

APPENDIX C9
COMMENTS AND RESPONSES REPORT

**MERINO WIND FARM, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE
(DFFE Ref. No.: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2114)
COMMENTS AND RESPONSES REPORT**

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The Scoping Phase of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process for the Merino Wind Farm, which is planned as part of a larger cluster of renewable energy projects, was announced on **Thursday, 21 October 2021**. The Background Information Document was distributed together with a notification letter which served to invite Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) to register their interest in the project and submit any comments / queries they may have on any of the proposed developments that make up the Great Karoo Cluster of Renewable Energy Facilities, including the Merino Wind Farm.

The Scoping Report was made available for a 30-day review and comment period from **Friday, 12 November 2021** until **Monday, 13 December 2021**. All written comments received to date have been included in the table below and in **Appendix C7** to the final Scoping Report. The Comments and Responses Report (C&RR) is included as a separate document to the final Scoping Report as **Appendix C9**.

NOTE:

All comments captured in the C&RR are verbatim and have not been summarised.

Notes for the record for all meetings held during the 30-day review and comment period of the Scoping Report are included as **Appendix C8** to the final Scoping Report and do not form part of this C&RR.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS

APM	Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites	NEMA	National Environmental Management Act
BID	Background Information Document	NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act
C&RR	Comments and Responses Report	OoS	Organs of State
CBA	Critical Biodiversity Area	PIA	Palaeontological Impact Assessment
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment	PP	Public Participation
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation	REIPPPP	Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme
EA	Environmental Authorisation	SABAA	South African Bat Assessment Association
EAP	Environmental Assessment Practitioner	SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	SAHRIS	South African Heritage Resources Information System
FGM	Focus Group Meeting	SR	Scoping Report
HIA	Heritage Impact Assessment	S&EIR	Scoping and Environmental Impact Report
KSW	Key Stakeholder Workshop		

1. COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE SCOPING REPORT REVIEW & COMMENT PERIOD

1.1. Organs of State

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
1.	<p>Please apply for water use authorisation where necessary. Attached is the Section 21 c and I water uses checklist</p>	<p>Pieter Ackerman Chief Landscape Architect Sub Directorate Instream Water Use DWS E-mail: 11 November 2021</p>	<p>The water use authorisation application process will be initiated once positive Environmental Authorisations (EAs) have been received and the projects are selected as Preferred Bidder under the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Programme (REIPPPP) or a similar programme.</p>
2.	<p>Your notification dated 12 November 2021 refers.</p> <p>In reference to the Electronic Communications Act no. 36 of 2005</p> <p>I hereby inform you that the proposed work indicated on your drawing is approved in terms of the Electronic Communications Act no. 36 of 2005</p> <p>No underground telecommunication infrastructure owned by Telkom SA SOC Ltd is affected.</p> <p>Approval of the proposed route is valid for six months. If construction has not yet commenced within this time period then the file must be resubmitted for approval. Any changes and deviations from the original planning during construction must be immediately communicated to this office.</p>	<p>Portia Mkhathini Wayleave Officer Network Operations openserve (Telkom SA SOC Ltd) E-mail: 18 November 2021</p>	<p>The validity of the approval of the proposed route for a six (6)-month period is noted and has been submitted to the applicant for record keeping purposes.</p> <p>Consultation with Openserve will take place during the EIA Phase in which the company will be informed that should the projects receive positive EAs, the applicant will be in contact with Openserve before construction commences.</p>
3.	<p>The SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit notes the pending assessment of the impact to heritage resources and requests that the assessment comply with section 38(3) of the NHRA. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) must contain an archaeological component that must be</p>	<p>Natasha Higgitt Heritage Officer SAHRA Letter: 03 December 2021</p>	<p>As part of the Scoping Phase, a heritage screener was produced for the proposed development which indicated that as few or no surveys have been undertaken for the proposed development, a full Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) with a detailed field component must be undertaken.</p>

