that the land is relatively flat so only minor grading should be required;
- levelling of hard-standing areas, e.g. for temporary laydown and storage areas, as indicated above only minor grading is likely to be necessary;
- erection of site fencing; and
- construction of a temporary construction camp which will occur within a lay down area within the development area.

These activities are only likely to be visible from the immediate vicinity of the development area.

As the development area is developed, concrete bases may be constructed (if required), the support structures will then be assembled and PV panels attached. Ancillary structures and minor buildings will also be constructed.

The development will, therefore, appear on a progressive basis in the landscape, however once the concrete bases are constructed, the structures are likely to be assembled rapidly.

The construction phase is programmed to take approximately 12-18 months.

By the end of the construction phase, the array will be assembled, and minor buildings constructed, and the full visual impact of the project will be experienced.

The operation phase is highly unlikely to result in any significant additional impact. It is possible however, that crews will be visible from time to time undertaking maintenance within the facility.

The main visible elements are likely to include:

1. The solar array including minor buildings and structures located within a fence line with an associated on-site substation that is slightly taller than surrounding elements;

2. Possible night-time lighting which may be required for operations, security and maintenance purposes.

4.2.2 The likely Nature of Views of the Proposed Solar Array

The proposed project layout is indicated on **Map 3**. If a fixed array is used then the PV panels will be mounted on continuous fixed support structures and orientated to face north, away from the N14 and the Orange River Corridor or organised in groups on fixed tilt supports but again generally orientated north.

Continuous support structure aligned in rows are generally used when the PV panels are fixed and are set at an angle and direction to maximise the average efficiency during the day or have a basic tracking set up that varies the angle of tilt of the unit in order to improve efficiency.

From areas to the north, a solar array, whether constructed on individual supports or continuous rows, is likely to appear as a continuous structure in the landscape.

A tracking array is also constructed in rows that also generally face a northerly direction. Each row however is divided into tables that can be manoeuvred by actuators to follow the solar azimuth and altitude. Visually, this results in greater variety in the nature of the view of the facility with the dark face of the panels being more obvious from the east in the morning and the west in the afternoon. This also means that the outline of the array appears as a jagged edge particularly from close views and the supporting structures may also be more or less exposed depending on the time of day.

The nature of the impact is also likely to vary with location and elevation;

- If the array is located on a hillside or if it is viewed from a higher level, the rows of PV tables are likely to visually combine and will be read as a single unit. From a distance this results in a PV array having a similar appearance as a large industrial structure when viewed from above. It should be noted that McTaggarts PV3 will not be viewed from a higher elevation and so this type of view will not apply;
- From the north and if the project is viewed from a similar level, the front row of PV tables will be seen in elevation. This is likely to result in the project being seen as a continuous dark line in the landscape possibly with slightly higher elements such as the on-site substation extending above the line. How obvious the dark line is, is likely to be dependent on the distance of the viewer from the project as well as the extent to which the view of the elevation is broken by other elements such as vegetation and landform.
- From the south, east and west, the dark face of the PV tables is not obvious and subject to the colour of the undersides of the tables, the supporting structures are likely to become more apparent. With distance however, the shadow cast by the structures is likely to be more obvious and the facility will probably appear much as the northern face, a long dark structure.
- If the landscape does not have significant Visual Absorption Capacity (VAC), because of the contrast in colour with the surrounding landscape, the array could be visible to the limit of visibility. Subject to the colour and reflectivity of the underside of the PV tables and supporting structure, it is possible that a similar level of impact could also be experienced from the south, east and west. It should be noted that the VAC of the landscape surrounding the proposed development is largely dependent on minor undulations in the surrounding landform, as well as vegetation in the Orange River Valley to the south.
- Mitigation or screening of views is possible at least from close views. This can be achieved either by earthwork berms or by planting trees around the boundary of the development area or by a combination of both. From a distance and particularly from elevated view points, mitigation is likely to be less feasible as the height of any screen is likely to cast shadow over the PV panels.
- In addition to the way that a solar array may change a landscape, the nuisance factor associated with resulting glare is often raised by stakeholders on similar projects. PV panels, however, are designed to absorb as much energy as possible and are designed not to reflect light. This issue is generally more likely to be associated with a focussed array which tracks the sun’s path during the day and uses reflective surfaces to focus energy onto receptors. It is therefore, not expected that this will be a significant issue with a PV array such as the one proposed.

The development area and the broader study area are relatively flat. This means that the array is likely to be viewed in elevation and there will be no areas from which an overview of the facility will be possible.

To the south of the project, the land falls away into the shallow Orange River Valley. Because the project does not extend to the ridgeline on the edge of the Valley, it is likely to be largely screened from this area.

Because the proposed PV panels will be set at a maximum height of 3.5m, it is likely that minor buildings, stored equipment within laydown areas and inverters will largely be screened by the array or will be seen below the level of the PV panels.

A new solar facility has been developed adjacent to the Upington International Airport. This facility has been developed in two sections on either side of the airport runway. It is somewhat smaller than McTaggarts PV3, covering approximately 25ha and the longest edge of the array being approximately 500m long. The PV panels are mounted on fixed frames approximately 2m high. Despite obvious differences compared with McTaggarts PV3, it does illustrate the effect of distance in mitigating the visibility of the solid line of solar panels.

Plate 15 indicates the location of the existing array at the Upington International Airport. **Plates 16, 17 and 18**, illustrate how the array is seen from distances of approximately 700m, 1500m and 5000m respectively.

The following effects are noted;

- From 700m the array is clearly visible. For the same effect relative to a 3.5m high array, this distance will be approximately 1225m.
- From 1500m, the array is visible but even with the minimal vegetation providing screening at the Airport, the dark line of panels is starting to blend into the background. The array is visible but might be missed by a casual viewer. For the same effect relative to a 3.5m high array, this distance will be approximately 2625m.
- From 5000m, the line of panels is indistinguishable from the horizon. For the same effect relative to a 3.5m high array, this distance will be approximately 8750m.

A single axis tracking system could slightly increase the height of structures particularly during late afternoon and early morning when the tables are tilted to their fullest extent.

Plate 15, Existing solar arrays at the Upington International Airport as seen from the air

Plate 16, The existing array seenin a flat landscape from approximately 700m. The array is clearly visible.

Plate 17, Existing array seenin a flat landscape from approximately 1500m. The array is visible but even with the minimal vegetation providing screening at the Airport. The dark line of panels is starting to blend into the background. The array is clearly visible but might be missed by a casual viewer who was not aware of its existence.

Plate 18, **Existing array seen in a flat landscape from approximately 5000m**. The line of panels is barely distinguishable. The viewer would have to know where to look to be able to differentiate the array from surrounding landscape features.

4.2.3 The likely Nature of Views of the Proposed On-Site Substation

The proposed on-site substation is reported to have solid elements up to approximately10m high. These are likely to be comprised of transformers and will appear as solid elements over the height of the adjacent array. These will be viewed as an isolated higher section of the development. It is likely that other taller elements will largely be comprised of steel lattice structures such as bus bars that will facilitate the connection between the on-site substation and the collector substation. They are, therefore, likely to be relatively transparent. The on-site substation is proposed immediately adjacent to the Eskom collector substation. The extent of the overhead power line connecting McTaggarts PV3 is, therefore, likely to be minimal and the connecting infrastructure will be visually read as part of the on-site and collector substations (this is being fully assessed as part of a separate Basic Assessment process).

4.2.5 Glare from the PV array

A common misconception about solar photovoltaic (PV) panels is that they inherently cause or create glare, posing a nuisance to neighbours and a safety risk for pilots. While in certain situations the glass surfaces of solar PV systems can produce glint (a momentary flash of bright light) and glare (a reflection of bright light for a longer duration). Light absorption, rather than reflection, is central to the function of a solar PV panel - to absorb solar radiation and convert it to electricity. Solar PV panels are constructed of dark-coloured (usually blue or black) materials and are covered with anti-reflective coatings. Modern PV panels reflect as little as two percent of incoming sunlight, about the same as water and less than soil. Some of the concern and misconceptions are likely due to the confusion between solar PV systems and concentrated solar power (CSP) systems. CSP systems typically use an array of mirrors to reflect sunlight to heat water or other fluids to create steam that turns an electric generator[4].

Glare generally occurs when the sun is low in the sky and the angle of incidence is such that light is reflected rather than refracted through the panel surface. The risk of this occurring is, therefore, highest for a fixed array during early morning and late afternoon when the sun is hitting PV panels at an acute angle. In South Africa, affected areas due to a fixed array during the early morning will generally vary from the west of the array during summer months to the north west of the array during winter months when the rising sun is further north. Affected areas during the late afternoon will generally vary from the east of the array during summer months to the north east of the array during winter months when the setting sun is further north.

Due to the fact that a tracking system realigns receptors to capture as much energy as possible between sunrise and sunset, and because of this, the sun does not hit the PV panels at acute angles, the risk of glare is significantly reduced.

[4] US Department of Energy

4.2.6 Security Lighting

The facility will be lit by security lights to a level sufficient to ensure that security cameras can operate at night. This could result in the array being obvious at night from surrounding areas.

5 VISIBILITY AND THE LIKELY NATURE OF VIEWS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 THE EXTENT OF POSSIBLE IMPACTS

The bulk of the proposed project is comprised of the array of PV panels. The majority of other elements including the inverters and buildings will be located amongst the array and will be of a similar or lower height.

The tallest elements are likely to be the transformers associated with the on-site substation. These will be solid elements and could be in the order of 10m high. Other electrical infrastructure such as the bus bars to which the power lines will connect may be taller but these will be largely comprised of lattice structures that are likely to be relatively transparent and will fall within the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of the proposed grid connection (assessed as part of a separate Basic Assessment).

The development can therefore be described as generally being comprised of elements of a similar height but with an isolated taller element.

In order to provide an indication of the likely limit of visibility, a universally accepted navigational formula has been used to calculate the likely distance that the proposed structures might be visible over (**Appendix III**). This indicates that in a flat landscape the proposed structures may be visible for the following distances;

Approximate limit of Visibility (ALV)

ELEMENT	APPROXIMATE LIMIT OF VISIBILITY
Solar PV panels 3.5m high	6.7 kilometres
Substation 10m high	11.3 kilometres

In reality these distances could be reduced by:

- Weather conditions that limit visibility. This could include hazy conditions during fine weather as well as mist and rain;
- Scale and colour of individual elements making it difficult to differentiate structures from the background; and
- The fact that as a viewer approaches the ALV only a small portion of the development will be visible to the extent that it is likely to be discernible to the human eye.

The ALV for solar PV panels and the on-site substation have been used to define an initial study area and they are indicated on mapping.

The laydown area is a temporary facility for use during construction. The extent of views of the laydown area is difficult to assess. It is likely that equipment stored in this area will be of similar height or lower than the proposed PV array. For this reason, it is assumed that equipment stockpiled will be visible or will be incorporated into views of

the array. It is possible, however that from time to time activity and / or the use of large equipment may make it more obvious.

5.2 ZONES OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY

Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) are defined as "a map usually digitally produced showing areas of land within which a development is theoretically visible"[5].

ZTVs of McTaggarts PV3 have been assessed using Arc Spatial Analyst GIS.

The detailed location of the proposed array has been provided by the proponent **(Map 3)**. In order to generate the ZTV for the proposed array, it has been assumed that entire area of the array will be set at a uniform maximum height of 3.5m. Points have been set at each change in direction of the array boundary, an additional point at the centre of the array and at high points in the development footprint, all with 3.5m offsets for generation of the ZTV using the Viewshed option in Arc Spatial Analyst.

Similar methodology was adopted for the on-site substation for which a 10m offset has been used to produce the ZTV.

Whilst the ZTV has been calculated from terrain data only, existing vegetation could have a modifying effect on the areas indicated.

The ZTV analysis is indicated on the following maps:

- **Map 8** indicates the ZTV for the proposed PV array and internal infrastructure; and
- **Map 9** indicates the ZTV the on-site substation.

5.2.1 General Visibility

The assessment indicates that McTaggarts PV3 may be visible to the following areas;

i. Even though it is taller than the array, the on-site substation will be visible to a significantly smaller area. This is due to screening that will be provided by landform;
ii. Shorter views of the proposed array and the on-site substation will be constrained to the north-east, south-west and the south-east by minor ridgelines with the development only being visible to upper valley slopes and ridgelines;
iii. Views of McTaggarts PV3 from northern areas are likely to be channelled along the lines of minor ridgelines that are formed by the historic dune field. Affected areas to the north are uninhabited and are currently affected by close views of the Khi Solar One project.
iv. Views of the proposed development will be screened from the Orange River Valley;
v. Views of McTaggarts PV3 may only be possible from approximately 1km of the N14, this section of road is outside the ALV of both the on-site sub-station and the array;
vi. Views of McTaggarts PV3 may be possible from areas to the south of the Orange River Valley but these will generally be set back from the edge of the

[5] UK Guidelines

valley to areas south of the R359.The affected areas are outside the ALV of the project;

vii. Views of McTaggarts PV3 may be possible over approximately 8.5km of the Lutzputs Road to the north and east of the development area. The main element that will be visible is the array as the on-site substation will be largely screened by landform.

5.2.2 Specific considerations regarding the nature of impacts

The PV panels will be mounted on continuous supports and orientated to face north, away from the N14 and the Orange River Valley.

From the south and south-east, which is the direction from which the majority of receptors will view McTaggarts PV3, the back side of the PV panels and support structures will be visible.

