



**Appendix 6H**  
**Terrestrial Ecology Assessment**



# Ecology Scoping Assessment

Umsobomvu Solar PV Energy Facilities near Noupoot in the Northern Cape Province and Middelburg in the Eastern Cape Province



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# Ecological Scoping study on the potential impacts of the proposed Umsobomvu Solar PV Energy Facilities near Noupoort in the Northern Cape Province and Middelburg in the Eastern Cape Province.

Location:  
Umsobomvu Local Municipality within the Pixley ka Seme District  
Municipality, and Inxuba Yethemba Local Municipality within the Chris  
Hani District Municipality

for

SiVEST Environmental Division  
P O Box 2921,  
Rivonia. 2128

on behalf of

Mooi Plaats (Pty) Ltd  
Wonderheuvel (Pty) Ltd  
Paarde Valley (Pty) Ltd

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SiVEST SA (Pty) Ltd were appointed as the Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAP) to undertake the required Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the proposed Umsobomvu Solar PV Energy Facilities, which includes three separate projects (Paarde Valley, Wonderheuwel and Mooi Plaats). Dr David Hoare of David Hoare Consulting (Pty) Ltd was commissioned by SiVEST Environmental Division to provide specialist biodiversity consulting services for the EIAs for the three proposed projects. The consulting services comprise an assessment of potential impacts on the general ecology in the study area by the three proposed projects. The study excludes Avifauna and Invertebrates. This report provides details of the results of the ecology Scoping study, based on a desktop assessment of the study area, mapping from aerial imagery and a site visit. The study area for the three projects is located on several farms that are situated near to Noupoot and Middelburg, located on the boundary between the Eastern and Northern Cape Provinces.

The first section of the report provides an outline of the Terms of Reference for the study, Limitations, Assumptions and Uncertainties, a list of acronyms, abbreviations and a short glossary, and a table indicating compliance with Appendix 6 of the EIA Regulations. This is followed by an introduction to the project and a description of layout alternatives for each of the three projects.

The following section provides an outline of the methodology used to undertake the ecology assessment. This includes the approach taken to assess the sensitivity of the three sites and a summary of the background information used to undertake the assessments. Background information includes electronic databases with species information, Red Data Lists, published field guides and National and Provincial legislation, specifically regulations with published lists of species and/or ecosystems.

The next section of the report provides details on legislation that applies to development of the sites with respect to the ecological receiving environment. There are various Acts that limit development or require permits before development can proceed. The most important of these are permits required in terms of protected species that could potentially occur on site, including the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act and the National Forests Act.

The next section provides a description of the ecological receiving environment, including details on the location of the three sites, the regional vegetation patterns, local habitat patterns occurring on the sites, lists of plant and animal species of concern that are likely to occur there and a list of species that were observed on site during the site visit. Based on the similarity of the sites to one another and the fact that they border upon one another as well as share some infrastructure components, the description of biodiversity applies identically to all three sites, except where it is specifically indicated otherwise. Details of this section are summarised as follows:

1. The study area (including all three sites together) is situated in an area that is on the boundary between relatively flat plains and a low mountain range with moderately to steeply sloping topography. Habitat on site is in a largely natural state and is in a rural environment. There is very little transformation or serious degradation on site.
2. There are two regional vegetation types occurring in the project study area, Eastern Upper Karoo (most of the area), and Besemkaree Koppies Shrubland (mountain areas). There are three other national vegetation types in the vicinity, namely Southern Karoo Riviere, Tarkastad Montane Shrubland and Karoo Escarpment Grassland. Floristic components of all five of these units occur in the study area, even though they are not all mapped as occurring within the study area. All these vegetation types are listed in the scientific literature as Least Threatened and none are listed in the National List of Ecosystems that are Threatened and need of protection (GN1002 of 2011).
3. All habitat in the Northern Cape part of the study area is mapped as "Critical Biodiversity Area 2" (CBA2) or "Critical Biodiversity Area 1" (CBA1) in the Provincial Conservation Plan and there are also patches mapped as "Ecological Support Area" (ESA). The remaining natural vegetation on site on the Northern Cape side, therefore has high value for conservation of vegetation in the Province according to the broadscale CBA maps. The Paarde Valley project site is within the Eastern Cape and this therefore does not apply to that project for the

solar array. However, one of the grid connection options for Paarde Valley is across the other two sites in the Northern Cape.

4. Habitats on site were divided into five units, namely “Mountain Vegetation”, “Lowland Plains Vegetation”, “Low Ridges and Koppies”, “Broad Drainage Areas” and “Mountain Stream”. The vegetation on the plains on site was found to be a karroid dwarf shrubland that resembles the description for Eastern Upper Karoo, but the mountain vegetation was a mixed grassy shrubland that appears to be a floristic mix of Besemkaree Koppies Shrubland and Karoo Escarpment Grassland. The mountain vegetation has the highest local diversity and greatest variation in species composition. A map of natural habitats of the study area was produced by mapping from aerial imagery, based on information collected in the field.
5. There are no plant species occurring on site or likely to occur on site that are protected according to the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No 10. Of 2004) (NEM:BA).
6. There are a number of plant species occurring on site that are protected according to the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act (Act 9 of 2009). It is likely that additional protected species occur there that were not observed during the field survey. None of these are of conservation concern, but a permit is required from the Provincial authorities to destroy them. These are listed in the text in the body of this report.
7. There are no protected tree species that are likely to occur in the study area.
8. A total of 79 mammal species have a geographical distribution that includes the general study area in which the sites are found. Of the species currently listed as threatened or protected (see Appendix 5 for list of protected species), the following are considered to have a very high, high or medium probability of occurring on site, based on habitat suitability and evidence collected in the field: the Black-footed Cat (Vulnerable), the Cape Clawless Otter (Near Threatened), the South African Hedgehog (Near Threatened), Grey Rhebok (Near Threatened), White-tailed Rat (Vulnerable), and the Spectacled Dormouse (Near Threatened). There is strong evidence to suggest that the Black-footed Cat and the Cape Clawless Otter both definitely occur on site.
9. The study area contains habitat that is suitable for a small number of frog species. One protected frog species, the Giant Bullfrog, could potentially occur on site.
10. A total of 55 reptile species have a geographical distribution that includes the general study area in which the sites are found. No reptile species of conservation concern could potentially occur in the study area.
11. A preliminary sensitivity map of the study area (including all three sites) was produced that identifies areas of higher sensitivity that should be taken into account during activities on site. This includes drainage areas and associated wetland-related habitat, low ridges, parts of the mountain area, and CBA1 and CBA2 areas.

The section of the report following the above identifies a number of potential impacts for the three proposed projects, including direct and indirect impacts for the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the project, as well as cumulative impacts taken together with similar projects in the region. These are described and assessed. The preliminary assessment of impacts indicates that all impacts are of low significance or can be reduced to low significance with mitigation, with the exception of loss of natural vegetation, for which the impact remains of medium significance after mitigation. The assessed impacts were found to be the same for all three projects.

The next section of the report provides some possible mitigation measures for managing potential impacts related to this project. Proposed mitigation measures include the following: shifting infrastructure positions to avoid sensitive habitats, select infrastructure options that cause the least amount of damage to natural habitats, cross watercourses at right angles, install appropriate structures at watercourse crossings to minimise impacts on these systems, minimise vegetation clearing and disturbance, formalise a rehabilitation programme, undertaking a pre-construction botanical walk-through survey of the footprint of the selected options, obtaining permits for any protected species that may be affected, undertaking a search and rescue of plants for which it is appropriate to rescue, compile an alien plant management plan and undertaking regular monitoring.

The report concludes that there are some sensitivities in the study area related to natural habitat and to individual species, but that these can be minimised or avoided with the application of appropriate mitigation or management measures. There will be residual impacts, primarily on natural habitat, but the amount of habitat that will be lost to the project is insignificant compared to the area in hectares of the regional vegetation type that occurs on site and therefore the residual impacts are considered acceptable, on condition local sensitivities of biodiversity importance are avoided. On this basis it is recommended that the project be authorised.

The report includes a comprehensive list of Appendices containing lists of species and species of concern with a geographical distribution that includes the site as well as lists of species protected according to National legislation.

# SPECIALISTS DECLARATION

I, David Hoare as the appointed independent specialist, in terms of the 2014 EIA Regulations, hereby declare that I:

- act as the independent specialist in this application;
- perform the work relating to the application in an objective manner, even if this results in views and findings that are not favourable to the applicant;
- regard the information contained in this report as it relates to my specialist input/study to be true and correct, and do not have and will not have any financial interest in the undertaking of the activity, other than remuneration for work performed in terms of the NEMA, the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 and any specific environmental management Act;
- declare that there are no circumstances that may compromise my objectivity in performing such work;
- have expertise in conducting the specialist report relevant to this application, including knowledge of the Act, Regulations and any guidelines that have relevance to the proposed activity;
- will comply with the Act, Regulations and all other applicable legislation;
- have no, and will not engage in, conflicting interests in the undertaking of the activity;
- have no vested interest in the proposed activity proceeding;
- undertake to disclose to the applicant and the competent authority all material information in my possession that reasonably has or may have the potential of influencing - any decision to be taken with respect to the application by the competent authority; and - the objectivity of any report, plan or document to be prepared by myself for submission to the competent authority;
- have ensured that information containing all relevant facts in respect of the specialist input/study was distributed or made available to interested and affected parties and the public and that participation by interested and affected parties was facilitated in such a manner that all interested and affected parties were provided with a reasonable opportunity to participate and to provide comments on the specialist input/study;
- have ensured that the comments of all interested and affected parties on the specialist input/study were considered, recorded and submitted to the competent authority in respect of the application;
- all the particulars furnished by me in this specialist input/study are true and correct; and
- realise that a false declaration is an offence in terms of regulation 48 and is punishable in terms of section 24F of the Act.

Signature of specialist:



Name of specialist:

Dr D B Hoare

Date:

8 November 2018

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

The study was to adhere to the following:

- A field investigation to survey the study area and three (3) PV application sites and associated grid corridors;
- Adherence to the content requirements for specialist reports in accordance with Appendix 6 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended.
- Adherence to all best practice guidelines, relevant legislation and authority requirements.
- Identification of sensitive areas to be avoided (including providing shapefiles/kmls).
- Separate assessment and impact significance ratings for each of the three (3) proposed PV developments, noting the impacts during the Pre-construction, Construction, Operation, and Decommissioning Phases (according to SiVEST's impact rating methodology).
- Cumulative impact identification and assessment as a result of other renewable energy (RE) developments in the area (including; a cumulative environmental impact statement, review of the specialist reports undertaken for other Renewable Energy developments and an indication of how the recommendations, mitigation measures and conclusion of the studies have been considered).
- Assessment of the significance of the cumulative impacts (according to SiVEST's impact rating methodology).
- Comparative assessment of alternatives to be provided for each of the three (3) PV facilities and associated grid connections.
- Recommend mitigation measures in order to minimise the impact of the proposed development and note any specific mitigation measures for a particular PV facility; and
- Implications of specialist findings for the proposed development (e.g. permits, licenses etc).