	<p>conducted by a qualified archaeologist and the report comply with the SAHRA 2007 Minimum Standards: Archaeological and Palaeontological Components of Impact Assessment Reports.</p>		<p>The full HIA will be submitted as part of the EIA Report during the EIA Phase of the process. As per this requirement, the HIA will contain an archaeological component which has been conducted by a qualified archaeologist. Furthermore, the report will be prepared in accordance with the SAHRA Minimum Standards: Archaeological and Palaeontological Components of Impact Assessment Report.</p>
	<p>The proposed development is located within an area of very high and moderate Palaeontological Sensitivity as per the SAHRIS PalaeoSensitivity map. As such, a field-based Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) must be undertaken by a qualified palaeontologist. (See https://www.palaeosa.org/heritage-practitioners.html for a list of qualified palaeontologists). The report must comply with the 2012 Minimum Standards: Palaeontological Components of Heritage Impact Assessments.</p>		<p>A field based Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) will be submitted as part of the EIA Report during the EIA Phase of the process. As per this requirement, the assessment will be conducted by a qualified palaeontologist listed on the list of heritage practitioners (https://www.palaeosa.org/heritage-practitioners.html). Furthermore, the report will be prepared in accordance with the 2012 Minimum Standards: Palaeontological Components of Heritage Impact Assessments.</p>
	<p>Any other heritage resources as defined in section 3 of the NHRA that may be impacted, such as built structures over 60 years old, sites of cultural significance associated with oral histories, burial grounds and graves, graves of victims of conflict, and cultural landscapes or viewsapes must also be assessed.</p>		<p>As per this requirement, the HIA will include an assessment of all relevant heritage resources as defined in Section 3 of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), including cultural landscapes or viewsapes.</p>
	<p>Previous comments regarding buffers from scenic routes in the Northern Cape must be taken into consideration during the assessment on the cultural landscape or viewsapes, and the results of the Visual Impact Assessment must be incorporated into the HIA.</p>		<p>A cultural landscape assessment will be undertaken for the proposed development, the results of which will be incorporated into the HIA to be submitted as part of the EIA Report during the EIA Phase of the process.</p> <p>As per this requirement, the cultural landscape assessment will take into consideration buffers from scenic routes in the Northern Cape. In addition, the results of the Visual Impact Assessment will be incorporated into the cultural landscape assessment.</p>

	<p>Further comments will be issued upon receipt of the above requested reports and the draft EIA with all appendices.</p>		<p>A copy of the Final Scoping Report and the draft EIA Report and supporting appendices will be uploaded onto the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS) website under SAHRIS CaseID 17539 for SAHRA's review and comment.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>This letter serves to inform you that the following information must be included to the final SR:</u></p> <p>a) Listed Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Please ensure that all relevant listed activities are applied for, are specific and can be linked to the development activity or infrastructure as described in the project description. ii. The listed activities represented in the final SR and the application form must be the same and correct. iii. If the activities applied for in the application form differ from those mentioned in the final SR, an amended application form must be submitted. iv. Please note that the Department's application form template has been amended and can be downloaded from the following link https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms. <p>b) Layout & Sensitivity Maps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The final SR must provide coordinate points for the proposed development site (note that if the site has numerous bend points, at each bend point coordinates must be provided) as well as the start, middle and end point of all linear activities. ii. All preferred turbine positions must be clearly numbered. The turbine position numbers must be consistently used in all maps to be included in the reports. 	<p>Herman Alberts Case Officer DFFE</p> <p>Letter: 06 December 2021</p>	<p>All relevant activities applied for in the application for an Environmental Authorisation (EA) and included in the Scoping Report are relevant to the Merino Wind Farm and its associated infrastructure as described in the project description.</p> <p>The listed activities applied for in the application form are the same as those included in the final Scoping Report. No amended application form is submitted with the final Scoping Report as no changes have been introduced to the application form since the version submitted to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) on 12 November 2021. It can be confirmed that the latest version of the application form, dated April 2021, as available from the DFFE's website, has been used for this project.</p> <p>The final Scoping Report includes coordinate points of the proposed development site (refer to Table 1.1., Chapter 1).</p> <p>An appropriate facility layout showing all preferred turbine positions, including turbine position numbers, is not available at this stage of the process. A layout map will however be included as part of the EIA Report to be submitted during the EIA Phase of the process and as per this requirement, turbine positions will be clearly numbered, and the turbine position numbers will be consistently used in all maps to be included in the report.</p>