The fact that the terrain is relatively flat which will mean that the project will be viewed largely in profile and will be seen as a dark line in the landscape.

The surrounding landscape has been shown to generally have a relatively low level of VAC. This is likely to mean that long views of the project may be possible particularly for views from across the Orange River Valley from which the minor changes in landform will have no mitigatory effect. There will, however, be a significant mitigatory effect provided by distance and the areas of vegetation on the fringe the valley. All receptors on the N14, within the Orange River Valley and beyond are located outside the ALV which means that distance is likely to mean that the development will be indistinguishable from the horizon. Given that there will also be other solar projects between the viewer and McTaggarts PV3 this will mean that it is unlikely that the project will be obvious.

In the vicinity of McTaggarts PV3, the relatively low height of the development combined with the gentle undulations in the plateau landform is likely to mean that a degree of screening will be provided. Close views, however, are only likely to be possible from the Lutzputs Road

Due to the fact that McTaggarts PV3 is located in a REDZ, a number of additional solar energy projects are likely to be developed within its vicinity. The strategic nature of the REDZ will ensure that there is less demand for similar developments in other more sensitive landscape areas. It is, therefore, highly likely that solar energy projects will become a common sight in the vicinity of McTaggarts PV3.

Whilst the majority of the current outlook is relatively natural, Khi Solar One which is comprised of a Solar Power Tower and surrounding heliostats, is located on the broader study area immediately to the south. The Power Tower is 205m high and is potentially visible over a radius of 51km. This facility, has therefore, already transformed the local landscape and introduced industrial infrastructure to the area. It is also likely that other projects, as they are developed will result in the landscape becoming progressively more industrialised.

Whilst industrialisation of the landscape appears to be inevitable, this cannot mean that an "anything goes" approach should be allowed to occur. The importance of the N14 as a tourism route and the need for amenity space around settlements and homesteads must be considered. In order to achieve this, it will be important to ensure that key

landscape features are retained, and that industrialisation does not completely dominate views from the road. However, McTaggarts PV3 is highly unlikely to have any significant impact on this receptor.

Views from the N14
Due to its tourism importance, the N14 is likely to be one of the most sensitive visual receptors.

Due to distance and other intervening projects in the area, McTaggarts PV3 is highly unlikely to have any significant impact on travellers on the N14.

Views from the R359
The R359 is located on the opposite side of the Orange River Valley to the broader study area. Potentially affected areas are approximately 16km from the closest section of McTaggarts PV3.

Given this distance, the extent of large woody vegetation on the edge of the Orange River Valley and the fact that there are other authorised solar projects immediately to the south of McTaggarts PV3, it is highly unlikely that the project will be obvious from this road.

Views from Adjacent Homesteads
The ZTV analysis indicates that the proposed array is unlikely to be visible to existing homesteads.

Views from Adjacent Settlements
Settlements in the vicinity of McTaggarts PV3 are relatively small and are generally associated with agricultural activities within the Orange River Valley.

The ZTV analysis indicates that McTaggarts PV3 is unlikely to be visible from these settlements.

Glare
There are two areas where glare may be a concern for stakeholders including:

- The Upington International Airport; and
- The Lutzputs Road.

The Upington International Airport is located approximately 23km to the north-east of McTaggarts PV3 and due to the location of the facility relative to the Airport it would only be possible for reflected light from the array to affect pilots on the northern flight path into the Airport.

The sun would have to be a considerable way north in order to create reflected light that would impact on the northern flight path. The worst-case scenario would be at sun set during mid-winter. At sunset, on the 22nd June, the sun has an azimuth of approximately 296°T in the Upington area[6]. Given that the solar panels will be orientated to the north, light would reflect at approximately 63°T. At touchdown at the northern end of the runway, an aircraft would be located at an approximate bearing of 57°T relative to the array. This means that during the most likely period for glare to impact, reflected light from the facility may only affect an area approximately 6°T south

[6] Sun angle calculator https://www.suncalc.org

of a potential receiver. Also given the distance, it can be concluded that McTaggarts PV3 is highly unlikely to affect the Airport.

The US Federal Aviation Authority (US FAA) have led the way in terms of assessing the impacts of glare created by solar projects around airports. Because the US FAA has no specific standards for Airport solar facilities and potential glare, the type of glare analysis that they require varies. Depending on site specifics (e.g., existing land uses, location and size of the project) an acceptable evaluation could involve one or more of the following levels of assessment:

a) A qualitative analysis of potential impact in consultation with the Air Traffic Control Tower, pilots, and airport officials;
b) A demonstration field test with solar panels at the proposed site in coordination with Air Traffic Control Tower personnel; or
c) A geometric analysis to determine days and times when there may be an ocular impact[7].

The information provided above provides a basic geometric analysis.

From reference to the ZTV, potentially affected sections of the Lutzputs Road are located between bearings of approximately 0°T to 135°T relative to the proposed facility, it is therefore possible that glare could impact on this road during the late afternoon. Given the low number of vehicles that use this road this is unlikely to be a major concern. However if glare should prove problematic mitigation in the form of screening might be incorporated.

[7] US FAA

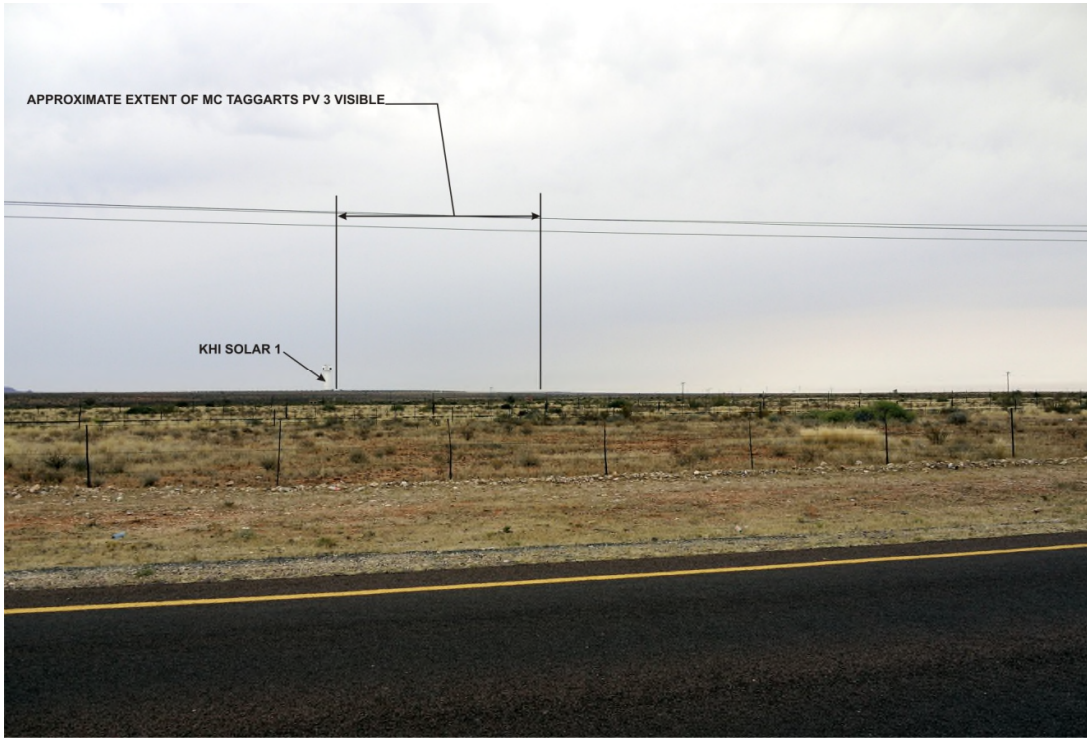


Plate 19, View from VP1 on the N14 approximately 10.5km to the south-east of the broader study area. The project may just be visible on the ridgeline. The Sirius PV 1 and 2 projects are authorised and is located between McTaggarts PV3 and the viewpoint. The Sirius PV 3 and 4 projects that at the time of reporting were going through the BAR process will also be visible from this viewpoint.

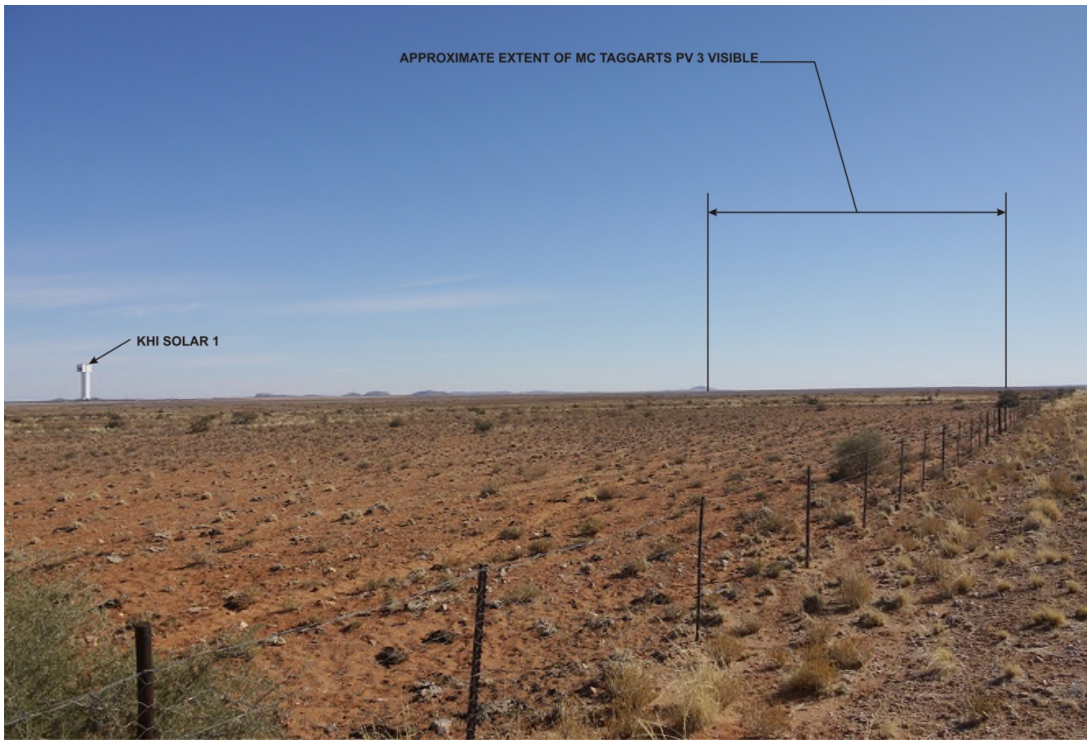
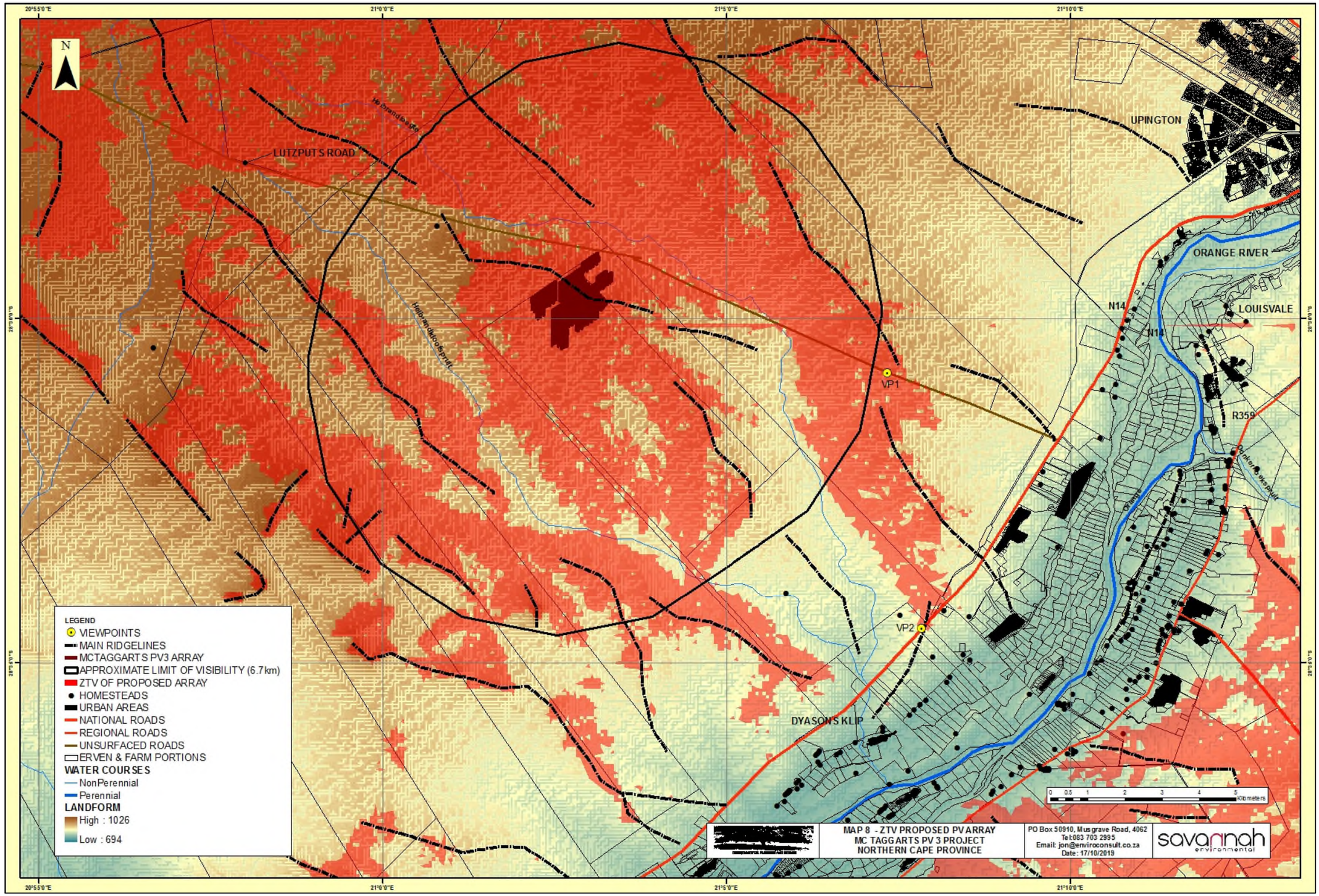