# LIMITATIONS, ASSUMPTIONS & UNCERTAINTIES

The following assumptions, limitations, uncertainties are listed regarding the ecological assessment of the Umsombomvu site:

- The assessment is based on a single reconnaissance site visit from 4-8 February 2019. The current study is based on an extensive site visit as well as a desktop study of the available information. The time spent on site was not adequate for describing seasonal floristic patterns on site in detail, but is adequate for understanding general patterns across affected areas. If necessary, additional surveys will be recommended to compensate for any short-coming related to this.
- The vegetation was in reasonably good condition for sampling at the time of the field assessment, although extensive parts of the mountainous areas had been burnt prior to the field survey and could not be adequately sampled. Nevertheless, there are few limitations with regards to the vegetation sampling of the lowland areas and the species lists obtained for these areas is considered reliable and relatively comprehensive.
- Compiling the list of species that could potentially occur on site is limited by the paucity of collection records for the area. The list of plant species that could potentially occur on site was therefore taken from a wider area and from literature sources that may include species that do not occur on site and may miss species that do occur on site. In order to compile a comprehensive site-specific list of the biota on site, studies would be required that would include different seasons, be undertaken over a number of years and include extensive sampling. Due to time constraints, this was not possible for this study.
- Rare and threatened plant and animal species are, by their nature, usually very difficult to locate and can be easily missed.
- The faunal component of the study relies primarily on existing information, as available in various spatial databases and published accounts. These databases are not intended for fine-scale use and the reliability and adequacy of these data sources relies heavily on the extent to which the area has been sampled in the past. Many remote areas have not been well sampled with the result that the species lists for an area do not always adequately reflect the actual fauna and flora present at the site. In order to counter the likelihood that the area has not been well sampled in the past and in order ensure a conservative approach, the species lists derived for the site from the literature were obtained from an area significantly larger than the study area and are likely to include a much wider array of species than actually occur at the site. The study excludes Bats, Avifauna, Aquatic Ecology and Invertebrates.
- Cumulative impacts are assessed by adding expected impacts from this proposed development to existing and proposed developments of a similar nature that are within a 50 km radius of the site.

# ACRONYMS

AIS	Alien and Invasive species
CBA	Critical Biodiversity Area
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEPF	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
CITES	Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
EA	Environmental Authorisation
EAP	Environmental Assessment Practitioner
ECO	Environmental Control Officer
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EMF	Environmental Management Framework
EMPr	Environmental Management Programme
ESA	Ecological Support Area
GIS	Geographical Information System
I&AP	Interested and Affected Party
IEM	Integrated Environmental Management
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
NBA	National Biodiversity Assessment
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan
NC	Northern Cape province
NCNCA	Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act
NDP	National Development Plan
NEM:BA	National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act
NPAES	National Protected Area Expansion Strategy
ONA	Other Natural Areas
PA	Protected Area
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
SANParks	South African National Parks
SCC	Species of Conservation Concern
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
ToPS	Threatened and Protected Species
ToR	Terms of Reference

# ABBREVIATIONS

%	Percentage
MW	Megawatt
kV	Kilovolt
cm	Centimetres
m	Metres
km	Kilometres

# GLOSSARY

Definitions	
Alternative	Alternatives can refer to any of the following but are not limited to: alternative sites for development, alternative projects for a particular site, alternative site layouts, alternative designs, alternative processes and alternative materials.
Biodiversity	The diversity of genes, species and ecosystems, and the ecological and evolutionary processes that maintain that diversity.
Biodiversity offset	Conservation measures designed to remedy the residual negative impacts of development on biodiversity and ecological infrastructure, once the first three levels of the mitigation hierarchy have been explicitly considered (i.e. to avoid, minimize and rehabilitate / restore impacts). Offsets are the last resort form of mitigation, only to be implemented if nothing else can mitigate the impact.
Biodiversity priority areas	Features in the landscape that are important for conserving a representative sample of ecosystems and species, for maintaining ecological processes, or for the provision of ecosystem services. These are identified using a systematic spatial biodiversity planning process and include the following categories: Protected Areas, Critically Endangered and Endangered ecosystems, Critical Biodiversity Areas, Ecological Support Areas, and Focus Areas for land-based Protected Area expansion.
Category 1a Listed Invasive Species	Species listed by notice in terms of section 70(1)(a) of the act, as a species that must be combatted or eradicated. These species are contained in Notice 3 of the AIS list, which is referred to as the National List of Invasive Species. Landowners are obliged to take immediate steps to control Category 1a species.
Category 1b Listed Invasive Species	Species listed by notice in terms of section 70(1)(a) of the act, as species that must be controlled or 'contained'. These species are contained in Notice 3 of the AIS list, which is referred to as the National List of Invasive Species. However, where an Invasive Species Management Programme has been developed for a Category 1b species, then landowners are obliged to "control" the species in accordance with the requirements of that programme.
Category 2 Listed Invasive Species	Species which require a permit to carry out a restricted activity e.g. cultivation within an area specified in the Notice or an area specified in the permit, as the case may be. Category 2 includes plant species that have economic, recreational, aesthetic or other valued properties, notwithstanding their invasiveness. It is important to note that a Category 2 species that falls outside the demarcated area specified in the permit, becomes a Category 1b invasive species. Permit-holders must take all the necessary steps to prevent the escape and spread of the species.
Category 3 Listed Invasive Species	A species listed by notice in terms of section 70(1)(a) of the act, as species which are subject to exemptions in terms of section 71(3) and prohibitions in terms of section 71A of the act, as specified in the notice. Category 3 species are less-transforming invasive species which are regulated by activity. The principal focus with these species is to ensure that they are not introduced, sold or transported. However, Category 3 plant species are automatically Category 1b species within riparian and wetland areas.
CBA Maps	A map of Critical Biodiversity Areas and Ecological Support Areas based on a systematic biodiversity plan.
Connectivity	The spatial continuity of a habitat or land cover type across a landscape.
Corridor	A relatively narrow strip of a particular type that differs from the areas adjacent on both sides.
Critical Biodiversity Areas	Areas required to meet biodiversity targets of representivity and persistence for ecosystems, species and ecological processes, determined by a systematic conservation plan. They may be terrestrial or aquatic, and are mostly in a good ecological state. These areas need to be maintained in a natural or near-natural state, and a loss or degradation must be avoided. If these areas were to be modified, biodiversity targets could not be met.
Cumulative impact	Past, current and reasonably foreseeable future impacts of an activity, considered together with the impact of the proposed activity, that in itself may not be significant, but may become significant when added to the existing and reasonably foreseeable impacts eventuating from similar or diverse activities.



Ecological condition	An assessment of the extent to which the composition, structure and function of an area or biodiversity feature has been modified from a reference condition of natural.
Ecological infrastructure	Naturally functioning ecosystems that generate or deliver valuable ecosystem services, e.g. mountain catchment areas, wetlands, and soils.
Ecological process	The functions and processes that operate to maintain and generate biodiversity.
Ecological Support Areas	An area that must be maintained in at least fair ecological condition in order to support the ecological functioning of a CBA or protected area, or to generate or deliver ecosystem services, or to meet remaining biodiversity targets for ecosystem types or species when it is not possible or necessary to meet them in natural or near natural areas. It is one of five broad categories on a CBA map, and a subset of biodiversity priority areas.
Ecosystem resilience	The ability of an ecosystem to maintain its functions (biological, chemical, and physical) in the face of disturbance or to recover from external pressures.
Ecosystem threshold	The tipping point where ongoing disturbance or change results in an irreversible change in its composition, structure and functioning. Surpassing ecosystem thresholds diminishes the quality and quantity of ecosystem services provided, rapidly reduces the ability of the ecosystem to sustain life, and results in less resilient ecosystems.
Ecosystem services	The benefits that people obtain from ecosystems, including provisioning services (such as food and water), regulating services (such as flood control), cultural services (such as recreational benefits), and supporting services (such as nutrient cycling, carbon storage) that maintain the conditions for life on Earth.
Edge	The portion of an ecosystem or cover type near its perimeter, and within which environmental conditions may differ from interior locations in the ecosystem.
Endemic	Restricted or exclusive to a particular geographic area and occurring nowhere else. Endemism refers to the occurrence of endemic species.
Exempted Alien Species	An alien species that is not regulated in terms of this statutory framework - as defined in Notice 2 of the AIS List.
Forbs	Herbaceous plants with soft leaves and non-woody stems.
Fragmentation	The breaking up of a habitat or cover type into smaller, disconnected parcels, often associated with, but not equivalent to, habitat loss.
Geophyte	Perennial plants having underground perennating organs, such as bulbs, corms or tubers.
Global Hotspot	An area characterised by high levels of biodiversity and endemism, and that faces significant threats to that biodiversity.
Habitat	The area of an environment occupied by a species or group of species, due to the particular set of environmental conditions that prevail there.
Habitat loss	Conversion of natural habitat in an ecosystem to a land use or land cover class that results in irreversible change to the composition, structure and functional characteristics of the ecosystem concerned.
Keystone species	A species that has a disproportionately large effect on its environment relative to its abundance.
Prohibited Alien Species	An alien species listed by notice by the Minister, in respect of which a permit may not be issued as contemplated in section 67(1) of the act. These species are contained in Notice 4 of the AIS List, which is referred to as the List of Prohibited Alien Species.
Mitigate	The implementation of practical measures to reduce adverse impacts or enhance beneficial impacts of an action.
"No-Go" option	The "no-go" development alternative option assumes the site remains in its current state, i.e. there is no construction of a WEF and associated infrastructure in the proposed project area.
Patch	A surface area that differs from its surroundings in nature or appearance.
Red List	A publication that provides information on the conservation and threat status of species, based on scientific conservation assessments.
Rehabilitation	Less than full restoration of an ecosystem to its predisturbance condition.
Restoration	To return a site to an approximation of its condition before alteration.
Riparian	The land adjacent to a river or stream that is, at least periodically, influenced by flooding.
Runoff	Non-channelized surface water flow.
Succulent	Plants that have some parts that are more than normally thickened and fleshy, usually to retain water in arid climates or soil conditions.

Species of special / conservation concern	Species that have particular ecological, economic or cultural significance, including but not limited to threatened species.
Systematic biodiversity conservation planning	Scientific methodology for determining areas of biodiversity importance involving: mapping biodiversity features (such as ecosystems, species, spatial components of ecological processes); mapping a range of information related to these biodiversity features and their condition (such as patterns of land and resource use, existing protected areas); setting quantitative targets for biodiversity features, analysing the information using GIS; and developing maps that show spatial biodiversity priorities. Systematic biodiversity planning is often called 'systematic conservation planning' in the scientific literature.
Threatened ecosystems	An ecosystem that has been classified as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable, based on analysis of ecosystem threat status. A threatened ecosystem has lost, or is losing, vital aspects of its structure, composition or function. The Biodiversity Act makes provision for the Minister or Environmental Affairs, or a provincial MEC of Environmental Affairs, to publish a list of threatened ecosystems.
Threatened species	A species that has been classified as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable, based on a conservation assessment using a standard set of criteria developed by the IUCN for determining the likelihood of a species becoming extinct. A threatened species faces a high risk of extinction in the near future.