<p>iii. The final SR must provide the technical details of the proposed facility in a table format as well as their description and/or dimensions.</p>		<p>The final Scoping Report includes technical details of the proposed facility in a table format as well as their description and dimensions (refer to Table 2.1, Chapter 2).</p>
<p>iv. Please provide a layout map which indicates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The envisioned area for the wind energy facility, i.e. placing of wind turbines and all associated infrastructure; b) Permanent laydown area footprint; c) All supporting onsite infrastructure e.g. roads (existing and proposed); d) Substation(s) and/or transformer(s) sites including their entire footprint; e) Connection routes (including pylon positions) to the distribution/transmission network; and f) All existing infrastructure on the site. 		<p>An appropriate facility layout map indicating the infrastructure listed in this comment is not available at this stage of the process. A layout map will however be included as part of the EIA Report to be submitted during the EIA Phase of the process and will be prepared in accordance with this requirement.</p>
<p>v. Please provide an environmental sensitivity map which indicates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The location of sensitive environmental features on site e.g. CBAs, heritage sites, wetlands, drainage lines etc. that will be affected; b) Buffer areas; and, c) All "no-go" areas. <p>vi. The above layout map must be overlain with the sensitivity map and a cumulative map which shows neighbouring energy developments and existing grid infrastructure.</p>		<p>A map showing the envisioned area for the Merino Wind Farm overlain with sensitive environmental features on site, buffer areas and all no-go areas is included as Figure 10.1 (Chapter 10) in the final Scoping Report. Once a detailed facility layout is available for the proposed development, the layout map will be overlain with the sensitivity map as per this requirement.</p> <p>A cumulative map which shows the development area for the Merino Wind Farm in relation to neighbouring energy projects in the area and existing infrastructure is included as Figure 9.9 (Chapter 9) in the final Scoping Report.</p>
<p>d) Alternatives</p> <p>i. Please provide a description of any identified alternatives for the proposed activity that are feasible and reasonable, including the advantages and disadvantages that the proposed activity or</p>		<p>An overview of the various alternatives (i.e., property/location alternatives, design and layout alternatives, activity alternatives, technology alternatives and the 'do-nothing' alternative) considered for the Merino Wind Farm is included in Chapter 3 of the final Scoping Report.</p>

	<p>alternatives will have on the environment and on the community that may be affected by the activity as per Appendix 2 of GN R.982 of 2014 (as amended).</p>		
	<p>ii. Alternatively, you should submit written proof of an investigation and motivation if no reasonable or feasible alternatives exist in terms of Appendix 2.</p>		<p>Where no alternatives have been considered, motivation has been included (refer to Section 3.3. of Chapter 3 of the final Scoping Report).</p>
	<p>e) Public Participation Process</p> <p>i. Please ensure that all issues raised and comments received during the circulation of the draft SR from registered I&APs and organs of state (<u>including this Department's Biodiversity & Conservation Section</u>), which have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are adequately addressed in the final SR.</p>		<p>All issues raised and comments received during the 30-day review and comment period of the Scoping Report, including those of the DFFE: Directorate Biodiversity Conservation, have been adequately addressed in this C&RR to be included as Appendix C9 to the final Scoping Report.</p>
	<p>ii. Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders must be included in the final SR. Should you be unable to obtain comments, proof should be submitted to the Department of the attempts that were made to obtain comments.</p>		<p>Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders is included as Appendix C5 and C6 of the final Scoping Report, including attempts to obtain comments during the 30-day review and comment period of the Scoping Report.</p>
	<p>iii. The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulation 39, 40 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended and as per the approved PP Plan.</p>		<p>The Public Participation Process has been conducted in terms of Regulations 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended (GNR 326), as well as in accordance with the approved Public Participation Plan (Appendix C1) as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project database: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A register of I&APs has been compiled and will be updated throughout the EIA process (Appendix C2). • EIA & Public Participation process announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The BID, accompanied by a cover letter inviting I&APs to register on the project database, was distributed via email to identified I&APs and relevant OoS on 21 October 2021 (refer to Appendices C4, C5 & C6 of the final Scoping Report).