Plate 20 - View from VP2, Lutzputs Road approximately 6.3km to the east of McTaggarts PV3. The project will be viewed on and just below the ridgeline.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LUTZPUTS ROAD
UPINGTON
ORANGE RIVER
N14
LOUISVALE
R359
VP1
VP2
DYASON'S KLIP
LEGEND
VIEWPOINTS
MAIN RIDGELINES
MCTAGGARTS PV3 ARRAY
APPROXIMATE LIMIT OF VISIBILITY (6.7km)
ZTV OF PROPOSED ARRAY
HOMESTEADS
URBAN AREAS
NATIONAL ROADS
REGIONAL ROADS
UNSURFACED ROADS
ERVEN & FARM PORTIONS
WATER COURSES
NonPerennial
Perennial
LANDFORM
High : 1026
Low : 694
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 Kilometers
MAP 8 - ZTV PROPOSED PV ARRAY
MC TAGGARTS PV 3 PROJECT
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PO Box 50910, Musgrave Road, 4062
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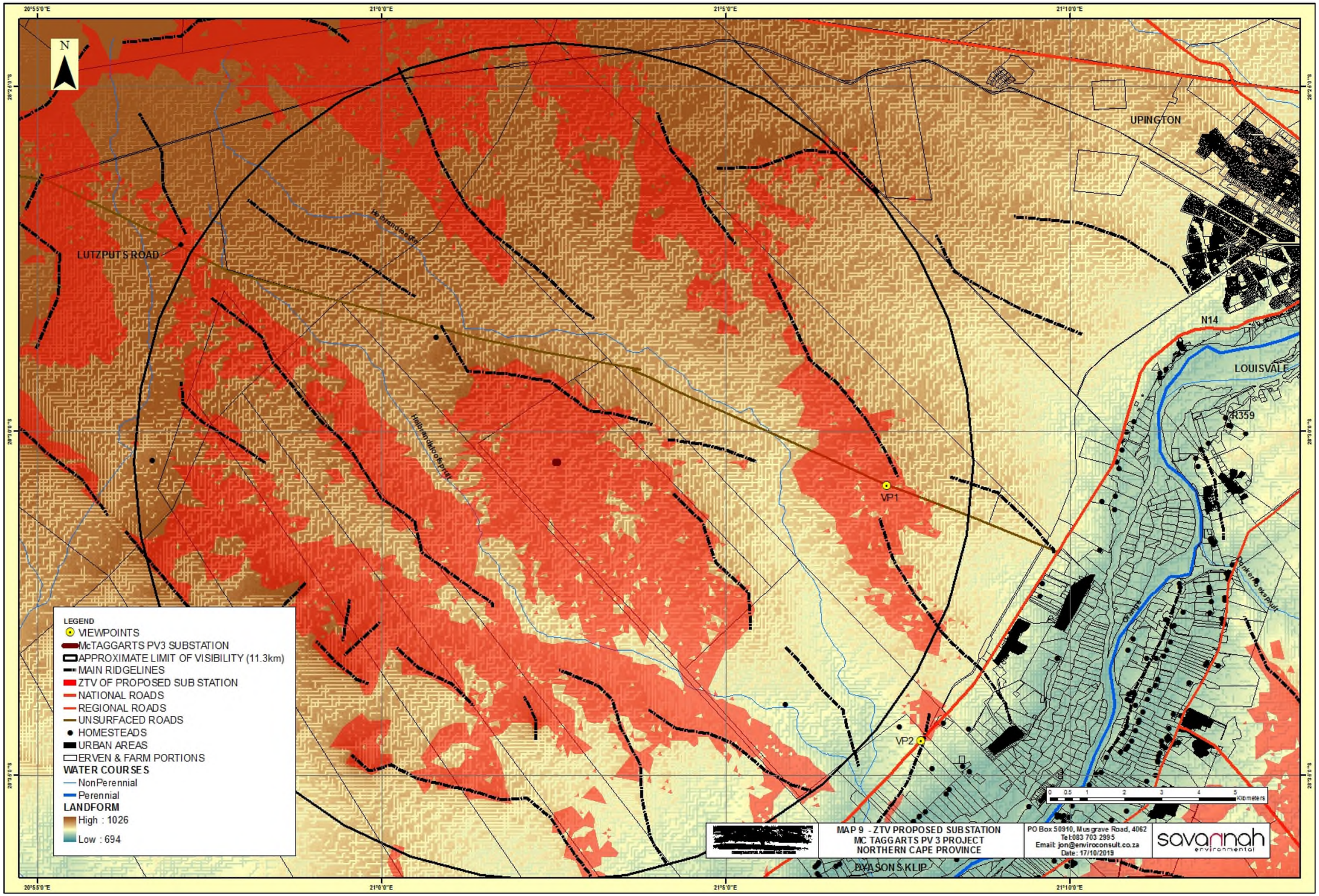
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N
LUTZPUT'S ROAD
UPINGTON
N14
LOUISVALE
R359
VP1
VP2
LEGEND
VIEWPOINTS
McTAGGARTS PV3 SUBSTATION
APPROXIMATE LIMIT OF VISIBILITY (11.3km)
MAIN RIDGELINES
ZTV OF PROPOSED SUB STATION
NATIONAL ROADS
REGIONAL ROADS
UNSURFACED ROADS
HOMESTEADS
URBAN AREAS
ERVEN & FARM PORTIONS
WATER COURSES
NonPerennial
Perennial
LANDFORM
High : 1026
Low : 694
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 Kilometers
MAP 9 - ZTV PROPOSED SUBSTATION
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NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE
PO Box 50910, Musgrave Road, 4062
Tel:083 703 2995
Email: jon@enviroconsult.co.za
Date: 17/10/2019
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BYASON'S KLIP

6 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The previous section of the Report identified specific areas where visual impacts may occur as well as their likely nature. This section will attempt to quantify these potential visual impacts in their respective geographical locations and in terms of the identified issues.

6.1 ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

The following list of possible impacts have been identified;

a) The proposed development could change the character and sense of place of the landscape setting;
b) The proposed development could change the character of the landscape as seen from the N14;
c) The proposed development could change the character of the landscape as seen from the R359;
d) The proposed development could change the character of the landscape as seen from the un-surfaced Lutzputs Road to the north and east;
e) The proposed development could change the character of the landscape as seen from local homesteads;
f) The proposed development could change the character of the landscape as seen from local settlement areas;
g) Glare impacts; and
h) Lighting impacts.

These impacts have to be addressed in terms of McTaggarts PV3 and the associated infrastructure.

It should, however, be noted that the impacts identified will all gradually increase from the current situation to the impact level indicated during the construction phase, be consistent at the impact levels indicated during the operation phase and decrease again from the levels indicated to close to the current situation during the decommissioning phase.

6.2 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the assessment of potential visual impacts includes:

- The **nature**, which shall include a description of what causes the effect, what will be affected and how it will be affected.
- The **extent**, wherein it will be indicated whether the impact will be local (limited to the immediate area or site of development) or regional:
    - local extending only as far as the development site area – assigned a score of 1;
    - limited to the site and its immediate surroundings (up to 10 km) – assigned a score of 2;
    - will have an impact on the region – assigned a score of 3;
    - will have an impact on a national scale – assigned a score of 4; or
    - will have an impact across international borders – assigned a score of 5.
- The **duration**, wherein it will be indicated whether:

    - the lifetime of the impact will be of a very short duration (0–1 years) – assigned a score of 1;
    - the lifetime of the impact will be of a short duration (2-5 years) - assigned a score of 2;
    - medium-term (5–15 years) – assigned a score of 3;
    - long term (> 15 years) - assigned a score of 4; or
    - permanent - assigned a score of 5.
- The **magnitude**, quantified on a scale from 0-10, where a score is assigned:
    - 0 is small and will have no effect on the environment;
    - 2 is minor and will not result in an impact on processes;
    - 4 is low and will cause a slight impact on processes;
    - 6 is moderate and will result in processes continuing but in a modified way;
    - 8 is high (processes are altered to the extent that they temporarily cease); and
    - 10 is very high and results in complete destruction of patterns and permanent cessation of processes.
- The **probability** *of occurrence*, which shall describe the likelihood of the impact actually occurring. Probability will be estimated on a scale, and a score assigned:
    - Assigned a score of 1–5, where 1 is very improbable (probably will not happen);
    - Assigned a score of 2 is improbable (some possibility, but low likelihood);
    - Assigned a score of 3 is probable (distinct possibility);
    - Assigned a score of 4 is highly probable (most likely); and
    - Assigned a score of 5 is definite (impact will occur regardless of any prevention measures).
- The **significance**, which shall be determined through a synthesis of the characteristics described above (refer formula below) and can be assessed as low, medium or high.
- The **status**, which will be described as either positive, negative or neutral.
- The degree to which the impact can be reversed.
- The degree to which the impact may cause irreplaceable loss of resources.
- The *degree* to which the impact can be *mitigated.*
- The **significance** is determined by combining the criteria in the following formula:
    - S=(E+D+M)P; where S = Significance weighting, E = Extent, D = Duration, M = Magnitude, P = Probability

The **significance weightings** for each potential impact are as follows:

- < 30 points: Low (i.e. where this impact would not have a direct influence on the decision to develop in the area),
- 30-60 points: Medium (i.e. where the impact could influence the decision to develop in the area unless it is effectively mitigated),
- > 60 points: High (i.e. where the impact must have an influence on the decision process to develop in the area).

6.2 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.2.1 The proposed development could change the character and sense of place of the landscape setting (Landscape Change)

Nature of impact:

The proposed solar project is located within an arid plateau landscape area which is within approximately 12km from the closest section of the verdant Orange River Corridor. The difference between these landscape areas is marked with the semi-desert of the plateau contrasting strongly with the green arable landscape of the Orange River Valley. The ZTV analysis indicates that the development McTaggarts PV3 is unlikely to be visible from this LCA. Therefore, the proposed project is unlikely to have any major impact on this LCA, it may, however, be visible from upper sections of the valley slopes. From these areas however vegetation generally softens or screens views.

Views of the bulk of the proposed development within the plateau landscape will be largely limited to areas in the immediate vicinity of the broader study area by minor ridgelines. These ridgelines will limit views of the development to approximately 5km to the north-east and east and approximately 7km to the west and south-west.

To the north visibility is more extensive as the topography flattens. There are however only limited locations from where McTaggarts PV3 may be viewed from as the majority of land is in private ownership.

To the south and south-east, views of the project will be limited to approximately 7km. Views of McTaggarts PV3 may be possible from ridgelines extending as far as the N14.

The landscape change will be viewed in the context of other solar projects within the area including the Khi Solar One CSP project which is located immediately to the south and the Sirius Solar PV Project One that at the time of reporting was under construction and is located to the south-east of Khi Solar One.

	Without mitigation	**With mitigation**
Extent	**Orange River LCA** Site and immediate surroundings **(2)** **Plateau LCA** Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	**Orange River LCA** Site and immediate surroundings **(2)** **Plateau LCA** Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**
Duration	**Orange River LCA** Long term **(4)** **Plateau LCA** Long term **(4)**	**Orange River LCA** Long term **(4)** **Plateau LCA** Long term **(4)**
Magnitude	**Orange River LCA** Small **(0)** **Plateau LCA** Minor **(2)**	**Orange River LCA** Small **(0)** **Plateau LCA** Small to minor **(1)**
Probability	**Orange River LCA**	**Orange River LCA**

	Very improbable **(1)** **Plateau LCA** Probable **(3)**	Very improbable **(1)** **Plateau LCA** Probable **(3)**
Significance	**Orange River LCA** Low **(6)** **Plateau LCA** Low **(24)**	**Orange River LCA** Low **(6)** **Plateau LCA** Low **(21)**
Status	**Negative**	**Negative**
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss	The proposed development can be dismantled and removed at the end of the operation phase. There will therefore be **no irreplaceable loss**. However, given the likely long term nature of the project, it is possible that a proportion of stakeholders will consider the loss of view as irreplaceable.	**No irreplaceable loss**
Can impacts be mitigated?	**Yes however mitigation will not change the significance rating.**	**N/A**

Mitigation / Management:

Planning:

- Plan levels to minimise earthworks to ensure that levels are not elevated;
- Plan to maintain the height of structures as low as possible; and
- Minimise disturbance of the surrounding landscape and maintain existing vegetation around the development.

Operation:

- Reinstate any areas of vegetation that have been disturbed during construction;
- Remove all temporary works;
- Monitor rehabilitated areas post-construction and implement remedial actions; and
- Minimise disturbance and maintain existing vegetation as far as is possible both within and surrounding the development area.