# COMPLIANCE WITH APPENDIX 6 OF THE EIA REGULATIONS AND AMENDMENTS

## National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and Environmental Impact Regulations 2014 (as amended) Requirements for Specialist Reports (Appendix 6)

Section in EIA Regulations 2014 (as amended)	Clause	Section in Report	
Appendix 6	(1)	A specialist report prepared in terms of these Regulations must contain –	
	(a)	details of –	
		(i) the specialist who prepared the report; and	Page ii
		(ii) the expertise of that specialist to compile a specialist report including a curriculum vitae.	Appendix 8
	(b)	A declaration that the person is independent in a form as may be specified by the competent authority;	Page viii
	(c)	An indication of the scope of, and the purpose for which, the report was prepared;	Page ix
	(cA)	An indication of the quality and age of base data used for the specialist report;	Page 23
	(cB)	A description of existing impacts on the site, cumulative impacts of the proposed development and levels of acceptable change;	Page 33
	(d)	The duration, date and season of the site investigation and the relevance of the season to the outcome of the assessment;	Page 26-27
	(e)	A description of the methodology adopted in preparing the report or carrying out the specialised process; inclusive of equipment and modelling used;	Page 22-27
	(f)	Details of an assessment of the specific identified sensitivity of the site related to the proposed activity or activities and its associated structures and infrastructure, inclusive of a site plan identifying site alternatives;	Page 57-59
	(g)	An indication of any areas to be avoided, including buffers;	Page 59
	(h)	A map superimposing the activity including the associated structures and infrastructure on the environmental sensitivities of the site including areas to be avoided, including buffers;	Pages 81, 84 & 87
	(i)	A description of any assumptions made and any uncertainties or gaps in knowledge;	Page x
(j)	A description of the findings and potential implications of such findings on the impact of the proposed activity, including identified alternatives on the environment or activities;	Page 60-74	
(k)	Any mitigation measures for inclusion in the EMPr;	Page 69-70	
(l)	Any conditions for inclusion in the environmental authorization;	Page 72	
(m)	Any monitoring requirements for inclusion in the EMPr or environmental authorization;	Page 72	
(n)	A reasoned opinion –		

	(i) as to whether the proposed activity, activities or portions thereof should be authorized;	Page 71-72
	(iA) regarding the acceptability of the proposed activity or activities; and	Page 71-72
	(ii) if the opinion is that the proposed activity, activities or portions thereof should be authorized, any avoidance, management and mitigation measures that should be included in the EMPr, and where applicable, the closure plan;	Page 69-70
(o)	A description of any consultation process that was undertaken during the course of preparing the specialist report;	N/A
(p)	A summary and copies of any comments received during any consultation process and where applicable all responses thereto; and	N/A
(q)	Any other information requested by the authority.	N/A
(2)	Where a government notice gazetted by the Minister provides for any protocol or minimum information requirement to be applied to a specialist report, the requirements as indicated in such notice will apply.	N/A

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

SiVEST SA (Pty) Ltd were appointed as the Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAP) to undertake the required Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the proposed Umsobomvu Solar PV Energy Facilities. On 11 January 2019 David Hoare Consulting (Pty) Ltd was commissioned by SiVEST Environmental Division to provide specialist Terrestrial Ecology consulting services for the EIA for the proposed project. The proposed facility is situated near to Noupoot and Middelburg, located in the Northern and Eastern Cape Provinces, on the border between the two Provinces. The consulting services comprise an assessment of potential impacts on the general ecology in the study area by the proposed project. The study excludes Bats, Avifauna, Aquatic Ecology and Invertebrates.

## Project description

It is proposed that three (3) Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Energy Facilities, with associated grid connection infrastructure, will be developed, these being:

- ***Mooi Plaats Solar PV Facility***, on an application site of approximately 5303ha, comprising the following farm portions:
  - Portion 1 of Leuwe Kop No 120
  - Remainder of Mooi Plaats No 121
- ***Wonderheuvel Solar PV Facility***, on an application site of approximately 5652ha, comprising the following farm portions:
  - Remainder of Mooi Plaats No 121
  - Portion 3 of Wonder Heuvel No 140
  - Portion 5 of Holle Fountain No 133
- ***Paarde Valley Solar PV Facility***, on an application site of approximately 2631ha, comprising the following farm portion:
  - Portion 2 of Paarde Valley No 62

### ***Solar PV Components***

The three Solar PV facilities will include the following components:

- PV fields (arrays) comprising multiple PV panels. The number of panels, the generation capacity of each facility and the layout of the arrays will be dependent on the outcome of the specialist studies conducted during the EIA process.
- PV panels will be either fixed tilt mounting or single axis tracking mounting, and the modules will be either crystalline silicon or thin film technology. Each panel will be approximately 2m wide and between 1m and 4m in height, depending on the mounting type.
- Internal roads, between 4m and 10m wide, will provide access to the PV arrays. Existing site roads will be used wherever possible, although new site roads will be constructed where necessary.
- Each PV facility will include up to two (2) temporary construction laydown/staging areas of approximately 10ha each.
- Operation and maintenance (O&M) buildings will be provided for each PV field, occupying a site of approximately 2 500m<sup>2</sup> (50m x 50m).

- Medium voltage cabling will link the PV plant to the grid connection infrastructure. These cables will be laid underground wherever technically feasible.

### ***Grid Connection Infrastructure***

The proposed grid connection infrastructure for each PV facility is being assessed as part of a separate BA application. The grid connections will include the following components:

- New on-site substations and collector substations to serve each PV facility, each occupying an area of up to 4ha.
- A new 132kV overhead power line connecting the on-site substations or collector substations to either Hydra D Main Transmission Substation (MTS) or the proposed Coleskop Wind Energy Facility (WEF) substation from where the electricity will be fed into the national grid. The type of power line towers being considered at this stage to include both lattice and monopole towers which will be up to 25m in height.

### ***No-Go alternative***

The no development alternative option assumes the site remains in its current state, i.e. there is no construction of a Solar PV Facility and associated infrastructure in the proposed project area and the status quo would prevail.



# APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The study commenced as a desktop-study followed by a site-specific field study from the 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019. This report provides a Scoping level description of the site and assessment of the proposed project from an ecology perspective. The detailed methodology followed as well as the sources of data and information used as part of this assessment is described below.

## Assessment philosophy

Many parts of South Africa contain high levels of biodiversity at species and ecosystem level. At any single site there may be large numbers of species or high ecological complexity. Sites also vary in their natural character and uniqueness and the level to which they have been previously disturbed. Assessing the potential impacts of a proposed development often requires evaluating the conservation value of a site relative to other natural areas and relative to the national importance of the site in terms of biodiversity conservation. A simple approach to evaluating the relative importance of a site includes assessing the following:

- Is the site unique in terms of natural or biodiversity features?
- Is the protection of biodiversity features on the site of national/provincial importance?
- Would development of the site lead to contravention of any international, national or provincial legislation, policy, convention or regulation?

Thus, the general approach adopted for this type of study is to identify any critical biodiversity issues that may lead to the decision that the proposed project cannot take place, i.e. to specifically focus on red flags and/or potential fatal flaws. Biodiversity issues are assessed by documenting whether any important biodiversity features occur on site, including species, ecosystems or processes that maintain ecosystems and/or species. These can be organised in a hierarchical fashion, as follows:

### Species

1. threatened plant species;
2. protected trees; and
3. threatened animal species.

### Ecosystems

1. threatened ecosystems;
2. protected ecosystems;
3. critical biodiversity areas;
4. areas of high biodiversity; and
5. centres of endemism.

### Processes

1. corridors;
2. mega-conservancy networks;
3. rivers and wetlands; and
4. important topographical features.

It is not the intention to provide comprehensive lists of all species that occur on site, since most of the species on these lists are usually common or widespread species. Rare, threatened, protected and conservation-worthy species and habitats are considered to be the highest priority, the presence of which are most likely to result in significant negative impacts on the ecological environment. The focus on national and provincial priorities and critical biodiversity issues is in line with National legislation protecting environmental and biodiversity resources, including, but not limited to the following which ensure protection of ecological processes, natural systems and natural beauty as well as the preservation of biotic diversity in the natural environment:

1. National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA) (Act 107 of 1998); and
2. National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, 2004. (Act 10 Of 2004).

## Species of conservation concern

There are two types of species of concern for the site under investigation, (i) those listed by conservation authorities as being on a Red List and are therefore considered to be at risk of extinction, and (ii) those listed as protected according to National and/or Provincial legislation.

### **Red List plant species**

Determining the conservation status of a species is required to identify those species that are at greatest risk of extinction and, therefore, in most need of conservation action. South Africa has adopted the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List Categories and Criteria to provide an objective, rigorous, scientifically founded system to identify Red List species. A published list of the Red List species of South African plants (Raimondo *et al.*, 2009) contains a list of all species that are considered to be at risk of extinction. This list is updated regularly to take new information into account, but these are not published in book/paper format. Updated assessments are provided on the SANBI website (<http://redlist.sanbi.org/>). According to the website of the Red List of Southern African Plants (<http://redlist.sanbi.org/>), *the conservation status of plants indicated on the Red List of South African Plants Online represents the status of the species within South Africa's borders. This means that when a species is not endemic to South Africa, only the portion of the species population occurring within South Africa has been assessed. The global conservation status, which is a result of the assessment of the entire global range of a species, can be found on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species: <http://www.iucnredlist.org>.* The South African assessment is used in this study.

The purpose of listing Red List species is to provide information on the potential occurrence of species at risk of extinction in the study area that may be affected by the proposed infrastructure. Species appearing on these lists can then be assessed in terms of their habitat requirements to determine whether any of them have a likelihood of occurring in habitats that may be affected by the proposed infrastructure.

Lists were compiled specifically for any species at risk of extinction (Red List species) previously recorded in the area. Historical occurrences of threatened plant species were obtained from the South African National Biodiversity Institute (<http://posa.sanbi.org>) for the quarter degree square/s within which the study area is situated. Habitat information for each species was obtained from various published sources. The probability of finding any of these species was then assessed by comparing the habitat requirements with those habitats that were found, during the field survey of the site, to occur there.