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o An advertisement was placed in The Echo Newspaper on Thursday, 23 September 2021 (refer to Appendix C3 of the final Scoping Report). o Site Notices announcing the EIA process were placed at visible points the along the boundary of the proposed development site in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations on 28-30 September 2021 (refer to Appendix C3 of the final Scoping Report). o Process Notices were placed at various public places in Richmond on 28-30 September 2021 (refer to Appendix C3 of the final Scoping Report). • Scoping Report available for review and comment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Registered I&APs were notified of the availability of the Scoping Report for a 30-day review and comment period via e-mail on 12 November 2021 (refer to Appendix C6 of the final Scoping Report). o Commenting authorities, municipal councillors and local and district municipalities which have jurisdiction in the area were requested to submit written comments on the Scoping Report via e-mail on 12 November 2021 (refer to Appendix C5 of the final Scoping Report). o An advertisement was placed in The Echo Newspaper on Friday, 12 November 2021 (refer to Appendix C3 of the final Scoping Report). o Live read (radio) on Radio Sonder Grense (RSG) 100-104 FM announcing the availability of the Scoping Report for a 30-day review and comment period was aired on Saturday, 13 November 2021. A further live read as a reminder of the availability of the Scoping Report for review and comment was aired on Saturday, 29 November 2021 (refer to Appendix C3 of the final Scoping Report for proof of the live read). • Attempt to obtain comments on the Scoping Report:
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o An e-mail to all registered I&APs and OoS as a reminder of the availability of the Scoping Report for review and comment was sent on 06 December 2021 (refer to Appendices C5 & C6 of the final Scoping Report). • Various Meetings were held during the 30-day review and comment period of the Scoping Report (refer to Appendix C8 of the final Scoping Report for the meeting notes): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A virtual Key Stakeholder Workshop (KSW) was held on 23 November 2021. o A virtual Focus Group Meeting (FGM) with District & Local Municipal Officials was held on 06 December 2021. o An Information Session / Poster Display was held at the Richmond Showgrounds on 02 December 2021 from 14h00 to 17h00. o A FGM with landowners and land occupiers was held on 02 December 2021 at 18h00. o A FGM with the Ubuntu Local Municipality Officials was held on 03 December 2021. • Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Proof of consultation with I&APs and OoS throughout the EIA process to date is included in Appendices C5 & C6 of the final Scoping Report. • Comments & Responses Report: All comments received from the announcement of the Scoping and EIA process and those submitted during the 30-day review and comment period of the Scoping Report have been captured in this C&RR which is attached to the final Scoping Report as Appendix C9.
	<p>iv. A comments and response trail report (C&R) must be submitted with the final SR. The C&R report must incorporate all historical comments for this development. The C&R report must be a separate</p>		<p>All comments received from the announcement of the Scoping and EIA process and those submitted during the 30-day review and comment period of the Scoping Report have</p>