Decommissioning:

- Remove infrastructure not required for the post-decommissioning use of the site; and
- Rehabilitate and monitor areas post-decommissioning and implement remedial actions.

Cumulative Impacts:

McTaggarts PV3 will extend the general influence of development and specifically solar projects in the area. The overall cumulative impact is assessed as having a medium significance, however, the contribution of the proposed project to this cumulative impact is assessed as low.

See appendix IV.

Residual Risks:

The residual risk relates to loss of natural vegetation cover being obvious on decommissioning of the proposed project. It is, therefore, critical that effective rehabilitation is undertaken.

6.2.2 The proposed development could change the character of the landscape as seen from the N14.

Nature of impact:
The ZTV analysis indicates that views of McTaggarts PV3 and the associated infrastructure ewill be limited to short sections of approximately 1km of this road at a distance of approximately 11km. The proposed project will also be viewed in the context of Khi Solar One, as well as Sirius Solar PV Project One project which at the time of reporting was under construction.

It is unlikely that the subject project will be obvious from this road.

	Without mitigation	**With mitigation**
Extent	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**
Duration	Long term **(4)**	Long term **(4)**
Magnitude	Small **(0)**	Small **(0)**
Probability	Very improbable **(1)**	Very improbable **(1)**
Significance	Low **(6)**	Low **(6)**
Status	Given that the area is developing as a renewable energy development zone, it is possible that some people will see the development in a positive light. For those visiting the area for its natural attributes and for residents whose view is affected the change is likely to be seen as a **Negative Impact.**	**Negative Impact**
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss	The proposed development can be dismantled and removed at the end of the operation phase. There will therefore be **no irreplaceable loss**.	**No irreplaceable loss.**
Can impacts be mitigated?	**Yes,** however, mitigation will not change the significance rating.	

Mitigation / Management:
Planning:

- Plan levels to minimise earthworks to ensure that levels are not elevated;
- Plan to maintain the height of structures as low as possible; and
- Minimise disturbance of the surrounding landscape and maintain existing vegetation around the development.

Operation:

- Reinstate any areas of vegetation that have been disturbed during construction;
- Remove all temporary works;
- Monitor rehabilitated areas post-construction and implement remedial actions; and
- Minimise disturbance and maintain existing vegetation as far as is possible both within and surrounding the development area.

Decommissioning:

- Remove infrastructure not required for the post-decommissioning use of the site; and
- Rehabilitate and monitor areas post-decommissioning and implement remedial actions.

Cumulative Impacts:
McTaggarts PV3 will have a low visual impact on the N14.

A detailed visual analysis of other solar projects in the area has not been undertaken, however, it is likely that other solar projects in the area could have a significant greater impact.

The overall cumulative impact is assessed as having a medium significance, however, the contribution of McTaggarts PV3to this cumulative impact is assessed as low.
See Appendix IV.

Residual Risks:
The residual risk relates to loss of natural vegetation cover being obvious on decommissioning of the proposed project. It is therefore critical that effective rehabilitation is undertaken.

6.2.3 The proposed development could change the character of the landscape as seen from the R359.

Nature of impact:

The ZTV analysis indicates that the proposed project could be visible to small sections of this road in the vicinity of Louisvale. These areas are outside the ALV of the project.

If the project is visible it will be seen in the context of and behind Khi Solar One, as well as the Sirius Solar PV Project One, which at the time of the reporting was under construction.

Given that the project will be seen at a distance of approximately 16km and behind other closer existing projects, it is highly unlikely that McTaggarts PV3 will be visually obvious.

	Without mitigation	**With mitigation**
Extent	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**
Duration	Long term **(4)**	Long term **(4)**
Magnitude	Small **(0)**	Small **(0)**
Probability	Very improbable **(1)**	Very improbable **(1)**
Significance	Low **(6)**	Low **(6)**
Status	Given that the area is developing as a renewable energy development zone, it is possible that some people will see the development in a positive light. For those visiting the area for its natural attributes and for residents whose view is affected, the change may be seen as a Negative Impact. However, due to distance and	**Neutral Impact**

	likely screening and because if small sections of the development are visible they will be seen in the context and behind other solar projects, the change in view is likely to be seen as a **neutral impact**.	
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss	The proposed development can be dismantled and removed at the end of the operation phase. There will therefore be **no irreplaceable loss**.	**No irreplaceable loss.**
Can impacts be mitigated?	**Yes** but mitigation is unlikely to affect the assessed levels of impact.	

Mitigation / Management:

Planning:

- Plan levels to minimise earthworks to ensure that levels are not elevated;
- Plan to maintain the height of structures as low as possible; and
- Minimise disturbance of the surrounding landscape and maintain existing vegetation around the development.

Operation:

- Reinstate any areas of vegetation that have been disturbed during construction;
- Remove all temporary works;
- Monitor rehabilitated areas post-construction and implement remedial actions; and
- Minimise disturbance and maintain existing vegetation as far as is possible both within and surrounding the development area.

Decommissioning:

- Remove infrastructure not required for the post-decommissioning use of the site; and
- Rehabilitate and monitor areas post-decommissioning and implement remedial actions.

Cumulative Impacts:

McTaggarts PV3 will have a low visual impact on the R359.

A detailed visual analysis of other solar projects in the area has not been undertaken, however, it is likely that only CSP projects in the area which have taller elements could have a significant impact on this road.

The overall cumulative impact is assessed as having a low significance. The contribution of the proposed project to this cumulative impact is assessed as low.
See Appendix IV.

Residual Risks:

The residual risk relates to loss of natural vegetation cover being obvious on decommissioning of the proposed project. It is therefore critical that effective rehabilitation is undertaken.

6.2.4 The proposed development could change the character of the landscape as seen from the Lutzputs Road.

Nature of impact:

The ZTV analysis indicates that McTaggarts PV3 will be seen from up to approximately 8.4km of this road. At its closest, the development may be seen at a distance of approximately 100m and at its furthest, the development may be seen at a distance of approximately 6.3km.

The development will be seen in the context of Khi Solar One. The full heliostat field as well as the power tower will be visible. The Sirius Solar PV Project One, that at the time of reporting was under construction, is also likely to be visible from this road.

The proposed array will appear as a dark line in the landscape generally with a lesser effect than is seen in **Plate 17**. It is unlikely to be highly obvious.

It is possible that the on-site substation will be seen slightly above the level of the array, however, at the distances involved these elements are highly unlikely to be obvious.

	Without mitigation	**With mitigation**
Extent	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**
Duration	Long term **(4)**	Long term **(4)**
Magnitude	Low **(4)**	Minor to low **(2)**
Probability	Definite **(5)**	Definite **(5)**
Significance	Medium **(50)**	Medium **(40)**
Status	Given that the area is developing as a renewable energy development zone, it is possible that some people will see the development in a positive light. For those visiting the area for its natural attributes and for residents whose view is affected, the change may be seen as a Negative Impact. However, due to distance, the fact that the road is largely used by local people and because it will be seen in the context of Khi Solar One, the change in view is likely to be seen as a **neutral to negative impact**.	**Neutral to negative impact**
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss	The proposed development can be dismantled and removed at the end of the operation phase. There will therefore be **no irreplaceable loss**.	**No irreplaceable loss.**

Can impacts be mitigated?	**Yes**

Mitigation / Management:

Planning:

- Plan levels to minimise earthworks to ensure that levels are not elevated;
- Plan to maintain the height of structures as low as possible; and
- Minimise disturbance of the surrounding landscape and maintain existing vegetation around the development.

Operation:

- Reinstate any areas of vegetation that have been disturbed during construction;
- Remove all temporary works;
- Monitor rehabilitated areas post-construction and implement remedial actions; and
- Minimise disturbance and maintain existing vegetation as far as is possible both within and surrounding the development area.

Decommissioning:

- Remove infrastructure not required for the post-decommissioning use of the site; and
- Rehabilitate and monitor areas post-decommissioning and implement remedial actions.

Cumulative Impacts:

McTaggarts PV3 will have a low visual impact on the Lutzputs Road.

A detailed visual analysis of all other solar projects in the area has not been undertaken, however, from the site visit, it is obvious that the Khi Solar One CSP project has a more significant impact on the road

The overall cumulative impact is assessed as having a medium significance. The contribution of the proposed project to this cumulative impact is assessed as low.
See Appendix IV.

Residual Risks:

The residual risk relates to loss of natural vegetation cover being obvious on decommissioning of the proposed project. It is, therefore, critical that effective rehabilitation is undertaken.

6.2.5 The proposed development could change the character of the landscape as seen from local homesteads.

Nature of impact:

Probably due to the low carrying capacity of the landscape, there are few agricultural homesteads in the vicinity of the proposed development. The closest homestead is located approximately 4km to the north west of McTaggarts PV3.

The ZTV analysis indicates that the proposed project is unlikely to be visible from any of the local homesteads that have been identified.

	Without mitigation	**With mitigation**
Extent	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	N/A

Duration	Very short duration **(1)**	N/A
Magnitude	Small **(0)**	N/A
Probability	Very improbable **(1)**	N/A
Significance	Low **(3)**	N/A
Status	As the project is unlikely to be visible it is unlikely that there will be a visual impact. The status is therefore **neutral.**	N/A
Reversibility	High	N/A
Irreplaceable loss	**No irreplaceable loss**	N/A
Can impacts be mitigated?	No mitigation required	N/A

Mitigation / Management:

No mitigation required.

Cumulative Impacts:
It is highly unlikely that there will be an impact on local homesteads. There is therefore, unlikely to be any contribution to cumulative visual impacts on homesteads.

See Appendix IV.

Residual Impacts:
The residual risk relates to the infrastructure being left in place on decommissioning of the solar project. It is therefore critical that effective rehabilitation is undertaken.

6.2.6 The proposed development could change the character of the landscape as seen from local settlement areas.

Nature of impact:

All local settlements are located close to or within the Orange River Corridor, and include xxx. The closest settlement is in excess of 10km to the south-east of McTaggarts PV3.

The ZTV analysis indicates that the proposed development is unlikely to be visible from settlements.

	Without mitigation	**With mitigation**
Extent	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	N/A
Duration	Very short duration **(1)**	N/A
Magnitude	Small **(0)**	N/A
Probability	Very improbable **(1)**	N/A

Significance	Low **(3)**	N/A
Status	As the project is unlikely to be visible it is unlikely that there will be a visual impact. The impact will therefore be **neutral**.	N/A
Reversibility	High	N/A
Irreplaceable loss	**No irreplaceable loss**	N/A
Can impacts be mitigated?	No mitigation is necessary	
Mitigation / Management: No mitigation is necessary		
Cumulative Impacts: It is highly unlikely that there will be an impact on local settlements. There is therefore unlikely to be any contribution to cumulative visual impacts on settlements. **See Appendix IV.**		
Residual Risks: No residual risks.		

6.2.7 Glare Impacts.

Nature of impact:

There are two areas where glare could be a concern to stakeholders, including:

a) Upington International Airport; and
b) The Lutzputs Road.

The assessment has shown that the impact of glare on the Upington International Airport is highly unlikely. It also indicates that glare could impact the Lutputz Road during late afternoon particularly during winter months. However due to the very limited number of vehicles on this road this impact is unlikely to have a high significance.

	Without mitigation	**With mitigation**
Extent	**Upington Airport** Regional **(3)** **Lutputz Road** Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	**Upington Airport** Regional **(3)** **Lutputz Road** Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**
Duration	Long term **(4)**	Long term **(4)**
Magnitude	**Upington Airport** Small **(0)**	**Upington Airport** Small **(0)**

	Lutputz Road Small to minor **(1)**	**Lutputz Road** Small **(0)**
Probability	**Upington Airport** Very improbable **(1)** **Lutputz Road** Improbable **(2)**	**Upington Airport** Very improbable **(1)** **Lutputz Road** Very improbable **(1)**
Significance	**Upington Airport** Low **(7)** **Lutputz Road** Low **(14)**	**Upington Airport** Low **(7)** **Lutputz Road** Low **(6)**
Status	**Neutral**	**Neutral**
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss	**No irreplaceable loss**.	**No irreplaceable loss.**
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes	
Mitigation / Management: Operation: • Should glare prove problematic, mitigation measures could include the implementation of screen fencing or earth berms.		
Cumulative Impacts: The glare arising from McTaggarts PV3 affecting stakeholders is unlikely. It is possible that glare associated with other proposed and existing projects (i.e. Khi Solar One) could impact stakeholders. Given that mitigation of possible impacts should be relatively simple to achieve, it is assumed that levels of impact will be minor. The overall cumulative impact is assessed as having a low significance. The contribution of McTaggarts PV3 to this cumulative impact is assessed as low. **See appendix IV.**		
Residual Risks: There are no residual risks.		