### **Protected trees**

Regulations published for the National Forests Act (Act 84 of 1998) (NFA) as amended, provide a list of protected tree species for South Africa. The species on this list were assessed in order to determine which protected tree species have a geographical distribution that coincides with the study area and habitat requirements that may be met by available habitat in the study area. The distribution of species on this list were obtained from published sources (e.g. van Wyk & van Wyk 1997) and from the SANBI Biodiversity Information System website (<http://sibis.sanbi.org/>) for quarter degree grids in which species have been previously recorded. Species that have been recorded anywhere in proximity to the site (within 100 km), or where it is considered possible that they could occur there, were listed and were considered as being at risk of occurring there.

### **Other protected species**

National legislation was evaluated in order to provide lists of any plant or animal species that have protected status. The most important legislation is the following:

- National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No 10 of 2004); and
- Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act (Act No. 9 of 2009).

This legislation contains lists of species that are protected. These lists were used to identify any species that have a geographical range that includes the study area and habitat requirements that are met by those found on site. These species were searched for within suitable habitats on site or, where relevant, if it is possible that they could occur on site, this was stated.

### **Red List animal species**

Lists of threatened animal species that have a geographical range that includes the study area were obtained from literature sources (for example, Alexander & Marais 2007, Branch 1988, 2001, du Preez & Carruthers 2009, Friedmann & Daly 2004, Mills & Hes 1997, Monadjem *et al.*, 2010). The likelihood of any of them occurring was evaluated based on habitat preference and habitats available within the study area. The three parameters used to assess the probability of occurrence for each species were as follows:

- *Habitat requirements*: most Red Data animals have very specific habitat requirements and the presence of these habitat characteristics within the study area were assessed;
- *Habitat status*: in the event that available habitat is considered suitable for these species, the status or ecological condition was assessed. Often, a high level of degradation of a specific habitat type will negate the potential presence of Red Data species (especially wetland-related habitats where water-quality plays a major role); and
- *Habitat linkage*: movement between areas used for breeding and feeding purposes forms an essential part of ecological existence of many species. The connectivity of the study area to these surrounding habitats and adequacy of these linkages are assessed for the ecological functioning Red Data species within the study area.

Mammal threat status is according to Child *et al.* (2016), reptile threat status is according to Bates *et al.* 2014, and amphibian threat status is according to Minter *et al.* (2004).

### **Species probability of occurrence**

Some species of plants may be cryptic, difficult to find, rare, ephemeral or generally not easy to identify while undertaking a survey of a large area. An assessment of the possibility of these species occurring there was therefore provided. For all threatened or protected flora that occur in the general geographical area of the site, a rating of the likelihood of it occurring on site is given as follows:

- LOW: no suitable habitats occur on site / habitats on site do not match habitat description for species;
- MEDIUM: habitats on site match general habitat description for species (e.g. karoo shrubland), but detailed microhabitat requirements (e.g. mountain shrubland on shallow soils overlying sandstone) are absent on the site or are unknown from the descriptions given in the literature or from the authorities;
- HIGH: habitats found on site match very strongly the general and microhabitat description for the species (e.g. mountain shrubland on shallow soils overlying sandstone);
- DEFINITE: species found in habitats on site.

## **Habitat sensitivity**

The purpose of producing a habitat sensitivity map is to provide information on the location of potentially sensitive features in the study area. This was compiled by taking the following into consideration:

1. The general status of the vegetation of the study area was derived by compiling a landcover data layer for the study area (*sensu* Fairbanks *et al.*, 2000) using available satellite imagery and aerial photography. From this, it can be seen which areas are transformed versus those that are still in a natural status.
2. Various provincial, regional or national level conservation planning studies have been undertaken in the area, e.g. the National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment (NSBA). The mapped results from these were taken into consideration in compiling the habitat sensitivity map.
3. Habitats in which various species of plants or animals occur that may be protected or are considered to have high conservation status are considered to be sensitive.

An explanation of the different sensitivity classes is given in Table 1. Areas containing untransformed natural vegetation of conservation concern, high diversity or habitat complexity, Red List organisms or systems vital to sustaining ecological functions are considered potentially sensitive. In contrast, any transformed area that has no importance for the functioning of ecosystems is considered to potentially have low sensitivity.

Table 1: Explanation of sensitivity ratings.

Sensitivity	Factors contributing to sensitivity	Example of qualifying features
VERY HIGH	<p>Indigenous natural areas that are highly positive for <u>any</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• presence of threatened species (Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable) and/or habitat critical for the survival of populations of threatened species.</li> <li>• <u>High</u> conservation status (low proportion remaining intact, highly fragmented, habitat for species that are at risk).</li> <li>• <u>Protected</u> habitats (areas protected according to national / provincial legislation, e.g. National Forests Act, Draft Ecosystem List of NEM:BA, Integrated Coastal Zone Management Act, Mountain Catchment Areas Act, Lake Areas Development Act)</li> </ul> <p>And may also be positive for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>High</u> intrinsic biodiversity value (<u>high</u> species richness and/or turnover, unique ecosystems)</li> <li>• <u>High</u> value ecological goods &amp; services (e.g. water supply, erosion control, soil formation, carbon storage, pollination, refugia, food production, raw materials, genetic resources, cultural value)</li> <li>• <u>Low</u> ability to respond to disturbance (low resilience, dominant species very old).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBA 1 areas.</li> <li>• Remaining areas of vegetation type listed in Draft Ecosystem List of NEM:BA as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable.</li> <li>• Protected forest patches.</li> <li>• Confirmed presence of populations of threatened species.</li> </ul>
HIGH	<p>Indigenous natural areas that are positive for any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>High</u> intrinsic biodiversity value (<u>moderate/high</u> species richness and/or turnover).</li> <li>• presence of habitat highly suitable for threatened species (Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable species).</li> <li>• <u>Moderate</u> ability to respond to disturbance (<u>moderate</u> resilience, dominant species of intermediate age).</li> <li>• <u>Moderate</u> conservation status (moderate proportion remaining intact, moderately fragmented, habitat for species that are at risk).</li> <li>• <u>Moderate to high</u> value ecological goods &amp; services (e.g. water supply, erosion control, soil formation, carbon storage, pollination, refugia, food production, raw materials, genetic resources, cultural value).</li> </ul> <p>And may also be positive for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Protected</u> habitats (areas protected according to national / provincial legislation, e.g. National Forests Act, Draft Ecosystem List of NEM:BA, Integrated Coastal Zone Management Act, Mountain Catchment Areas Act, Lake Areas Development Act)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBA 2 “critical biodiversity areas”.</li> <li>• Habitat where a threatened species could potentially occur (habitat is suitable, but no confirmed records).</li> <li>• Confirmed habitat for species of lower threat status (near threatened, rare).</li> <li>• Habitat containing individuals of extreme age.</li> <li>• Habitat with low ability to recover from disturbance.</li> <li>• Habitat with exceptionally high diversity (richness or turnover).</li> <li>• Habitat with unique species composition and narrow distribution.</li> <li>• Ecosystem providing high value ecosystem goods and services.</li> </ul>
MEDIUM-HIGH	<p>Indigenous natural areas that are positive for <u>one</u> or <u>two</u> of the factors listed above, but not a combination of factors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBA 2 “corridor areas”.</li> </ul>

Sensitivity	Factors contributing to sensitivity	Example of qualifying features
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Habitat with high diversity (richness or turnover).</li> <li>Habitat where a species of lower threat status (e.g. (near threatened, rare) could potentially occur (habitat is suitable, but no confirmed records).</li> </ul>
MEDIUM	Other indigenous natural areas in which factors listed above are of no particular concern. May also include natural buffers around ecologically sensitive areas and natural links or corridors in which natural habitat is still ecologically functional.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural habitat with no specific sensitivities.</li> </ul>
MEDIUM-LOW	Degraded or disturbed indigenous natural vegetation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly degraded areas or highly disturbed areas in which the original species composition has been lost.</li> </ul>
LOW	No natural habitat remaining.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transformed areas.</li> </ul>

Any natural vegetation within which there are features of conservation concern will be classified into one of the high sensitivity classes (MEDIUM-HIGH, HIGH or VERY HIGH. The difference between these three high classes is based on a combination of factors and can be summarised as follows:

1. Areas classified into the VERY HIGH class are vital for the survival of species or ecosystems. They are either known sites for threatened species or are ecosystems that have been identified as being remaining areas of vegetation of critical conservation importance. CBA1 areas would qualify for inclusion into this class.
2. Areas classified into the HIGH class are of high biodiversity value, but do not necessarily contain features that would put them into the VERY HIGH class. For example, a site that is known to contain a population of a threatened species would be in the VERY HIGH class, but a site where a threatened species could potentially occur (habitat is suitable), but it is not known whether it does occur there or not, is classified into the HIGH sensitivity class. The class also includes any areas that are not specifically identified as having high conservation status, but have high local species richness, unique species composition, low resilience or provide very important ecosystem goods and services. CBA2 "irreplaceable biodiversity areas" would qualify for inclusion into this class, if there were no other factors that would put them into the highest class.
3. Areas classified into the MEDIUM-HIGH sensitivity class are natural vegetation in which there are one or two features that make them of biodiversity value, but not to the extent that they would be classified into one of the other two higher categories. CBA2 "corridor areas" would qualify for inclusion into this class.

## Field surveys

The study area was visited and assessed to confirm patterns identified from the desktop assessment. One site visit was undertaken on 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019. The site visit was undertaken at the height of the summer growing season. Vegetation was in a moderate state, although affected by a multi-year drought. Many plant species could be identified, and habitats were generally in a good state to assess. This means that botanical diversity and species composition were possible to assess.

Specific features of potential concern were investigated in the field, including the following:

- General vegetation status, i.e. whether the vegetation was natural, disturbed/secondary or transformed;
- Presence of habitats of conservation concern in terms of high biodiversity, presence of SCC, specific sensitivities, e.g. wetlands, and any other factors that would indicate an elevated biodiversity or functional value that could not be determined from the desktop assessment;

- Presence of protected trees; and
- Potential presence of SCC, including observation of individual plants found on site or habitats that are suitable for any of the species identified from the desktop assessment.

Key parts of the development site were visited during the reconnaissance site visit in such a way as to ensure all major variation was covered and that any unusual habitats or features were observed. A preliminary checklist of species occurring on site was collected during the survey (Appendix 3, highlighted in green). Plant names follow Germishuizen *et al.* (2005). The season of the survey was favourable, and it there is high confidence that many of species present on site were identifiable at the time of the survey. The survey was of adequate duration and intensity to characterise the flora of the development site as per the regulations.

# RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Relevant legislation is provided in this section to provide a description of the key legal considerations of importance to the proposed project. The applicable legislation is listed below.

## Convention on Biodiversity (CBD)

South Africa became a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1993, which was ratified in 1995. The CBD requires signatory states to implement objectives of the Convention, which are the conservation of biodiversity; the sustainable use of biological resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. According to Article 14 (a) of the CBD, each Contracting Party, as far as possible and as appropriate, must introduce appropriate procedures, such as environmental impact assessments of its proposed projects that are likely to have significant adverse effects on biological diversity, to avoid or minimize these effects and, where appropriate, to allow for public participation in such procedures.