	<p>document from the main report and the format must be in the table format as indicated in Annexure 1 of this comments letter.</p>		<p>been captured in this C&RR which is attached to the final Scoping Report as Appendix C9.</p>
	<p>v. Please refrain from summarising comments made by I&APs. All comments from I&APs must be copied verbatim and responded to clearly. Please note that a response such as "Noted" is not regarded as an adequate response to I&APs' comments.</p>		<p>Comments received have not been summarised for inclusion in the C&RR and have been captured verbatim.</p> <p>All comments have been responded to adequately, as applicable, and no comments have been responded to as "noted".</p>
	<p>vi. The final SR must provide evidence that all identified and relevant competent authorities have been given an opportunity to comment on the proposed development particularly the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, and the District and Local Municipalities.</p>		<p>The Scoping Report has not been submitted to the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning as the project is located within the Northern Cape Province. The Scoping Report has been submitted to the relevant competent authorities within the Northern Cape Province for comment, including the Pixley ka Seme District and the Ubuntu Local Municipalities.</p>
	<p>vii. Minutes and attendance registers (where applicable) of any physical/virtual meetings held by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) with Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) and other role players must be included in the final SR.</p>		<p>All meeting notes (virtual and face-to-face meetings) are included in Appendix C8 of the final Scoping Report, including attendance registers.</p>
	<p>f) Specialist Assessments</p> <p>i. Specialist Declaration of Interest forms must be attached to the final SR. The forms are available on Department's website (please use the Department's template).</p>		<p>Signed and commissioned specialist declarations have been included as Appendix N to the final Scoping Report.</p>
	<p>ii. The final EIAR and all the attached specialist studies must indicate and adequately assess a consistent number of turbines.</p>		<p>The final EIA Report to be submitted during the EIA Phase of the process, including the specialist studies, will assess a consistent number of turbines.</p> <p>The final Scoping Report, including the attached specialist studies, assess a consistent number of turbines (i.e., 45 turbines).</p>

	<p>iii. The EAP must ensure that the terms of reference for all the identified specialist studies include the following:</p> <p>a) A detailed description of the study's methodology; indication of the locations and descriptions of the development footprint, and all other associated infrastructures that they have assessed and are recommending for authorisation.</p> <p>b) Provide a detailed description of all limitations to the studies. All specialist studies must be conducted in the right season and providing that as a limitation will not be allowed.</p> <p>c) Please note that the Department considers a 'no-go' area, as an area where no development of any infrastructure is allowed; therefore, no development of associated infrastructure including access roads is allowed in the 'no-go' areas.</p> <p>d) Should the specialist definition of 'no-go' area differ from the Department's definition; this must be clearly indicated. The specialist must also indicate the 'no-go' area's buffer if applicable.</p> <p>e) All specialist studies must be final, and provide detailed/practical mitigation measures for the preferred alternative and recommendations, and must not recommend further studies to be completed post EA.</p> <p>f) Bird and Bat specialist studies must have support from Birdlife South Africa and SABAA.</p> <p>g) Should a specialist recommend specific mitigation measures, these must be clearly indicated.</p>		<p>The identified specialist studies include a detailed description of the methodology followed as well as an indication of the location and description of the development and all other associated infrastructure. Furthermore, the specialist studies, with the exception of the heritage screener, provide a detailed description of the limitations to the studies. The full HIA to be submitted as part of the EIA Report will however include limitations to the study.</p> <p>The specialist's definition of 'no-go' area is the same as that of the Department and various 'no-go' areas, including their associated buffer areas, have been recommended by the specialists for consideration in the design of the facility layout.</p> <p>Since the project is currently in the Scoping Phase, the specialist studies attached to the final Scoping Report only include scoping of potential issues. A full assessment of the identified issues will be undertaken by the specialists during the EIA Phase of the process. These assessments will include mitigation measures and where relevant, enhancement measures.</p> <p>The Bird and Bat specialist studies have been undertaken in accordance with the approved guidelines for bird and bat studies for wind energy developments. These guidelines are supported by Birdlife South Africa and the South African Bat Assessment Association (SABAA).</p>
	<p>iv. Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations, the EAP must clearly indicate the most reasonable recommendation and substantiate</p>		<p>This comment is noted and will be taken into consideration during the EIA Phase of the process.</p>