6.2.8 The potential visual impact of operational, safety and security lighting of the facility at night on observers.

Nature of impact: McTaggarts PV3 will be lit by security lights to a level sufficient to ensure that security cameras can operate at night. This is likely to result in the array being obvious at night from surrounding areas. Khi solar One located immediately to the south appears relatively dark at night. There are obvious lights from Upington, as well as from passing traffic and small settlements and homesteads particularly in the Orange River Valley. The area therefore is not completely dark during the night. There is potential therefore for the project to add to these existing lighting levels.		
	Without mitigation	**With mitigation**

Extent	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	Site **(1)**
Duration	Long term **(4)**	Long term **(4)**
Magnitude	Low **(4)**	Small to minor **(1)**
Probability	Definite **(5)**	Improbable **(2)**
Significance	Medium **(50)**	Low **(12)**
Status	The appearance of a large lit area may be accepted by most people. It is likely however that some people will see the expansion of lighting as a **negative** impact.	If the lights are generally not visible then the occasional light is unlikely to be seen as negative. **Neutral**
Irreplaceable loss	It would be possible to change and adapt the lighting / camera system so the impact cannot be seen as an irreplaceable loss.	No irreplaceable loss
Reversibility	High	High
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes	

Mitigation / Management:

Operation:

- Use low key lighting around buildings and operational areas that is triggered only when people are present;
- Plan to utilise infra-red security systems or motion sensor triggered security lighting;
- Ensure that lighting is focused on the development with no light spillage outside the site; and
- Keep lighting low, no tall mast lighting should be used.

Cumulative Impact:

There is potential for security lighting and operational lighting associated with solar energy projects to further impact on the area but with the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures, the contribution of McTaggarts PV3 to possible cumulative impacts is likely to be of low significance.

See appendix IV.

Residual Risks:

No residual risk has been identified.

7 IMPACT STATEMENT

7.1 VISIBILITY

The limited height of the bulk of the proposed development helps to limit visibility.

The natural grain of the landform is formed by small ridgelines that are remnants of an historic dune field running approximately north north-west to south south-east. This landform channels views to the north of the broader study are. Due to the relatively low height of McTaggarts PV3 this subtle landform is likely to play a major role in moderating views of the proposed development.

Due to its location and its general low profile, mitigation due to distance is likely to mean that the development is unlikely to be obvious for most receptors particularly those located to the south.

Views of the proposed on-site substation may extend the visibility of the project, however, the relative transparency of the upper sections of the substation is likely to mean that these elements are not highly obvious.

7.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS AND VISUAL ABSORPTION CAPACITY

The affected landscape can generally be divided into the following LCAs that are largely defined by vegetation, topography and drainage patterns.

- **Plateau LCA** includes the gently undulating, arid plateau above the Orange River Valley. This area is generally natural in character with very little settlement. It is obvious from **Map 2 (Context)** that the character of this area is in transition in that solar projects are likely to create an industrial aesthetic within a matrix of natural vegetation. VAC within this area is only provided by the regular, low, dune formation as well as slopes of the slightly larger minor valleys that are associated with the non-perennial water courses that flow into the Orange River Valley.
- **The Orange River Corridor LCA** is comprised of the shallow valley area surrounding the Orange River. This area is generally inward looking drawing little character influence from the surrounding plateau. Landform, vegetation and development all play a role in screening views of surrounding areas and contribute to significant VAC.

7.3 SENSITIVE RECEPTORS

Identified visual receptors include:

- Area Receptors including the minor urban settlement areas that are located within the River Corridor LCA. From the site visit it appears that the majority of settlement areas relate to agricultural use of the Orange River Valley. It is likely that the residents of these minor settlements are predominantly focused on agricultural production of the area. As these settlements are located within the River Valley LCA, it is likely that views of the proposed development particularly from the northern side of the valley will be difficult. It is also likely that vegetation within the River Valley will at least partially screen any views of the proposed development that may be possible from the higher sections of the southern valley slopes;

- Linear Receptors or routes through the area includes the N14, the R359 and the Lutzputs Road. Both the N14 and the R359 roads have tourism significance, although the N14 is possibly the most important in this regard;
- The Lutzputs Road is an un-surfaced road that runs to the north and east and close to the broader study area. Because of its proximity the Lutzputs Road is likely to be impacted to a greater degree than other linear receptors. However this road is likely to be mainly used by local people;
- Point Receptors include individual homesteads that are located both within the River Valley LCA and the Plateau LCA. From the site visit, it is unlikely that settlements on the northern side of the Orange River will have views towards the proposed development. It is however possible that receptors on the higher sections on the southern side of the valley could have views of the proposed development. These however will be distance views and they are likely to be softened by vegetation within the River Valley.

7.4 VISUAL IMPACT

Visual impacts are likely to include;

a) The general change in character of the landscape due McTaggarts PV3 was assessed as low. This is due to the limited area over which the proposed development is likely to be visible as well as the fact that the landscape is partly industrialised by Khi Solar One and other solar projects that are under construction;
b) The impact due to the possible change in view as seen from the N14 was assessed as low. This is due to the limited area over which the proposed development could be visible, the fact that the N14 lies outside the ALV as well as the fact that the landscape is partly industrialised by Khi Solar One and other solar projects that are under construction;
c) The impact due to the possible change in view as seen from the R359 was assessed as low. This is due to the fact that the road lies outside the Approximate Limit of Visibility and the likely screening / softening of views towards the project by vegetation within and on the edge of the Orange River Valley;
d) The impact due to the possible change in view as seen from the Lutzputs Road was assessed as having a medium significance both with and without mitigation. This is largely due to the proximity of the array to the road. Due to the limited number of people that use this road and due to the fact that it has no tourism significance, the impact was ascribed as having a neutral to negative status;
e) The impact due to the possible change in view as seen from homesteads and settlements was assessed as low. This is due to the fact that the ZTV analysis indicates that no homesteads or settlements are likely to be affected and the fact that all settlement areas fall outside the Approximate Limit of Visibility;
f) The impact of glare on the Upington International Airport was assessed as very improbable and low whereas, due to proximity, the impact on the Lutzputs Road was assessed as probable and having a medium significance. Due to the limited amount of traffic on the Lutzputs Road and the relatively easy mitigation method, should glare prove problematic with mitigation, the impact was assessed as low; and
g) The impact of lighting in changing the nature of the night-time landscape was assessed as medium without mitigation but with mitigation lighting levels are likely to be similar to those in the surrounding area.

7.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

In terms of general landscape change, the overall cumulative impact associated with solar projects was assessed as having a medium significance however, the contribution of McTaggarts PV3 to this cumulative impact is assessed as low.

Cumulative visual impacts associated with solar projects that are likely to affect the N14, the R359, homesteads and settlement areas are likely to have a medium significance. The contribution to these impacts associated with the proposed project is likely to be low.

Cumulative visual impacts associated with solar projects that are likely to affect the Lutzputs Road are likely to have a medium significance. Due largely to the proximity of the array to the road, the contribution to this impact associated with the proposed project is also likely to have a medium significance.

With mitigation, it is likely that the cumulative effect of glare on sensitive receivers associated with other authorised projects and the proposed project is likely to be low. This is due to awareness of issues associated with glare, the distance of the majority of projects from sensitive receivers and the relatively simple measures that can be adopted to mitigate potential problems.

There is potential for security lighting and operational lighting associated with solar energy projects to have a significant impact in a rural region where lighting levels are limited to traffic on roads passing through the area and low level lighting associated with homesteads and small settlements. With appropriate mitigation however, general lighting levels are likely to be largely in keeping with surrounding areas.

7.6 CONCLUSION

McTaggarts PV3 will generally result in a relatively limited level of visual impact within an area that is already impacted by a major solar project – Khi Solar One. Therefore, the level of impact within the region is also not likely to increase significantly.

In general terms, the proposed project is in keeping with its surroundings and will not impact significantly on receptors that are likely to be sensitive to landscape change associated with the project.

The proposed project is therefore considered to be acceptable from a visual perspective and is appropriate for authorisation, subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures. The development footprint (i.e. facility layout) proposed for McTaggarts PV3 is also considered to be acceptable from a visual perspective.

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APPENDIX I

SPECIALIST'S BRIEF CV

Name	JONATHAN MARSHALL
Nationality	British
Year of Birth	1956
Specialisation	Landscape Architecture / Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment / Environmental Planning / Environmental Impact Assessment.
Qualifications	
Education	Diploma in Landscape Architecture, Gloucestershire College of Art and Design, UK (1979) Environmental Law, University of KZN (1997)
Professional	Registered Professional Landscape Architect (SACLAP) Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (UK) Member of the International Association of Impact Assessment, South Africa
Languages	English- Speaking - Excellent - Reading - Excellent - Writing - Excellent
Contact Details	Post: PO Box 50910 Musgrave Road 4062 Republic of South Africa Cell: +27 83 7032995

General

Jon qualified as a Landscape Architect (Dip LA) at Cheltenham (UK) in 1979. He has been a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute UK since 1986. He is a registered Professional Landscape Architect and he has also worked as an Environmental Assessment Practitioner within South Africa.

During the early part of his career (1981 - 1990) He worked with Clouston (now RPS) in Hong Kong and Australia. During this period he was called on to undertake landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) input to numerous environmental assessment processes for major infrastructure projects. This work was generally based on photography with line drawing superimposed to illustrate the extent of development visible.

He has worked in the United Kingdom (1990 - 1995) for major supermarket chains including Sainsbury's and prepared CAD based visual impact assessments for public enquiries for new store development. He also prepared the LVIA input to the environmental statement for the Cardiff Bay Barrage for consideration by the UK Parliament in the passing of the Barrage Act (1993).

His more recent LVIA work (1995 to present) includes a combination of CAD and GIS based work for a new international airport to the north of Durban, new heavy industrial operations, overhead electrical transmission lines, mining operations in West Africa and numerous commercial and residential developments.

LVIA work undertaken recently includes assessments for a new Eskom gas fired power station, two proposed private power stations, numerous solar and wind energy projects, a proposed cable car development in the Drakensberg and tourism related development within iSimangiliso Wetland Park and the Kruger National Park.

Select List of Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment Projects

- **Selati Railway Bridge** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for proposed development of up-market accommodation on a railway bridge at Skukuza in the Kruger Park.
- **Eskom Combined Cycle Power Plant** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for proposed gas power plant in Richards Bay, KwaZulu Natal Province.
- **Olifantshoek Power Line and Substation -** Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed 31km 132kV power line and 10MVA substation in Olifantshoek in the Northern Cape Province.
- **Jozini TX Tower -** Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed telecommunications mast above Jozini Dam in KwaZulu Natal Province.
- **Macapanstad Agri-Park Development** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed agri-park in the North West Province.
- **Gunstfontein Wind Farm Amendment -** Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed change in rotor size, hub height and layout of an authorised wind farm near Sutherland in the Northern Cape Province.
- **Great Karoo Wind Farm Amendment -** Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed change in rotor size, hub height and layout of an authorised wind farm near Sutherland in the Northern Cape Province.
- **Mpushini Park Mixed Use Development** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed change in development height and density of a mixed use development near Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu Natal.
- **Aggeneys PV Solar Project** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed solar farm near Aggeneys in the Northern Cape.
- **Sirius PV Solar Project** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed solar farm near Upington in the Northern Cape.
- **Hyperion PV Solar Project** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed solar farm in near Kathu in the Northern Province.
- **Moeding PV Solar Project** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed solar farm in Vryburg.
- **Kangala Mine Extension -** Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed extension to an open cast coal mine in Mpumalanga Province for Universal Coal.
- **N2 Section 20 Wild Coast, road upgrades, borrow pits and quarry sites** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for the NRA through KSEMS Environmental Consulting
- **Establishment of Upmarket Tourism Accommodation on the Selati Bridge, Kruger National Park** – Assessment of visual implications of providing tourism accommodation in 12 railway carriages on an existing railway bridge at the Skukuza Rest Camp in the Kruger Park.
- **Palesa Power Station** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a new 600MW power station near Kwamhlanga in Mpumalanga for a private client.
- **Heuningklip PV Solar Project** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a solar project in the Western Cape Province for a private client.
- **Kruispad PV Solar Project** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a solar project in the Western Cape Province for a private client.
- **Doornfontein PV Solar Project** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a solar project in the Western Cape Province for a private client.
- **Olifantshoek Power Line and Substation** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a new 10MVA 132/11kV substation and 31km powerline, Northern Cape Province, for Eskom.
- **Noupoort Concentrating Solar Plants -** Scoping and Visual Impact Assessments for two proposed parabolic trough projects.
- **Drakensberg Cable Car –** Preliminary Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and draft

terms of reference as part of the feasibility study.