## National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998 (NEMA)

NEMA is the framework environmental management legislation, enacted as part of the government's mandate to ensure every person's constitutional right to an environment that is not harmful to his or her health or wellbeing. It is administered by DEA but several functions have been delegated to the provincial environment departments. One of the purposes of NEMA is to provide for co-operative environmental governance by establishing principles for decision-making on matters affecting the environment. The Act further aims to provide for institutions that will promote cooperative governance and procedures for coordinating environmental functions exercised by organs of state and to provide for the administration and enforcement of other environmental management laws.

NEMA requires, inter alia, that:

- “development must be socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable”,
- “disturbance of ecosystems and loss of biological diversity are avoided, or, where they cannot be altogether avoided, are minimised and remedied.” ,
- “a risk-averse and cautious approach is applied, which takes into account the limits of current knowledge about the consequences of decisions and actions”,

NEMA states that “the environment is held in public trust for the people, the beneficial use of environmental resources must serve the public interest and the environment must be protected as the people's common heritage.”

This report considers the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations of 2014 (NEMA, 2014) as amended in 2017 (NEMA, 2017), under the National Environmental Management Act, (Act No. 107 of 1998). According to these Regulations under Listing Notice 1 (GRN No. 327), Listing Notice 2 (GRN No 325) and Listing Notice 3 (GRN No 324), the activities listed are identified as activities that may require Environmental Authorisation prior to commencement of that activity and to identify competent authorities in terms of sections 24(2) and 24D of the Act.

## National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No 10 of 2004)

As the principal national act regulating biodiversity protection, NEM:BA, which is administered by DEA, is concerned with the management and conservation of biological diversity, as well as the use of indigenous biological resources in a sustainable manner. The term biodiversity according to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) refers to the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity in genes, species and ecosystems.

In terms of the Biodiversity Act, the developer has a responsibility for:

- The conservation of endangered ecosystems and restriction of activities according to the categorisation of the area (not just by listed activity as specified in the EIA regulations).
- Promote the application of appropriate environmental management tools in order to ensure integrated environmental management of activities thereby ensuring that all development within the area are in line with ecological sustainable development and protection of biodiversity.
- Limit further loss of biodiversity and conserve endangered ecosystems.

Chapter 4 of the Act relates to threatened or protected ecosystems or species. According to Section 57 of the Act, "Restricted activities involving listed threatened or protected species":

- (1) A person may not carry out a restricted activity involving a specimen of a listed threatened or protected species without a permit issued in terms of Chapter 7.

Such activities include any that are "of a nature that may negatively impact on the survival of a listed threatened or protected species".

### ***Alien and Invasive Species***

Chapter 5 of NEM:BA relates to species and organisms posing a potential threat to biodiversity. The Act defines alien species and provides lists of invasive species in regulations. The Alien and Invasive Species (AIS) Regulations, in terms of Section 97(1) of NEM:BA, was published in Government Notice R598 in Government Gazette 37885 in 2014 (NEM:BA, 2014). The Alien and Invasive Species (AIS) lists were subsequently published in Government Notice R 864 of 29 July 2016 (NEM:BA, 2016).

According to Section 75 of the Act, "Control and eradication of listed invasive species":

- (1) Control and eradication of a listed invasive species must be carried out by means of methods that are appropriate for the species concerned and the environment in which it occurs.
- (2) Any action taken to control and eradicate a listed invasive species must be executed with caution and in a manner that may cause the least possible harm to biodiversity and damage to the environment.
- (3) The methods employed to control and eradicate a listed invasive species must also be directed at the offspring, propagating material and re-growth of such invasive species in order to prevent such species from producing offspring, forming seed, regenerating or re-establishing itself in any manner.

The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA) regulates all invasive organisms in South Africa, including a wide range of fauna and flora. Chapter 5 of the Act relates to species and organisms posing a potential threat to biodiversity. The purpose of Chapter 5 is:

- a) to prevent the unauthorized introduction and spread of alien species and invasive species to ecosystems and habitats where they do not naturally occur;
- b) to manage and control alien species and invasive species to prevent or minimize harm to the environment and to biodiversity in particular;
- c) to eradicate alien species and invasive species from ecosystems and habitats where they may harm such ecosystems or habitats;

According to Section 65 of the Act, "Restricted activities involving alien species":

- 1) A person may not carry out a restricted activity involving a specimen of an alien species without a permit issued in terms of Chapter 7. Restricted activities include the following:
  - a. Importing into the Republic, including introducing from the sea, any specimen of a listed invasive species.
  - b. Having in possession or exercising physical control over any specimen of a listed invasive species.
  - c. Growing, breeding or in any other way propagating any specimen of a listed invasive species, or causing it to multiply.
  - d. Conveying, moving or otherwise translocating any specimen of a listed invasive species.
  - e. Selling or otherwise trading in, buying, receiving, giving, donating or accepting as a gift, or in any other way acquiring or disposing of any specimen of a listed invasive species.
  - f. Spreading or allowing the spread of any specimen of a listed invasive species.
  - g. Releasing any specimen of a listed invasive species.
  - h. Additional activities that apply to aquatic species.



- 2) A permit referred to in subsection (1) may be issued only after a prescribed assessment of risks and potential impacts on biodiversity is carried out.

3)

An "**alien species**" is defined in the Act as:

- a) a species that is not an indigenous species; or
- b) an indigenous species translocated or intended to be translocated to a place outside its natural distribution range in nature, but not an indigenous species that has extended its natural distribution range by means of migration or dispersal without human intervention.

According to Section 71 of the Act, "Restricted activities involving listed invasive species":

- 1) A person may not carry out a restricted activity involving a specimen of a listed invasive species without a permit issued in terms of Chapter 7.
- 2) A permit referred to in subsection (1) may be issued only after a prescribed assessment of risks and potential impacts on biodiversity is carried out.

An "**invasive species**" is defined in the Act as any species whose establishment and spread outside of its natural distribution range:

- a) threaten ecosystems, habitats or other species or have demonstrable potential to threaten ecosystems, habitats or other species; and
- b) may result in economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

A "**listed invasive species**" is defined in the Act as any invasive species listed in terms of section 70(1).

According to Section 73 of the Act, "Duty of care relating to listed invasive species":

- 2) A person who is the owner of land on which a listed invasive species occurs must-
  - a) notify any relevant competent authority, in writing, of the listed invasive species occurring on that land;
  - b) take steps to control and eradicate the listed invasive species and to prevent it from spreading; and
  - c) take all the required steps to prevent or minimize harm to biodiversity.

According to Section 75 of the Act, "Control and eradication of listed invasive species":

- (1) Control and eradication of a listed invasive species must be carried out by means of methods that are appropriate for the species concerned and the environment in which it occurs.
- (2) Any action taken to control and eradicate a listed invasive species must be executed with caution and in a manner that may cause the least possible harm to biodiversity and damage to the environment.
- (3) The methods employed to control and eradicate a listed invasive species must also be directed at the offspring, propagating material and re-growth of such invasive species in order to prevent such species from producing offspring, forming seed, regenerating or re-establishing itself in any manner.

**Government Notice No. 1002 of 2011: National List of Ecosystems that are Threatened and in need of protection**

Published under Section 52(1)(a) of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004). This Act provides for the listing of threatened or protected ecosystems based on national criteria. The list of threatened terrestrial ecosystems supersedes the information regarding terrestrial ecosystem status in the National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment (2004).

The EIA Regulations (2014, as amended) include three lists of activities that require environmental authorisation:

- Listing Notice 1: activities that require a basic assessment (GNR. 327 of 2014, as amended),
- Listing Notice 2: activities that require a full environmental impact assessment report (EIR) (GNR. 325 of 2014, as amended),
- Listing Notice 3: activities that require a basic assessment in specific identified geographical areas only (GNR. 324 of 2014, as amended).

**GNR 151: Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable and Protected Species List**

Published under Section 56(1) of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004).

### **GNR 1187: Amendment of Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable and Protected Species List**

Published under Section 56(1) of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004).

### **Government Notice No. 40733 of 2017: Draft National Biodiversity Offset Policy**

Published under the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998). The aim of the Policy is to ensure that significant residual impacts of developments are remedied as required by NEMA, thereby ensuring sustainable development as required by section 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. This policy should be taken into consideration with every development application that still has significant residual impact after the Mitigation Sequence has been followed. The mitigation sequence entails the consecutive application of avoiding or preventing loss, then at minimizing or mitigating what cannot be avoided, rehabilitating where possible and, as a last resort, offsetting the residual impact. The Policy specifies that one impact that has come across consistently as unmitigatable is the rapid and consistent transformation of certain ecosystems and vegetation types, leading to the loss of ecosystems and extinction of species. The Policy specifically targets ecosystems where the ability to reach protected area targets is lost or close to being lost. However, the Policy states that “[w]here ecosystems remain largely untransformed, intact and functional, an offset would not be required for developments that lead to transformation, provided they have not been identified as a biodiversity priority”. Biodiversity offsets should be considered to remedy residual negative impacts on biodiversity of ‘medium’ to ‘high’ significance. Residual impacts of ‘very high’ significance are a fatal flaw for development and residual biodiversity impacts of ‘low’ significance would usually not require offsets. The Policy indicates that impacts should preferably be avoided in protected areas, CBAs, verified wetland and river features and areas earmarked for protected area expansion.

## **National Forests Act (Act no 84 of 1998)**

### Protected trees

According to this act, the Minister may declare a tree, group of trees, woodland or a species of trees as protected. The prohibitions provide that ‘no person may cut, damage, disturb, destroy or remove any *protected tree*, or collect, remove, transport, export, purchase, sell, donate or in any other manner acquire or dispose of any protected tree, except under a licence granted by the Minister’.

### Forests

Prohibits the destruction of indigenous trees in any natural forest without a licence.

## **National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998)**

Wetlands, riparian zones and watercourses are defined in the Water Act as a water resource and any activities that are contemplated that could affect the wetlands requires authorisation (Section 21 of the National Water Act of 1998). A “watercourse” in terms of the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998) means:

- River or spring;
- A natural channel in which water flows regularly or intermittently;
- A wetland, lake or dam into which, or from which, water flows; and

Any collection of water which the Minister may, by notice in the gazette, declare to be a watercourse, and a reference to a watercourse includes, where relevant, its bed and banks.

## **Conservation of Agricultural Resources (Act No. 43 of 1983) as amended in 2001**

Declared Weeds and Invaders in South Africa are categorised according to one of the following categories:

- **Category 1 plants:** are prohibited and must be controlled.
- **Category 2 plants:** (commercially used plants) may be grown in demarcated areas providing that there is a permit and that steps are taken to prevent their spread.
- **Category 3 plants:** (ornamentally used plants) may no longer be planted; existing plants may remain, as long as all reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spreading thereof, except within the floodline of watercourses and wetlands.