	<p>this with defensible reasons; and were necessary, include further expertise advice.</p> <p>v. Please ensure that all mitigation recommendations are in line with applicable and most recent guidelines.</p> <p>vi. It is further brought to your attention that Procedures for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting on identified Environmental Themes in terms of Sections 24(5)(a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998, when applying for Environmental Authorisation, which were promulgated in Government Notice No. 320 of 20 March 2020 (i.e. "the Protocols"), and in Government Notice No. 1150 of 30 October 2020 (i.e. protocols for terrestrial plant and animal species), have come into effect. Please note that specialist assessments must be conducted in accordance with these protocols.</p> <p>vii. <u>As such, the Specialist Declaration of Interest forms must also indicate the scientific organisation registration/member number and status of registration/membership for each specialist.</u></p> <p>g) Cumulative Assessment</p> <p>i. If there are any other similar facilities within a 30km radius of the proposed development site, a cumulative impact assessment must be conducted for all identified and assessed impacts which must indicate the following:</p> <p>a) Identified cumulative impacts must be clearly defined, and where possible the size of the identified impact must be quantified and indicated, i.e. hectares of cumulatively transformed land.</p> <p>b) Detailed process flow and proof must be provided, to indicate how the specialist's recommendations,</p>		<p>This comment is noted and will be taken into consideration during the EIA Phase of the process.</p> <p>The specialist studies have been conducted in accordance with Government Notice No. 320 of 20 March 2020 (i.e., "the protocols"), and Government Notice No. 1150 of 30 October 2020 (i.e., protocols for terrestrial plant and animal species).</p> <p>Signed and commissioned specialist declarations, including the scientific organisation registration/member number, and status of registration/membership for each specialist are contained in Appendix N of the final Scoping Report.</p> <p>Ten authorised renewable energy facilities within a 30km radius of the proposed development have been identified as detailed in Section 9.4 of the Scoping Report. An evaluation of potential cumulative impacts will be undertaken during the EIA Phase of the process in accordance with these requirements.</p>
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	<p>mitigation measures and conclusions from the various similar developments in the area were taken into consideration in the assessment of cumulative impacts and when the conclusion and mitigation measures were drafted for this project.</p> <p>c) The cumulative impacts significance rating must also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development.</p> <p>d) A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed.</p>		
	<p>h) Specific comments</p> <p>i. Please provide a clear indication of who the contact person for the Applicant is.</p> <p>ii. The approved PP plan with the approval email must be submitted with the final SR and must be included as an Appendix under the Public Participation Process.</p>		<p>The contact persons for the Applicant (Ms Romaya Dorasamy (Project Manager) and Mr Tobias Hobbach (Managing Director)) are included in the EA application form submitted to the DFFE on 12 November 2021.</p> <p>The approved PP plan, including the approval e-mail, is included as Appendix C1 to the final Scoping Report.</p>
	<p>i) General</p> <p>You are further reminded to comply with Regulation 21 (1) of the NEMA EIA Regulations 2014, as amended, which states that: <i>"If S&EIR must be applied to an application, the applicant must, within 44 days of receipt of the application by the competent authority, submit to the competent authority a scoping report which has been subjected to a public participation process of at least 30 days and which reflects the incorporation of comments received, including any comments of the competent authority"</i></p> <p>You are further reminded that the final SR to be submitted to this Department must comply with all the requirements in terms of the scope of assessment and content of Scoping reports in</p>		<p>All timeframes as per regulations Regulation 21(1) of the NEMA EIA Regulations 2014, as amended, will be adhered to.</p>

	<p>accordance with Appendix 2 and Regulation 21(1) of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended.</p> <p>Further note that in terms of Regulation 45 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended, this application will lapse if the applicant fails to meet any of the timeframes prescribed in terms of these Regulations, unless an extension has been granted in terms of Regulation 3(7).</p> <p>You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.</p>		
5.	<p>The Directorate Biodiversity Conservation has reviewed and evaluated the report and does not have any objections to the Draft Scoping Report & Plan of Study provided that all relevant National and Provincial biodiversity guidelines will be considered in the final report.</p> <p>NB: The Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA for review and queries should be submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation at Email; BCAdmin@environment.gov.za for attention of Mr. Seoka Lekota.</p>	<p>Portia Makitla DFFE: Biodiversity Conservation Directorate</p> <p>Letter: 10 December 2021</p>	<p>The comment that the Directorate does not have any objections to the Draft Scoping Report and Plan of Study is noted, and no further action is required.</p> <p>It can be confirmed that all relevant National and Provincial biodiversity guidelines have been taken into consideration with the drafting of the final Scoping Report.</p> <p>The Public Participation Process documents will be submitted together with the final Scoping Report to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation using the contact information provided.</p>