- **Paulputs Concentrating Solar Plant (tower technology)** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a new CSP project near Pofadder in the Northern Cape.
- **Ilanga Concentrating Solar Plants 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5** – Scoping and Visual Impact Assessments for the proposed extension of five authorised CSP projects including parabolic trough and tower technology within the Karoshoek Solar Valley near Upington in the Northern Cape.
- **Ilanga Concentrating Solar Plants 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 Shared Infrastructure** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for the necessary shared infrastructure including power lines, substation, water pipeline and roads for these projects.
- **Ilanga Concentrating Solar Plants 7, 8 & 9** - Scoping and Visual Impact Assessments for three new CSP projects including parabolic trough and tower technology within the Karoshoek Solar Valley near Upington in the Northern Cape.
- **Sol Invictus Solar Plants** - Scoping and Visual Impact Assessments for three new Solar PV projects near Pofadder in the Northern Cape.
- **Gunstfontein Wind Energy Facility** – Scoping and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed WEF near Sutherland in the Northern Cape.
- **Moorreeesburg Wind Energy Facility** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed WEF near Moorreeesburg in the Western Cape.
- **Semonkong Wind Energy Facility** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed WEF near Semonkong in Southern Lesotho.
- **Great Karoo Wind Energy Facility** – Addendum report to the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Report for amendment to this authorised WEF that is located near Sutherland in the Northern Cape. Proposed amendments included layout as well as rotor diameter.
- **Perdekraal East Power Line** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed power line to evacuate power from a wind energy facility near Sutherland in the Northern Cape.
- **Tshivhaso Power Station** – Scoping and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed new power station near Lephalale in Limpopo Province.
- **Saldanha Eskom Strengthening** – Scoping and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for the upgrading of strategic Eskom infrastructure near Saldanha in the Western Cape.
- **Eskom Lethabo PV Installation** - Scoping and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for the development of a solar PV plant within Eskom's Lethabo Power Station in the Free State.
- **Eskom Tuthuka PV Installation** - Scoping and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for the development of a solar PV plant within Eskom's Thutuka Power Station in Mpumalanga.
- **Eskom Majuba PV Installation** - Scoping and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for the development of a solar PV plant within Eskom's Majuba Power Station in Mpumalanga.
- **Golden Valley Power Line** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed power line to evacuate power from a wind energy facility near Cookhouse in the Eastern Cape.
- **Mpophomeni Shopping Centre** – Landscape and Visual impact assessment for a proposed new shopping centre close to the southern shore of Midmar Dam in KwaZulu Natal.
- **Rheeboksfontein Power Line** - Addendum report to the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Report for amendment to this authorised power line alignment located near Darling in the Western Cape.
- **Woodhouse Solar Plants** – Scoping and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for two proposed solar PV projects near Vryburg in the North West Province.
- **AngloGold Ashanti, Dokyiwa (Ghana)** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for proposed new Tailings Storage Facility at a mine site working with SGS as part of their EIA team.
- **Gateway Shopping Centre Extension (Durban)** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed shopping centre extension in Umhlanga, Durban.
- **Kouroussa Gold Mine (Guinea)** – Landscape and Visual impact assessment for a proposed new mine in Guinea working with SGS as part of their EIA team.

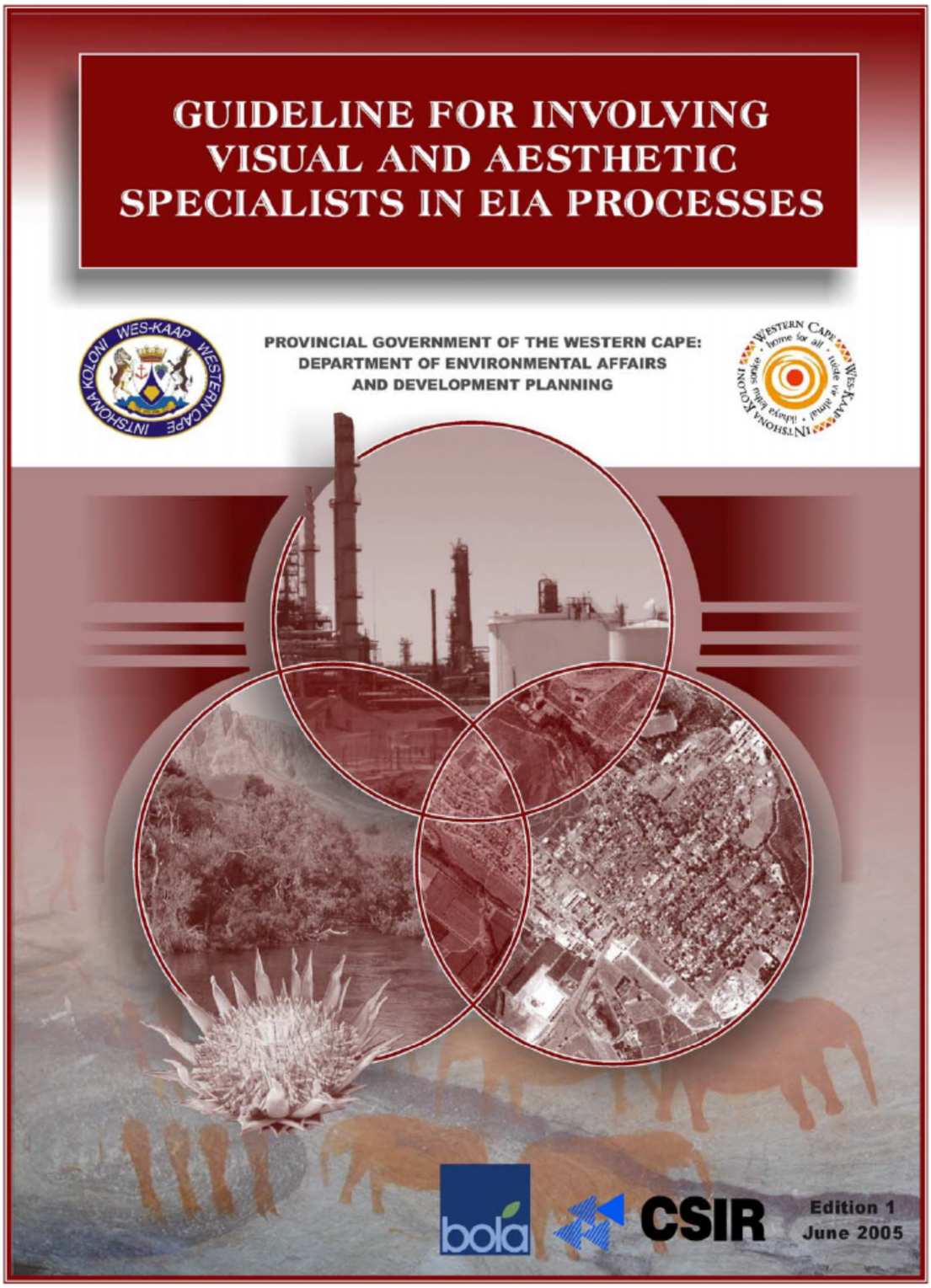
- **Mampon Gold Mine (Ghana)** - Landscape and Visual impact assessment for a proposed new mine in Ghana working with SGS as part of their EIA team.
- **Telkom Towers** – Landscape and Visual impact assessments for numerous Telkom masts in KwaZulu Natal.
- **Eskom Isundu Substation** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed major new Eskom substation near Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu Natal.
- **Eskom St Faiths Power Line and Substation** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a major new substation and associated power lines near Port Shepstone in KwaZulu Natal.
- **Eskom Ficksburg Power Line** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed new power line between Ficksburg and Cocolan in the Free State.
- **Eskom Matubatuba to St Lucia Power Line** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a proposed new power line between Mtubatuba and St Lucia in KwaZulu Natal.
- **Dube Trade Port, Durban International Airport** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- **Sibaya Precinct Plan** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as part of Environmental Impact Assessment for a major new development area to the north of Durban.
- **Umdloti Housing** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as part of Environmental Impact Assessment for a residential development beside the Umdloti Lagoon to the north of Durban.
- **Tata Steel Ferrochrome Smelter** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of proposed new Ferrochrome Smelter in Richards Bay as part of EIA undertaken by the CSIR.
- **Durban Solid Waste Large Landfill Sites –** Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of proposed development sites to the North and South of the Durban Metropolitan Area. The project utilised 3d computer visualisation techniques.
- **Hillside Aluminium Smelter, Richards Bay -** Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of proposed extension of the existing smelter. The project utilised 3d computer visualisation techniques.
- **Estuaries of KwaZulu Natal Phase 1 –** Visual character assessment and GIS mapping as part of a review of the condition and development capacity of eight estuary landscapes for the Town and Regional Planning Commission. The project was extended to include all estuaries in KwaZulu Natal.
- **Signage Assessments** – Numerous impact assessments for proposed signage developments for Blast Media.
- **Signage Strategy** – Preparation of an environmental strategy report for a national advertising campaign on National Roads for Visual Image Placements.
- **Zeekoegatt, Durban** - Computer aided Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. EDP acted as advisor to the Province of KwaZulu Natal in an appeal brought about by a developer to extend a light industrial development within a 60 metre building line from the National N3 Highway.
- **La Lucia Mall Extension** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment using three dimensional computer modelling / photo realistic rendering and montage techniques for proposed extension to shopping mall for public consultation exercise.
- **Redhill Industrial Development** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment using three dimensional computer modelling / photo realistic rendering and montage techniques for proposed new industrial area for public consultation exercise.
- **Avondale Reservoir** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment using three dimensional computer modelling / photo realistic rendering and montage techniques for proposed hilltop reservoir as part of Environmental Impact Assessment for Umgeni Water.
- **Hammersdale Reservoir** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment using three dimensional computer modelling / photo realistic rendering and montage techniques for proposed hilltop reservoir as part of Environmental Impact Assessment for Umgeni Water.

- **Southgate Industrial Park, Durban** - Computer Aided Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Landscape Design for AECI.
- **Sainsbury's Bryn Rhos** - Computer Aided Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment / Planning Application for the development of a new store within the Green Wedge North of Swansea.
- **Ynyston Farm Access** - Computer Aided Impact Assessment of visual intrusion of access road to proposed development of Cardiff for the Land Authority for Wales.
- **Cardiff Bay Barrage** – Preparation of the Visual Impact Statement for inclusion in the Impact Statement for debate by parliament (UK) prior to the passing of the Cardiff Bay Barrage Bill.
- **A470, Cefn Coed to Pentrebach** - Preparation of landscape frameworks for the assessment of the impact of the proposed alignment on the landscape for The Welsh Office.
- **Sparkford to Illchester Bye Pass** - The preparation of the landscape framework and the draft landscape plan for the Department of Transport.
- **Green Island Reclamation Study** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of building massing, Urban Design Guidelines and Masterplanning for a New Town extension to Hong Kong Island.
- **Route 3** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for alternative road alignments between Hong Kong Island and the Chinese Border.
- **China Border Link** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and initial Landscape Design for a new border crossing at Lok Ma Chau.
- **Route 81, Aberdeen Tunnel to Stanley** - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for alternative highway alignments on the South side of Hong Kong Island.

APPENDIX II

GUIDELINES FOR INVOLVING VISUAL AND AESTHETIC SPECIALISTS IN EIA PROCESSES

(Preface, Summary and Contents for full document go to the Provincial Government of the Western Cape, Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning web site, http://eadp.westerncape.gov.za/your-resource-library/policies-guidelines)


GUIDELINE FOR INVOLVING VISUAL AND AESTHETIC SPECIALISTS IN EIA PROCESSES
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF THE WESTERN CAPE:
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
bola
CSIR
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GUIDELINE FOR INVOLVING VISUAL AND AESTHETIC SPECIALISTS IN EIA PROCESSES

Edition 1

Issued by:

Provincial Government of the Western Cape
Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning
Utilitas Building, 1 Dorp Street
Private Bag X9086
Cape Town 8000
South Africa

Prepared by:

Bernard Oberholzer Landscape Architect
PO Box 26643
Hout Bay, 7872, South Africa
email: bola@wol.co.za

Coordinated by:

CSIR Environmentek
P O Box 320
Stellenbosch 7599
South Africa

Contact person:

Frauke Münster
Tel: +27 21 888-2538
(fmunster@csir.co.za)

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Steering committee:

Paul Hardcastle	-	DEA&DP
Ayub Mohammed	-	DEA&DP
Susie Brownlie	-	de Villiers Brownlie Associates
Keith Wiseman	-	City of Cape Town
Mike Burns	-	CSIR Environmentek
Paul Lochner	-	CSIR Environmentek
Pete Ashton	-	CSIR Environmentek

Focus group participants:

Paul Hardcastle	-	DEA&DP
Washiela Anthony	-	DEA&DP
Danie Smit	-	DEAT
Eileen Weinronk	-	City of Cape Town
Menno Klapwijk	-	Cave Klapwijk and Associates
Graham Young	-	Landscape Consultant
Bernard Oberholzer	-	Bernard Oberholzer Landscape Architect (BOLA)
Nicolas Baumann	-	Baumann & Winter Heritage Consultants
Sarah Winter	-	Baumann & Winter Heritage Consultants
Tanya de Villiers	-	Chittenden Nicks deVilliers Africa
Frauke Münster	-	CSIR Environmentek

Internal review:

Mike Burns	-	CSIR Environmentek
Eileen Weinronk	-	City of Cape Town
Paul Hardcastle	-	DEA&DP
Washiela Anthony	-	DEA&DP

Stakeholders engaged in the guideline development process:

These guidelines were developed through a consultative process and have benefited from the inputs and comments provided by a wide range of individuals and organizations actively working to improve EIA practice. Thanks are due to all who took the time to engage in the guideline development process.

In particular, thanks are due to Jan Glazewski (University of Cape Town), Keith Wiseman (City of Cape Town), Paul Britton (SANPARKS), Graham Young (University of Pretoria), Lisa Parkes (Ninham Shand) and Paul Claassen (Environomics) for providing useful information and in-depth comments.

Finalisation of report figures and formatting:

Magdel van der Merwe and Elna Logie, DTP Solutions

PREFACE

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is to provide decision-makers (be they government authorities, the project proponent or financial institutions) with adequate and appropriate information about the potential positive and negative impacts of a proposed development and associated management actions in order to make an informed decision whether or not to approve, proceed with or finance the development.

For EIA processes to retain their role and usefulness in supporting decision-making, the involvement of specialists in EIA needs to be improved in order to:

- Add greater value to project planning and design;
- Adequately evaluate reasonable alternatives;
- Accurately predict and assess potential project benefits and negative impacts;
- Provide practical recommendations for avoiding or adequately managing negative impacts and enhancing benefits;
- Supply enough relevant information at the most appropriate stage of the EIA process to address adequately the key issues and concerns, and effectively inform decision-making in support of sustainable development.