## National Veld and Forest Fire Act (Act No. 101 of 1998)

Provides requirements for veldfire prevention through firebreaks and required measures for fire-fighting. Chapter 4 of the Act places a duty on landowners to prepare and maintain firebreaks. Chapter 5 of the Act places a duty on all landowners to acquire equipment and have available personnel to fight fires.

## Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act, No. 9 of 2009

This Act provides for the sustainable utilisation of wild animals, aquatic biota and plants; provides for the implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; provides for offences and penalties for contravention of the Act; provides for the appointment of nature conservators to implement the provisions of the Act; and provides for the issuing of permits and other authorisations. Amongst other regulations, the following may apply to the current project:

- Boundary fences may not be altered in such a way as to prevent wild animals from freely moving onto or off of a property;
- Aquatic habitats may not be destroyed or damaged;
- The owner of land upon which an invasive species is found (plant or animal) must take the necessary steps to eradicate or destroy such species.

The Act provides lists of protected species for the Province. According to Northern Cape Nature Conservation officials, a permit is required for the removal of any species on this list.

## Other Acts

Other Acts that may apply to biodiversity issues, but which are considered to not apply to the current site are as follows:

- National Environmental Management Protected Areas Act (Act No. 57 of 2003)
- Marine Living Resources Act (Act No. 18 of 1998)
- Sea Birds and Seals Protection Act (Act No. 46 of 1973)
- Lake Areas Development Act (Act No. 39 of 1975)
- Mountain Catchment Areas Act (Act No. 63 of 1970)
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management Act (Act No. 24 of 2008)

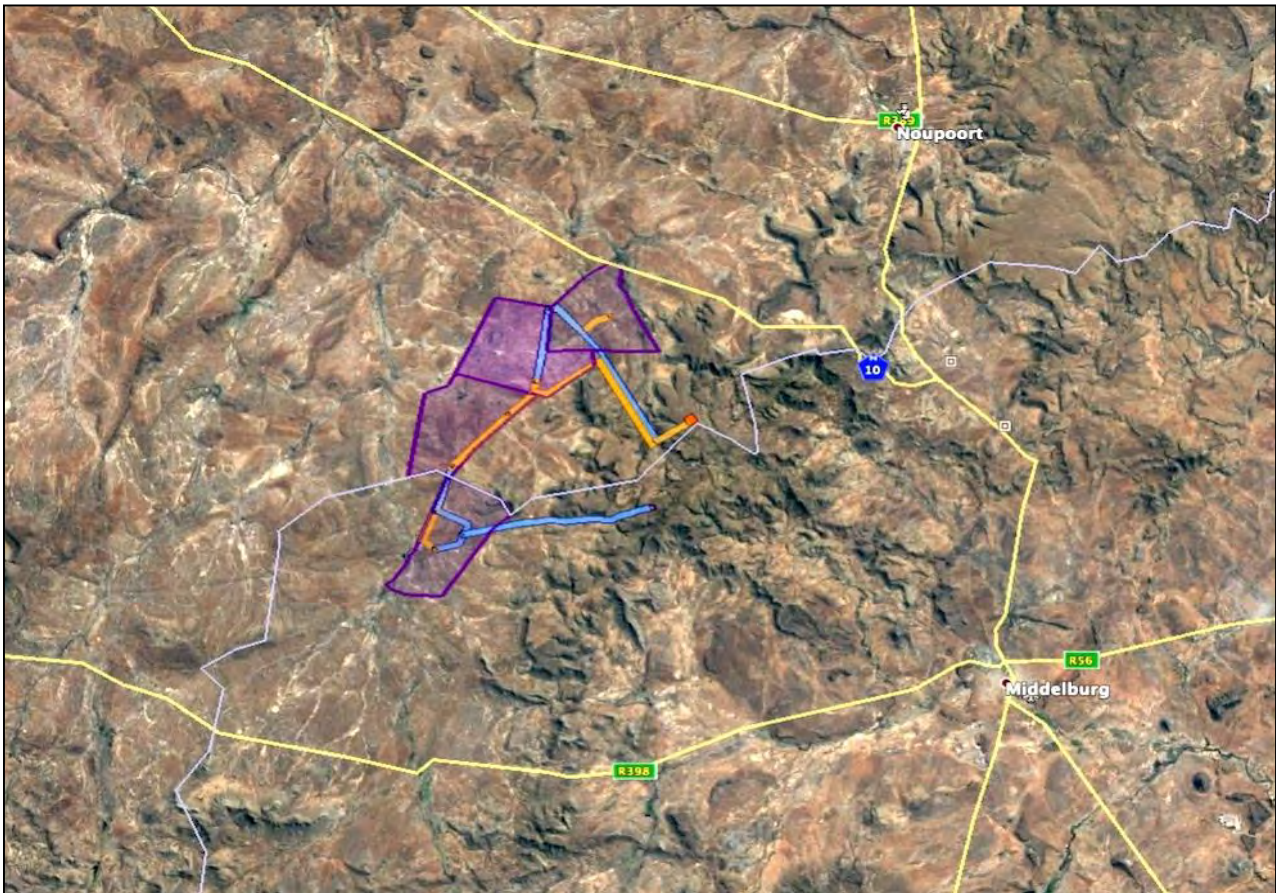
# DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA

## Location

The combined projects (Mooi Plaats, Paarde Valley and Wonderheuwel) are located 20 km south-west of Noupoort and 30 km north-west of Middelburg, straddling the border between the Eastern and Northern Cape Provinces, South Africa (Figure 1). The proposed facilities are located within the Umsobomvu Local Municipality within the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality, and Inxuba Yethemba Local Municipality within the Chris Hani District Municipality. The N10 national road from Port Elizabeth to Upington passes along the northern border of the combined site. A farm access road from the N10 passes through the combined site. The combined site (study area) is in the quarter degree grids 3124BC, and BD, between 31°15'47.9" S and 31°27'24.3 S latitude, and between 24°37'57.7 E and 24°49'30.8 E longitude.

## Site conditions

The entire study area is largely in a natural state, but used for animal production. There is well-established farm infrastructure on each land holding, including homesteads, farm buildings, camps, dams, small areas of cultivated lands, and some stands of exotic trees used as shade and wind-screens. There are also access roads, narrow gravel roads, jeep tracks and fences. The vegetation in the study area is used primarily for livestock grazing and is affected to some degree by this usage, but not to the extent that any severe degradation was noted on site. With the exception of this



**Figure 1: Location of the study area (Mooi Plaats, Paarde Valley and Wonderheuwel).**

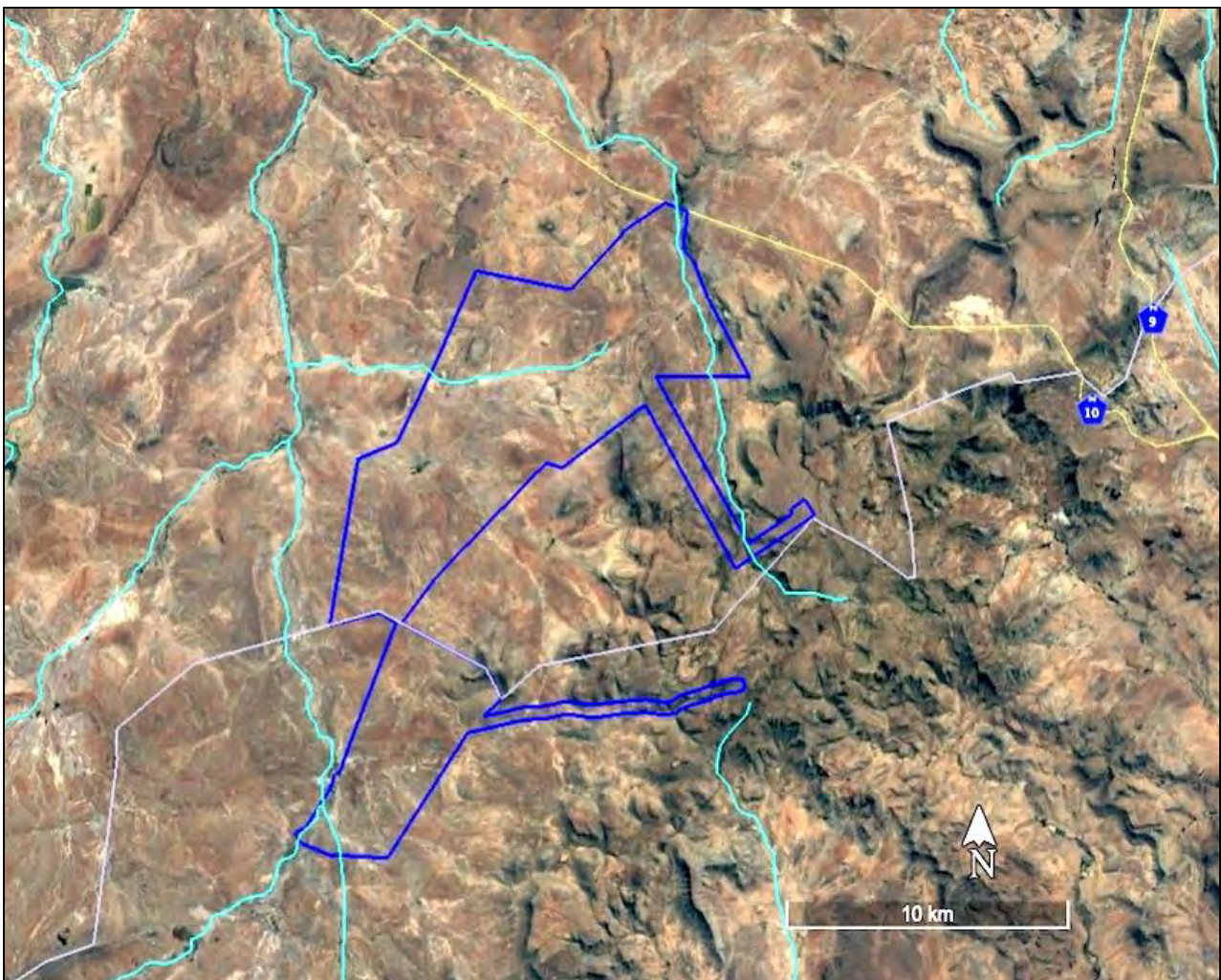
infrastructure, the vegetation and habitats in the study area appear to be largely in a natural state and reflecting what would be expected according to the natural relationship between the physical environment and the vegetation. This natural pattern extends beyond the study area in all directions and gives the general area a sense of being relatively untransformed and largely natural.

## Topography and drainage

The study area is situated in an area along the boundary between plains and mountain ranges, with moderately to steeply sloping topography in the south-eastern parts, and relatively flat to undulating terrain in the remainder of the area (Figure 2).