1.2. Key Stakeholders and I&APs

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
1.	<p>Business & Financial: We have no objection to any solar development.</p>	<p>Jan Pickard Director Ratelfontein Farms</p>	<p>The comment regarding no objection to any solar developments is acknowledged and will be included in the solar energy facilities' C&RRs.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	Any wind energy facility will greatly affect the financial viability of Ratelfontein Farms which include Ratelfontein Hunting Safaris and Bloemhof-Karoo Guest House.	Registration & Comment Form: 12 December 2021	Potential business and financial impacts on Ratelfontein Farms, Ratelfontein Hunting Safaris and Bloemhof-Karoo Guest House are noted and will be fully assessed through the Social Impact Assessment to be undertaken in the EIA Phase.
	Any wind energy facility will impact on: 1) Visual Impact (visitors come to experience nature and openness of space – 220m turbines will have a direct impact.		The potential visual impact of the project will be assessed in detail in the EIA Phase.
	2) Turbines are not situated outside 5,2km of active Verreux Eagle Nests – will destroy many birds.		Various no-go areas, including the Verreux's Eagle nests, have been identified from an avifaunal perspective and will be used to inform the facility layout design which will be presented and assessed in the EIA Phase.
	A detailed objection to follow.		No detailed written objection has been received to date.

2. COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE SCOPING PHASE OF THE EIA PROCESS

2.1. Organs of State

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
1.	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREAT KAROO CLUSTER OF RENEWABLE ENERGY FACILITIES AND GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE NEAR RICHMOND, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE With reference to your above- mentioned application, I hereby confirm that the proposed work installation is approved in terms of Section 29 of the Electronic Communications Act No. 36 of 2005 as amended.	Chris Schutte Mvelaphande Trading (Telkom SA SOC Ltd) Email: 04 November 2021	It is noted that no Openserve infrastructure will be impacted by the Great Karoo Cluster of Renewable Energy Facilities and Grid Connection Infrastructure. The comment has been submitted to the applicant for consideration in the design and construction of the proposed facility.

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>No infrastructure of our Client (Openserve) will be affected by this proposal. We did our utmost to ensure that we indicate our route as accurate as possible and should you discover any of our cables that is not on the sketch please stop and contact us immediately to arrange a site meeting. In the event that our cables are exposed and damaged/stolen by a third party the damages will be repaired at the customer's account. Please make use of pilot holes in order not to damage our infrastructure. Therefore, any damages occurred during construction of work will be repaired at the customer's account.</p>		
	<p>Although we are not affected by this proposal, Mr Vivian Groenewald must be contacted at telephone number 081 362 6738 from our Network Field Services. Two (2) weeks prior to commencement of proposed work. It's important that all services are shown on site before construction starts.</p>		<p>Should the proposed development receive a positive EA and become preferred bidder under the REIPPPP or a similar programme, Mr Vivian Groenewald will be contacted two weeks prior to commencement of the proposed work as per this requirement.</p>
	<p>Approval of the proposed route is valid for six months. If construction has not yet commenced within this period, then the file must be resubmitted for approval.</p>		<p>The validity of the approval of the proposed route for a six (6)-month period is noted and has been submitted to the applicant for record keeping purposes.</p>
	<p>Any changes/deviations from the original planning during or prior to construction must immediately be communicated to this office.</p>		<p>These comments are noted, and no further action is required.</p>
	<p>On completion of this project, please certify that all requirements as stipulated in this letter have been met. Please note that should any of our Client (Openserve) infrastructure has to be relocated or altered as a result of your activities the cost for such alteration or relocation will be for your account in terms of section 25 of the Electronic Communication Act.</p>		

2.2. Key Stakeholders and Interested & Affected Parties

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
No comments received.			