It is important to note that not all EIA processes require specialist input; broadly speaking, specialist involvement is needed when the environment could be significantly affected by the proposed activity, where that environment is valued by or important to society, and/or where there is insufficient information to determine whether or not unavoidable impacts would be significant.

The purpose of this series of guidelines is to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of specialist involvement in EIA processes. The guidelines aim to improve the capacity of roleplayers to anticipate, request, plan, review and discuss specialist involvement in EIA processes. Specifically, they aim to improve the capacity of EIA practitioners to draft appropriate terms of reference for specialist input and assist all roleplayers in evaluating whether or not specialist input to the EIA process is appropriate for the type of development and environmental context. Furthermore, they aim to ensure that specialist inputs support the development of effective, practical Environmental Management Plans where projects are authorised to proceed (refer to *Guideline for Environmental Management Plans*).

The guidelines draw on best practice in EIA in general, and within specialist fields of expertise in particular, to address the following issues related to the timing, scope and quality of specialist input. The terms "specialist involvement" and "input" have been used in preference to "specialist assessment" and "studies" to indicate that the scope of specialists' contribution (if required) depends on the nature of the project, the environmental context and the amount of available information and does not always entail detailed studies or assessment of impacts.

The guidelines draw on best practice in EIA in general, and within specialist fields of expertise in particular, to address the following issues related to the timing, scope and quality of specialist input. The terms "specialist involvement" and "input" have been used in preference to "specialist

McTaggarts PVS, Visual Impact Assessment, September 2019.

assessment" and "studies" to indicate that the scope of specialists' contribution depends on the nature of the project, the environmental context and the amount of available information.

	ISSUES
TIMING	▪ When should specialists be involved in the EIA process; i.e. at what stage in the EIA process should specialists be involved (if at all) and what triggers the need for their input?
SCOPE	▪ Which aspects must be addressed through specialist involvement; i.e. what is the purpose and scope of specialist involvement? ▪ What are appropriate approaches that specialists can employ? ▪ What qualifications, skills and experience are required?
QUALITY	▪ What triggers the review of specialist studies by different roleplayers? ▪ What are the review criteria against which specialist inputs can be evaluated to ensure that they meet minimum requirements, are reasonable, objective and professionally sound?

The following guidelines form part of this first series of guidelines for involving specialists in EIA processes:

- Guideline for determining the scope of specialist involvement in EIA processes
- Guideline for the review of specialist input in EIA processes
- Guideline for involving biodiversity specialists in EIA processes
- Guideline for involving hydrogeologists in EIA processes
- Guideline for involving visual and aesthetic specialists in EIA processes
- Guideline for involving heritage specialists in EIA processes
- Guideline for involving economists in EIA processes

The *Guideline for determining the scope of specialist involvement in EIA processes* and the *Guideline for the review of specialist input in EIA processes* provide generic guidance applicable to any specialist input to the EIA process and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different roleplayers involved in the scoping and review of specialist input. It is recommended that these two guidelines are read first to introduce the generic concepts underpinning the guidelines which are focused on specific specialist disciplines.

Who is the target audience for these guidelines?

The guidelines are directed at authorities, EIA practitioners, specialists, proponents, financial institutions and other interested and affected parties involved in EIA processes. Although the guidelines have been developed with specific reference to the Western Cape province of South Africa, their core elements are more widely applicable.

What type of environmental assessment processes and developments are these guidelines applicable to?

The guidelines have been developed to support project-level EIA processes regardless of whether they are used during the early project planning phase to inform planning and design decisions (i.e. during pre-application planning) or as part of a legally defined EIA process to obtain statutory approval for a proposed project (i.e. during screening, scoping and/or impact assessment). Where specialist input may be required the guidelines promote early, focused and appropriate involvement of specialists in EIA processes in order to encourage proactive consideration of potentially significant impacts, so that negative impacts may be avoided or

effectively managed and benefits enhanced through due consideration of alternatives and changes to the project.

The guidelines aim to be applicable to a range of types and scales of development, as well as different biophysical, social, economic and governance contexts.

What will these guidelines not do?

In order to retain their relevance in the context of changing legislation, the guidelines promote the principles of EIA best practice without being tied to specific legislated national or provincial EIA terms and requirements. They therefore do not clarify the specific administrative, procedural or reporting requirements and timeframes for applications to obtain statutory approval. They should, therefore, be read in conjunction with the applicable legislation, regulations and procedural guidelines to ensure that mandatory requirements are met.

It is widely recognized that no amount of theoretical information on how best to plan and coordinate specialist inputs, or to provide or review specialist input, can replace the value of practical experience of coordinating, being responsible for and/or reviewing specialist inputs. Only such experience can develop sound judgment on such issues as the level of detail needed or expected from specialists to inform decision-makers adequately. For this reason, the guidelines should not be viewed as prescriptive and inflexible documents. Their intention is to provide best practice guidance to improve the quality of specialist input.

Furthermore, the guidelines do not intend to create experts out of non-specialists. Although the guidelines outline broad approaches that are available to the specialist discipline (e.g. field survey, desktop review, consultation, modeling), specific methods (e.g. the type of model or sampling technique to be used) cannot be prescribed. The guidelines should therefore not be used indiscriminately without due consideration of the particular context and circumstances within which an EIA is undertaken, as this influences both the approach and the methods available and used by specialists.

How are these guidelines structured?

The specialist guidelines have been structured to make them user-friendly. They are divided into six parts, as follows:

- **Part A**: Background;
- **Part B**: Triggers and key issues potentially requiring specialist input;
- **Part C**: Planning and coordination of specialist inputs (drawing up terms of reference);
- **Part D**: Providing specialist input;
- **Part E**: Review of specialist input; and
- **Part F**: References.

Part A provides grounding in the specialist subject matter for all users. It is expected that authorities and peer reviewers will make most use of Parts B and E; EIA practitioners and project proponents Parts B, C and E; specialists Part C and D; and other stakeholders Parts B, D and E. Part F gives useful sources of information for those who wish to explore the specialist topic.

SUMMARY

This guideline document, which deals with specialist visual input into the EIA process, is organised into a sequence of interleading sections. These follow a logical order covering the following:

- the background and context for specialist visual input;
- the triggers and issues that determine the need for visual input;
- the type of skills and scope of visual inputs required in the EIA process;
- the methodology, along with information and steps required for visual input;
- finally, the review or evaluation of the visual assessment process.

Part A is concerned with defining the visual and aesthetic component of the environment, and with principles and concepts relating to the visual assessment process. The importance of the process being logical, holistic, transparent and consistent is stressed in order for the input to be useful and credible.

The legal and planning context within which visual assessments take place indicate that there are already a number of laws and bylaws that protect visual and scenic resources. These resources within the Western Cape context have importance for the economy of the region, along with the proclaimed World Heritage Sites in the Province.

The role and timing of specialist visual inputs into the EIA process are outlined, with the emphasis being on timely, and on appropriate level of input, from the early planning stage of a project, through to detailed mitigation measures and management controls at the implementation stage.

Part B deals with typical factors that trigger the need for specialist visual input to a particular project. These factors typically relate to:

(a) the nature of the receiving environment, in particular its visual sensitivity or protection status;
(b) the nature of the project, in particular the scale or intensity of the project, which would result in change to the landscape or townscape.

The correlation between these two aspects are shown in a table, in order to determine the varying levels of visual impact that can be expected, i.e. from little or no impact, to very high visual impact potential.

Part C deals with the choice of an appropriate visual specialist, and the preparation of the terms of reference (TOR) for the visual input. Three types of visual assessment are put forward, each requiring different expertise, namely:

Type A: assessments involving large areas of natural or rural landscape;
Type B: assessments involving local areas of mainly built environment;
Type C: assessments involving smaller scale sites with buildings, or groups of buildings.

The scope of the visual input would in summary relate to the following:

- the issues raised during the scoping process;
- the time and space boundaries, i.e. the extent or zone of visual influence;

- the types of development alternatives that are to be considered;
- the variables and scenarios that could affect the visual assessment;
- the inclusion of direct, indirect and cumulative effects.

Approaches to the visual input relate to the level of potential impact and range from minimal specialist input, to a full visual impact assessment (VIA). A list of the typical components of a visual assessment is given, and the integration with other studies forming part of the EIA process is discussed.

Part D provides guidance for specialist visual input, and on the information required by specialists. Notes on predicting potential visual impacts are given, along with suggested criteria for describing and rating visual impacts. The assessment of the overall significance of impacts, as well as thresholds of significance are discussed.

Further aspects that need to be considered by visual specialists in EIA processes include:

- affected parties who stand to benefit or lose,
- risks and uncertainties related to the project,
- assumptions that have been made, and their justification,
- levels of confidence in providing the visual input or assessment,
- management actions that can be employed to avoid or mitigate adverse effects and enhance benefits, and
- the best practicable environental option from the perspective of the visual issues and impacts.

Finally, pointers for the effective communication of the findings are given.

Part E lists specific evaluation criteria for reviewing visual input by a specialist, where this becomes necessary. Further guidance on this is given in the document on *Guideline for the review of specialist input in EIA processes*.

CONTENTS

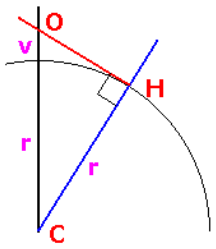
APPENDIX III

FORMULA FOR DERIVING THE APPROXIMATE VISUAL HORIZON

The Mathematics behind this Calculation

This calculation should be taken as a guide only as it assumes the earth is a perfect ball 6378137 metres radius. It also assumes the horizon you are looking at is at sea level. A triangle is formed with the centre of the earth (C) as one point, the horizon point (H) is a right angle and the observer (O) the third corner. Using Pythagoras's theorem we can calculate the distance from the observer to the horizon (OH) knowing CH is the earth's radius (r) and CO is the earth's radius (r) plus observer's height (v) above sea level.

Sitting in a hotel room 10m above sea level a boat on the horizon will be 11.3km away. The reverse is also true, whilst rowing across the Atlantic, the very top of a mountain range 400m high could be seen on your horizon at a distance of 71.4 km assuming the air was clear enough.



APPENDIX IV

CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1 Landscape Change

Nature:
The proposed project will extend the general influence of development and specifically solar projects within the area.

The project is one of three proposed projects within the same broader study area.

There are also a number of authorised and existing solar projects in the vicinity including:

- Khi solar One which is a Concentrated Solar Power project including a 205m high power tower and a field of heliostats, has already been developed on the site immediately to the south of the proposed development area. This project really sets the scene for introducing a major industrial element that is visible over a broad area and within the context of which all the proposed solar PV projects in the vicinity will be viewed; and
- Two authorised PV projects on the adjoining property to the south (Sirius PV 1 and Sirius PV2). At the time of reporting, one of these projects was under construction.

In addition there are solar projects proposed and approved on fourteen additional properties within 30km of the proposed site.

The proposed project will therefore not extend the visual influence of industry, it will however intensify the influence within a relatively small area.

Whilst a detailed visual analysis of other solar projects in the area has not been undertaken, the combined effect of all proposed solar projects could be significant. Because the proposed project will affect an area within which there is already significant industrial influence, it is only likely to have a relatively small contribution to landscape change.

As the impact of the proposed project on the Orange River Corridor is minimal and because it is more difficult to predict the impact of other projects on this area without undertaking a detailed analysis, only the impact of projects on the Plateau LCA is considered.

	Overall impact of the proposed project considered in isolation	**Cumulative impact of the project and other projects in the area**
Extent	Site and surroundings **(2)**	Region **(3)**
Duration	Long term **(4)**	Long term **(4)**
Magnitude	Minor **(2)**	High **(8)**
Probability	Probable **(3)**	Probable **(3)**
Significance	**Low (24)**	**Medium (45)**
Status (positive or negative)	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes	Unknown

Mitigation:
Planning:

- Plan levels to minimise earthworks to ensure that levels are not elevated;
- Plan to maintain the height of structures as low as possible; and

- Minimise disturbance of the surrounding landscape and maintain existing vegetation around the development.

Operation:

- Reinstate any areas of vegetation that have been disturbed during construction;
- Remove all temporary works;
- Monitor rehabilitated areas post-construction and implement remedial actions; and
- Minimise disturbance and maintain existing vegetation as far as is possible both within and surrounding the development area.

Decommissioning:

- Remove infrastructure not required for the post-decommissioning use of the site; and
- Rehabilitate and monitor areas post-decommissioning and implement remedial actions.

Residual Impacts:

Residual impacts relate to the loss of indigenous vegetation as well as the failure to remove development and infrastructure on decommissioning.

2 Character of the landscape as seen from the N14.

Nature:

The ZTV analysis indicates that views of the proposed PV array and the on-site substation will be limited to a short section of approximately 1km of this road at a distance of approximately 10.8km which is outside the ALV.

If visible, the proposed project will also be viewed in the context of and adjacent to the Khi Solar One project as well as at least one another PV solar project that at the time of reporting was under construction (Sirius).

It is unlikely therefore that McTaggarts PV3 will be obvious from this road, its influence on this cumulative impact is therefore likely to be minimal.