The elevation on site varies from 1430 to 1855 m above sea level, an elevation difference of approximately 425 m across a distance of around 15,0 km. The mountains rise fairly steeply from the surrounding plains resulting in much steeper gradients along this interface. The mountain areas are incised by steep valleys and are dissected and variable in topography. The plains are relatively flat to undulating, but with regular low ridges and koppies to break the landscape, some isolated and others linked into long, low ridges.

The study area is drained by several dry drainage valleys, most of which drain eventually towards the north-west. The dry stream beds on site coalesce into the Klein Seekoeirivier that runs northwards out of the study area.



**Figure 2: Main non-perennial rivers draining the study area.**

## Soils

Detailed soil information is not available for broad areas of the country. As a surrogate, landtype data was used to provide a general description of soils in the study area (landtypes are areas with largely uniform soils, topography and climate). The landtypes described below provide a generalized description of soils on site that may differ in detail from site-specific patterns, but not in overall trends. There are three land types in the study area. These are the Fb and Ib landtypes in the mountains, and the Da landtype in the remainder of the study area (Land Type Survey Staff, 1987).

The F-group of landtypes accommodates pedologically young landscapes that are not predominantly rock and not predominantly alluvial or aeolian, and in which the dominant soil-forming processes include rock weathering, the formation of orthic topsoil horizons and commonly, clay illuviation, giving rise typically to lithocutanic horizons. The Fb landtype refers to land where the soils are shallow and/or rocky, often on steep slopes. The soils are slightly leached and there is usually lime in some of the bottomlands. The Ib landtype indicates areas with exposed rock (exposed country rock, stones or boulders) covering 60 – 80% of the area.

The D-group of land types refers to lands where prismatic, pedocutanic and/or gleycutanic diagnostic horizons (duplex soils – sandier topsoil abruptly overlying more clayey subsoil) are common (MacVicar *et al.*, 1974). Unit Da refers to land in which duplex soils with red B-horizons comprise more than half the area covered by duplex soils.

## Climate

The study area is within an arid environment with an annual rainfall of around 366 mm per annum. Rainfall can potentially occur at any time of the year, but is more likely in summer to late-summer, most often from October to April. Winters can be cold, with mean minimum temperatures approaching zero in July. Winter frost is common and occurs on average 30 days per year. In contrast, summers can be very hot with mean maximum temperatures in January exceeding 30°C.

## Broad vegetation patterns

There are two regional vegetation types occurring in the study area, namely Eastern Upper Karoo (all areas not coloured in Figure 3) and Besemkaree Koppies Shrubland (purple area in Figure 6). The first of these two units (Eastern Upper Karoo) occurs across most of the study area, whereas the second (Besemkaree Koppies Shrubland) is restricted to the mountainous areas and is only affected by small proportions of the proposed infrastructure (mostly the proposed power line corridors). There are three additional units that occur in nearby areas, namely Southern Karoo Riviere, Tarkastad Montane Shrubland and Karoo Escarpment Grassland. It is possible that floristic components and / or plant community patterns related to any of these could extend locally into the study area. This is especially true of Southern Karoo Riviere, which as a unit is only mapped as broad are, but is probably representative of all shallow drainage lines in the study area. The vegetation types that occur in the study area and nearby areas are briefly described below.

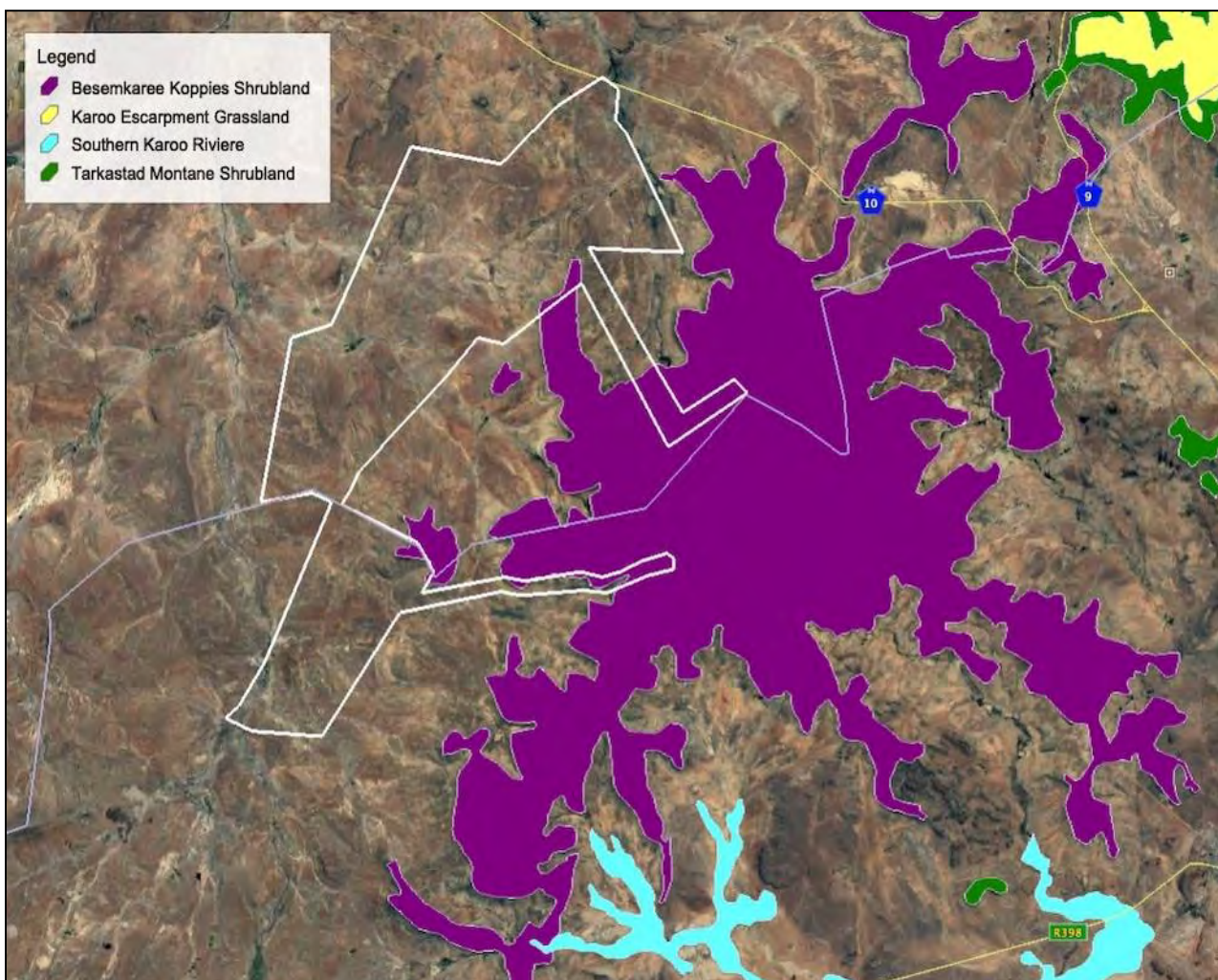
### ***Eastern Upper Karoo***

#### *Distribution*

Found in the Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and Western Cape Provinces: Between Carnarvon and Loxton in the west, De Aar, Petrusville and Venterstad in the north, Burgersdorp, Hofmeyr and Cradock in the east and the Great Escarpment and the Sneeuberge-Coetzeesberge mountain chain in the south. The vegetation type occurs at an altitude of between mostly 1 000–1 700 m.

#### *Vegetation & Landscape Features*

The vegetation occurs on flats and gently sloping plains (interspersed with hills and rocky areas of Upper Karoo Hardeveld in the west, Besemkaree Koppies Shrubland in the northeast and Tarkastad Montane Shrubland in the



**Figure 3: Broad vegetation types of the study area.**

southeast), dominated by dwarf microphyllous shrubs, with 'white' grasses of the genera *Aristida* and *Eragrostis* (these become prominent especially in the early autumn months after good summer rains). The grass cover increases along a gradient from southwest to northeast.

#### Geology & Soils

Mudstones and sandstones of the Beaufort Group (incl. both Adelaide and Tarkastad Subgroups) supporting duplex soils with prisma-cutanic and/or pedocutanic diagnostic horizons dominant (Da land type) as well as some shallow Glenrosa and Mispah soils (Fb and Fc land types). In places, less prominent Jurassic dolerites (Karoo Dolerite Suite) are also found.

#### Climate

Rainfall mainly in autumn and summer, peaking in March. MAP ranges from about 180 mm in the west to 430 mm in the east. Incidence of frost is relatively high, but ranging widely from <30 days (in the lower-altitude Cradock area) to >80 days of frost per year (bordering the Upper Karoo Hardeveld on the Compassberg and mountains immediately to the west). Mean maximum and minimum monthly temperatures in Middelburg (Grootfontein) are 36.1°C and -7.2°C for January and July, respectively. Corresponding values are 37°C and -8°C for Victoria West and 36.6°C and -4.2°C for Hofmeyr. See also climate diagram for NKu 4 Eastern Upper Karoo.

#### Important Taxa

<b>Succulent Shrubs</b>	<i>Euphorbia hypogaea</i> , <i>Ruschia intricata</i> .
<b>Tall Shrub</b>	<i>Lycium cinereum</i> (d), <i>L. horridum</i> , <i>L. oxycarpum</i> .
<b>Low Shrubs</b>	<i>Chrysocoma ciliata</i> (d), <i>Eriocephalus ericoides</i> subsp. <i>ericoides</i> (d), <i>E. spinescens</i> (d), <i>Pentzia globosa</i> (d), <i>P. incana</i> (d), <i>Phymaspermum parvifolium</i> (d), <i>Salsola calluna</i> (d), <i>Aptosimum procumbens</i> , <i>Felicia muricata</i> , <i>Gnidia polycephala</i> , <i>Helichrysum dregeanum</i> , <i>H. lucilioides</i> , <i>Limeum aethiopicum</i> , <i>Nenax microphylla</i> , <i>Osteospermum leptolobum</i> , <i>Plinthus karoocicus</i> , <i>Pteronia glauca</i> , <i>Rosenia humilis</i> , <i>Selago geniculata</i> , <i>S. saxatilis</i> .
<b>Herbs</b>	<i>Indigofera alternans</i> , <i>Pelargonium minimum</i> , <i>Tribulus terrestris</i> .
<b>Geophytic Herbs</b>	<i>Moraea pallida</i> (d), <i>Moraea polystachya</i> , <i>Syringodea bifucata</i> , <i>S. concolor</i> .
<b>Succulent Herbs</b>	<i>Psilocalaon coriarium</i> , <i>Tridentea jucunda</i> , <i>T. virescens</i>
<b>Graminoids</b>	<i>Aristida congesta</i> (d), <i>A. diffusa</i> (d), <i>Cynodon incompletus</i> (d), <i>Eragrostis bergiana</i> (d), <i>E. bicolor</i> (d), <i>E. lehmanniana</i> (d), <i>E. obtusa</i> (d), <i>Sporobolus fimbriatus</i> (d), <i>Stipagrostis ciliata</i> (d), <i>Tragus koelerioides</i> (d), <i>Aristida adscensionis</i> , <i>Chloris virgata</i> , <i>Cyperus usitatus</i> , <i>Digitaria eriantha</i> , <i>Enneapogon desvauxii</i> , <i>E. scoparius</i> , <i>Eragrostis curvula</i> , <i>Fingerhuthia africana</i> , <i>Heteropogon contortus</i> , <i>Sporobolus ludwigii</i> , <i>S. tenellus</i> , <i>Stipagrostis obtusa</i> , <i>Themeda triandra</i> , <i>Tragus berteronianus</i>

#### Endemic Taxa

<b>Succulent Shrubs</b>	<i>Chasmatophyllum rouxii</i> , <i>Hertia cluytiifolia</i> , <i>Rabiea albinota</i> , <i>Salsola tetrandra</i>
<b>Low Shrub</b>	<i>Aspalathus acicularis</i> subsp. <i>planifolia</i> , <i>Selago persimilis</i> , <i>S. walpersii</i> .
<b>Tall Shrub</b>	<i>Phymaspermum scoparium</i>

#### Remarks

This vegetation type has the largest mapped area of all vegetation units in the country, although it is likely that variations occur across the geographical range of the unit. The regions between Colesberg (Northern Cape) and Springfontein (Free State) fall within a broad ecotone where grassy Eastern Upper Karoo grades into Xhariep Karroid Grassland.