	Overall impact of the proposed project considered in isolation	**Cumulative impact of the project and other projects in the area**
Extent	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	Region **(3)**
Duration	Long term **(4)**	Long term **(4)**
Magnitude	Small **(0)**	Moderate to low **(5)**
Probability	Very improbable **(1)**	Probable **(5)**
Significance	Low **(6)**	Medium **(60)**
Status (positive or negative)	Neutral	Negative
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes	Unknown

Mitigation:

Planning:

- Plan levels to minimise earthworks to ensure that levels are not elevated;
- Plan to maintain the height of structures as low as possible; and
- Minimise disturbance of the surrounding landscape and maintain existing vegetation around the development.

Operation:

- Reinstate any areas of vegetation that have been disturbed during construction;
- Remove all temporary works;
- Monitor rehabilitated areas post-construction and implement remedial actions; and
- Minimise disturbance and maintain existing vegetation as far as is possible both within and surrounding the development area.

Decommissioning:

- Remove infrastructure not required for the post-decommissioning use of the site; and
- Rehabilitate and monitor areas post-decommissioning and implement remedial actions.

Residual Impacts:
Residual impacts relate to the loss of indigenous vegetation as well as the failure to remove development and infrastructure on decommissioning.

3 Change in the character of the landscape as seen from the R359.

Nature:
The ZTV analysis indicates that the proposed project could be visible intermittently to small sections of this road in the vicinity of Louisvale at a distance of approximately 13.5km. Given the distance and the extent of vegetation on the edge of the Orange River Valley, the proposed project is unlikely to be obvious from this road.

The proposed project is largely screened from the road by landform and vegetation. Other solar PV projects are also likely to be largely screened from the road.

It is unlikely therefore that McTaggarts PV3 will be obvious from this road, its influence on this cumulative impact is therefore likely to be minimal.

	Overall impact of the proposed project considered in isolation	**Cumulative impact of the project and other projects in the area**
Extent	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	Regional **(3)**
Duration	Long term **(4)**	Long term, **(4)**
Magnitude	Small **(0)**	Minor to Low, **(3)**
Probability	Very Improbable **(1)**	Probable, **(3)**
Significance	**Low (6)**	**Medium (30)**
Status (positive or negative)	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No irreplaceable loss.	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes	Unknown

Mitigation:
Planning:

- Plan levels to minimise earthworks to ensure that levels are not elevated;
- Plan to maintain the height of structures as low as possible; and

- Minimise disturbance of the surrounding landscape and maintain existing vegetation around the development.

Operation:

- Reinstate any areas of vegetation that have been disturbed during construction;
- Remove all temporary works;
- Monitor rehabilitated areas post-construction and implement remedial actions; and
- Minimise disturbance and maintain existing vegetation as far as is possible both within and surrounding the development area.

Decommissioning:

- Remove infrastructure not required for the post-decommissioning use of the site; and
- Rehabilitate and monitor areas post-decommissioning and implement remedial actions.

Residual Impacts:

Residual impacts relate to the loss of indigenous vegetation as well as the failure to remove development and infrastructure on decommissioning.

4 Change in the character of the landscape as seen from the Lutzputs Road.

Nature:

The ZTV analysis indicates that the proposed project will be seen from up to approximately 5km of this road. At its closest, the development may be seen at a distance of approximately 1.2km, and at its furthest the development may be seen at a distance exceeding 5.6km.

The proposed project is therefore likely to be obvious from this road and it will add to the cumulative visual impact of renewable energy projects for travellers on this road.

Other existing major contributors to cumulative effects include:

- The Khi Solar One project, the heliostat field as well as the power tower will be visible; and
- The Sirius PV Project One that at the time of reporting was under construction to the south of the proposed project which is also likely to be visible from this road.

Whilst a detailed visual analysis of other solar projects in the area has not been undertaken, in general terms Solar PV projects in close proximity to the road and the CSP tower project are likely to provide the major contribution to cumulative visual impacts associated with renewable energy projects in the area.

The overall cumulative impact could therefore have a medium significance. The proposed project is likely to result in a relatively low contribution to this overall impact.

	Overall impact of the proposed project considered in isolation	**Cumulative impact of the project and other projects in the area**

Extent	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	Regional **(3)**
Duration	Long term **(4)**	Long term **(4)**
Magnitude	Minor to low **(2)**	Moderate to low **(5)**
Probability	Definite **(5)**	Definite **(5)**
Significance	Medium **(40)**	Medium **(60)**
Status (positive or negative)	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No irreplaceable loss.	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes	Unknown

Mitigation:

Planning:

- Plan levels to minimise earthworks to ensure that levels are not elevated;
- Plan to maintain the height of structures as low as possible; and
- Minimise disturbance of the surrounding landscape and maintain existing vegetation around the development.

Operation:

- Reinstate any areas of vegetation that have been disturbed during construction;
- Remove all temporary works;
- Monitor rehabilitated areas post-construction and implement remedial actions; and
- Minimise disturbance and maintain existing vegetation as far as is possible both within and surrounding the development area.

Decommissioning:

- Remove infrastructure not required for the post-decommissioning use of the site; and
- Rehabilitate and monitor areas post-decommissioning and implement remedial actions.

Residual Impacts:

Residual impacts relate to the loss of indigenous vegetation as well as the failure to remove development and infrastructure on decommissioning.

5 Cumulative impact on local homesteads

Nature:

Visual impacts on homesteads were assessed as being very improbable.

The proposed solar PV project is therefore unlikely to contribute significantly to cumulative visual impacts on homesteads.

Because the majority of homesteads are located within the Orange River Valley and are likely to be at least partially screened from PV projects to the north by landform and vegetation their cumulative visual impact is also anticipated to be low.

CSP tower projects such as the Khi Solar One project are likely to be obvious however.

The cumulative impact is therefore also likely to be improbable with a low significance.

	Overall impact of the proposed project considered in isolation	**Cumulative impact of the project and other projects in the area**
Extent	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	Region **(3)**
Duration	Very short duration **(1)**	Long term **(4)**
Magnitude	Small **(0)**	Minor **(2)**
Probability	Very improbable **(1)**	Probable **(3)**
Significance	Low **(3)**	Low **(27)**
Status (positive or negative)	Neutral	Neutral
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No irreplaceable loss	No irreplaceable loss
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes	Unknown

Mitigation:

Planning:

- Plan levels to minimise earthworks to ensure that levels are not elevated;
- Plan to maintain the height of structures as low as possible; and
- Minimise disturbance of the surrounding landscape and maintain existing vegetation around the development.

Operation:

- Reinstate any areas of vegetation that have been disturbed during construction;
- Remove all temporary works;
- Monitor rehabilitated areas post-construction and implement remedial actions; and
- Minimise disturbance and maintain existing vegetation as far as is possible both within and surrounding the development area.

Decommissioning:

- Remove infrastructure not required for the post-decommissioning use of the site; and
- Rehabilitate and monitor areas post-decommissioning and implement remedial actions.

Residual Impacts:

Residual impacts relate to the loss of indigenous vegetation as well as the failure to remove development and infrastructure on decommissioning.

6 Cumulative impact on Settlement

Nature:

There are numerous small settlement areas along the N14 and within the Orange River Valley. The proposed development is screened from these largely by landform.

The proposed project was assessed as likely to have a very improbable impact of low significance on settlements. It is therefore highly unlikely that this project will have a significant contribution to cumulative impacts on settlements.

Whilst a detailed assessment of other planned projects has not been undertaken, it is possible that they may impact on settlement areas. The Khi Solar One project, due to the height of the power tower already has significant visual impact on numerous settlements in the area.

	Overall impact of the proposed project considered in isolation	**Cumulative impact of the project and other projects in the area**
Extent	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	Regional **(3)**
Duration	Very short duration **(1)**	Long term **(4)**
Magnitude	Small **(0)**	Moderate **(6)**
Probability	Very improbable **(1)**	Probable **(3)**
Significance	Low **(3)**	Medium **(39)**
Status	**Neutral**	**Negative**
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No irreplaceable loss.	No irreplaceable loss.
Can impacts be mitigated?	No mitigation is necessary	Unknown
Mitigation: Unknown		
Residual Impacts: Residual impacts relate to the loss of indigenous vegetation as well as the failure to remove development and infrastructure on decommissioning.		

7 Cumulative impact of glare affecting local receptors.

Nature:

A brief geometric review of the potential for glare to affect the Upington International Airport and the Lutzputs Road during the potentially worst time of the year (mid-winter) when the sun is furthest north and the possible angle of reflection is greatest has indicated that it is highly unlikely that glare from McTaggarts PV3 will affect the Airport. It is however likely that glare will affect the Lutzputs Road.

Only the Lutzputs Road is considered likely to add to cumulative impacts of glare. With mitigation and because of the very low number of vehicles that use this road, the contribution to cumulative impacts is however assessed as having a low significance.

	Overall impact of the proposed project considered in isolation	**Cumulative impact of the project and other projects in the area**
Extent	Site and immediate surroundings **(2)**	Regional **(3)**
Duration	Long term **(4)**	Long term **(4)**
Magnitude	Small to minor **(1)**	Minor **(2)**
Probability	Improbable **(2)**	Probable **(3)**
Significance	Low **(14)**	Low **(27)**
Status (positive or negative)	**Neutral**	**Negative**
Reversibility	High	High

Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No irreplaceable loss.	No irreplaceable loss.
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes	
Mitigation: Should glare prove problematic mitigation might include a the implementation of screen fencing or an earth bund..		
Residual Impacts: None		

8 Night Time Lighting Impacts

Nature:
Currently lighting in the area arises from the settlement areas and homesteads within the Orange River Valley and traffic on the N14. There is also a background lighting level from the urban area of Upington

There is a risk that the proposed project will extend the influence of lighting, however with appropriate mitigation lighting levels are anticipated to be low and in keeping with the current lighting pattern.

It is likely that the development of other solar projects in the area will increase lighting levels. However, with appropriate mitigation it is anticipated that this also will produce a low level of impact that is also in keeping with surrounding lighting levels.

	Overall impact of the proposed project considered in isolation	**Cumulative impact of the project and other projects in the area**
Extent	Site **(1)**	Regional **(3)**
Duration	Long term **(4)**	Long term **(4)**
Magnitude	Small to minor **(1)**	Small to minor **(1)**
Probability	Improbable **(2)**	Improbable **(3)**
Significance	Low **(12)**	Low **(24)**
Status (positive or negative)	If the lights are generally not visible then the occasional light is unlikely to be seen as negative. **Neutral**	**Neutral**
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No irreplaceable loss	No irreplaceable loss
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes	

Mitigation:

1) Use low key lighting around buildings and operational areas that is triggered only when people are present.
2) Plan to utilise infra-red security systems or motion sensor triggered security lighting;
3) Ensure that lighting is focused on the development with no light spillage outside the site; and
4) Keep lighting low, no tall mast lighting should be used.

Residual Impacts:
No residual risk has been identified.

APPENDIX V
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Project component/s	McTaggarts PV3, Construction, Operation and Decommissioning
Potential Impact	Change in Landscape Character and the nature of stakeholder views: • Extending the influence of development into relatively natural areas; • Changing the nature of views from the N14, the R359, the Lutzputs Road and homesteads; • Extending lighting impacts into natural areas that are currently dark during the night-time hours of darkness; and • Glare from PV panel surface affecting the Lutzputs Road and the Upington International Airport.
Activity/risk source	• Engineered change in landform being obvious against natural contours; • Vegetation clearance and lack of rehabilitation during construction and decommissioning making the development more obvious particularly from a distance; • The development industrialising the outlook for stakeholders; • Lighting extending into natural areas that are currently dark during the night-time hours of darkness; and • Reflection from the surface of PV panels causing glare.
Mitigation: Target/Objective	• Plan platforms and earthworks to blend into surrounding natural contours. • Minimise and reinstate vegetation loss. • Maintain and augment existing surrounding natural vegetation in order to soften views of the development and maintain continuity with the surrounding natural landscape. • Remove structures and rehabilitate the site to its natural condition on decommissioning. • Ensure PV panels use non reflective surfaces in order to minimise the potential for glint and glare.

Mitigation: Action/control	**Responsibility** Contractor (C) Environmental Officer (EO) Environmental Liaison Officer (ELO)	**Timeframe** Construction Phase (C) Operational Phase (O) Decommissioning Phase (D)
Ensure that the face of panels have the most effective non reflective surface possible at the time of ordering.	C	C
Should glare be an issue, undertake screening to minimise the impact.	EO	O
Minimise disturbance and maintain existing vegetation as far as is possible both within and surrounding the development area.	C, EO	C

Reinstate any areas of vegetation that have been disturbed during construction.	C, EO	C
Maintain and augment vegetation within the area surrounding the development.	C, EO	C
Rehabilitate disturbed areas to their natural state on decommissioning.	EO	D
Monitor rehabilitated areas post-construction and post-decommissioning and implement remedial actions.	C, EO	C, D
Remove all temporary works.	C, EO	D
Remove infrastructure not required for the post-decommissioning use of the site.	C, EO	D
Performance Indicators	Natural contours are followed rather than rigid engineered landform. Vegetation presence and density is sufficient and satisfactory. Visibility of the development from surrounding areas. Presence of unnecessary infrastructure.	
Monitoring	Evaluate vegetation before, during and after construction. Evaluate vegetation growth and reinstatement during decommissioning and for a year thereafter. Monitor glare affecting the Airport through liaison with the operator. Monitor glare affecting traffic on the Lutzputs Road particularly during late afternoons during winter months by driving relevant sections of the road, should any complaints from the I&APs and surrounding community embers be lodged in this regard. Take regular time-line photographic evidence. Responsibility: EO and ELO. Prepare regular reports.	