### **Besemkaree Koppies Shrubland**

#### Distribution

Northern Cape, Free State and Eastern Cape Provinces: On plains of Eastern Upper Karoo (between Richmond and Middelburg in the south and the Orange River) and within dry grasslands of the southern and central Free State. Extensive dolerite-dominated landscapes along the upper Orange River belong to this unit as well. Extends northwards to around Fauresmith in the northwest and to the Wepener District in the northeast. Altitude 1 120–1 680 m.

#### Vegetation & Landscape Features

Slopes of koppies, butts and tafelbergs covered by two-layered karroid shrubland. The lower (closed-canopy) layer is dominated by dwarf small-leaved shrubs and, especially in precipitation-rich years, also by abundant grasses, while the upper (loose canopy) layer is dominated by tall shrubs, namely *Rhus erosa*, *R. burchellii*, *R. ciliata*, *Euclea crispa* subsp. *ovata*, *Diospyros austro-africana* and *Olea europaea* subsp. *africana*.



### Geology & Soils

Dolerite koppies and sills embedded within Karoo Supergroup sediments. The dolerite dykes and sills are igneous intrusions that are the result of extensive volcanic activity, which accompanied the break-up of Gondwana in the Jurassic. In places the slopes of mesas and butts carrying this vegetation type have a mixed geology where dolerites occur together with sandstones and mudstones of the Ecca and Beaufort Groups. Fb land type covers almost 60% of the area, followed by Ib.

### Climate

Due to the large extent of the area, the rainfall pattern differs slightly from west to east. Seasonal summer rainfall prevails when the patches are found embedded within other units of the Grassland Biome, but the southern and southwestern regions show hints of bimodal climate patterns typical of the Nama-Karoo. Far more importantly, despite an overall MAP of almost 400 mm, MAP ranges from about 280 mm in the west (De Aar) to more than double, 580 mm, in the east (Edenburg). Much of the rainfall is of convectational origin. MAT 15°C.

### Important Taxa

<b>Small trees</b>	<i>Cussonia paniculata</i> , <i>Ziziphus mucronata</i> .
<b>Tall shrubs</b>	<i>Diospyros austro-africana</i> (d), <i>Euclea crispa</i> subsp. <i>ovata</i> (d), <i>Olea europaea</i> subsp. <i>africana</i> (d), <i>Rhus burchellii</i> (d), <i>R. ciliata</i> (d), <i>R. erosa</i> (d), <i>Buddleja saligna</i> , <i>Diospyros lycioides</i> subsp. <i>lycioides</i> , <i>Ehretia rigida</i> , <i>Grewia occidentalis</i> , <i>Gymnosporia polyacantha</i> , <i>Tarchonanthus minor</i>
<b>Low Shrubs</b>	<i>Asparagus suaveolens</i> (d), <i>Chrysocoma ciliata</i> (d), <i>Amphiglossa triflora</i> , <i>Aptosimum elongatum</i> , <i>Asparagus striatus</i> , <i>Diospyros pallens</i> , <i>Eriocephalus ericoides</i> , <i>E. spinescens</i> , <i>Euryops empetrifolius</i> , <i>Felicia filifolia</i> subsp. <i>filifolia</i> , <i>F. muricata</i> , <i>Helichrysum dregeanum</i> , <i>H. lucilioides</i> , <i>Hermannia multiflora</i> , <i>H. vestita</i> , <i>Lantana rugosa</i> , <i>Limeum aethiopicum</i> , <i>Lycium cinereum</i> , <i>Melolobium candicans</i> , <i>M. microphyllum</i> , <i>Nenax microphylla</i> , <i>Pegolettia retrofracta</i> , <i>Pentzia globosa</i> , <i>Rhigozum obovatum</i> , <i>Selago saxatilis</i> , <i>Stachys linearis</i> , <i>S. rugosa</i> , <i>Sutera halimifolia</i> , <i>Wahlenbergia albens</i>
<b>Succulent Shrubs</b>	<i>Aloe broomii</i> , <i>Chasmatophyllum musculinum</i> , <i>C. verdoorniae</i> , <i>Cotyledon orbiculata</i> var. <i>dactyloopsis</i> , <i>Pachypodium succulentum</i>
<b>Graminoids</b>	<i>Aristida adscensionis</i> (d), <i>A. congesta</i> (d), <i>A. diffusa</i> (d), <i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i> (d), <i>Cymbopogon caesius</i> (d), <i>Cynodon incompletus</i> (d), <i>Digitaria eriantha</i> (d), <i>Eragrostis curvula</i> (d), <i>E. lehmanniana</i> (d), <i>Heteropogon contortus</i> (d), <i>Setaria lindenbergiana</i> (d), <i>Themeda triandra</i> (d), <i>Tragus koelerioides</i> (d), <i>Cymbopogon pospischilii</i> , <i>Enneapogon scoparius</i> , <i>Eragrostis chloromelas</i> , <i>E. obtusa</i> , <i>Eustachys paspaloides</i> , <i>Fingerhuthia africana</i> , <i>Hyparrhenia hirta</i> , <i>Sporobolus fimbriatus</i>
<b>Herbs</b>	<i>Convolvulus sagittatus</i> , <i>Dianthus caespitosus</i> subsp. <i>caespitosus</i> , <i>Gazania krebsiana</i> subsp. <i>krebsiana</i> , <i>Hibiscus pusillus</i> , <i>Indigofera alternans</i> , <i>I. rhytidocarpa</i> , <i>Lepidium africanum</i> subsp. <i>africanum</i> , <i>Pollichia campestris</i>
<b>Herbaceous Climber</b>	<i>Argyrolobium lanceolatum</i>
<b>Geophytic Herbs</b>	<i>Albuca setosa</i> , <i>Asplenium cordatum</i> , <i>Cheilanthes bergiana</i> , <i>C. eckloniana</i> , <i>Freesia andersoniae</i> , <i>Haemanthus humilis</i> subsp. <i>humilis</i> , <i>Oxalis depressa</i> , <i>Pellaea calomelanos</i>
<b>Succulent Herbs</b>	<i>Aloe grandidentata</i> , <i>Crassula nudicaulis</i> , <i>Duvalia caespitosa</i> , <i>Euphorbia pulvinata</i> , <i>Huernia piersii</i> , <i>Stapelia grandiflora</i> , <i>S. olivacea</i> , <i>Tridentea gemmiflora</i>

### Endemic Taxa

<b>Succulent Shrubs</b>	<i>Euphorbia crassipes</i> , <i>Neohenricia sibbettii</i> , <i>N. spiculata</i>
<b>Small tree</b>	<i>Cussonia</i> sp. nov. ( <i>P.J. du Preez</i> 3666 BLFU).

### Remarks

The diversity of the shrub component is lower than in the Gm 5 Basotho Montane Shrubland—a similar shrubland unit occurring on the Drakensberg foothills. The density of shrubs marking the slopes of the koppies decreases along a northeast-southwest gradient. On the southern edges of the distribution area of this unit, shrubs retreat to drainage lines and onto the base of dolerite caps, while the slopes themselves remain covered by dwarf shrublands of the NKu 4 Eastern Upper Karoo. In the northeastern areas which receive a higher rainfall, the sheltered sites have larger trees such as *Rhus lancea* and *Celtis africana*.

### **Southern Karoo Riviere**

#### Distribution

Western and Eastern Cape Provinces: Alluvia of the Buffels, Bloed, Dwyka, Gamka, Sout, Kariega, and Sundays Rivers and their tributaries), east of Laingsburg as far west as Graaff-Reinet and Jansenville. This vegetation unit is embedded within the Koedoesberge-Moordenaars Karoo, Prince Albert Succulent Karoo, Gamka Karoo, Eastern Lower Karoo, and

southern parts of the Eastern Upper Karoo as well as some parts of the Albany Thicket Biome south of Cradock. Altitude ranging from 250–1 550 m.

Vegetation & Landscape Features

Narrow riverine flats supporting a complex of *Acacia karroo* or *Tamarix usneoides* thickets (up to 5 m tall), and fringed by tall *Salsola*-dominated shrubland (up to 1.5 m high), especially on heavier (and salt-laden) soils on very broad alluvia. In sandy drainage lines *Stipagrostis namaquensis* may occasionally also dominate. Mesic thicket forms in the far eastern part of this region (see Van der Walt 1980: Table 4) may also contain *Leucosidea sericea*, *Rhamnus prinoides* and *Ehrharta erecta*.

Geology & Soils

Recent sandy-clayey alluvial deposits rich in salt occurring on mudrocks and sandstones of the Adelaide Subgroup (Beaufort Group of the Karoo Supergroup) that support soils typical of Ia land type. Torrential convectional rains in summer cause sudden flood surges which remodel the riverbed and adjacent alluvium.

Climate

Transitional, bimodal (equinoctial) rainfall patterns with peaks in March (major) and November (minor). Climate is subarid on the whole, with overall MAP of 243 mm (range from 165 mm in the Gamka Karoo basin to 430 mm in the vicinity of Bedford). Overall warm-temperate regime, with MAT of 16.3°C, ranging from 14.6°C (Upper Karoo) to 18.3°C (upper reaches of Sundays River). Frost occurs frequently in winter.

Important Taxa: Riparian Thickets

<b>Small trees</b>	<i>Acacia karroo</i> (d), <i>Rhus lancea</i> (d).
<b>Tall shrubs</b>	<i>Diospyros lycioides</i> (d), <i>Tamarix usneoides</i> (d), <i>Cadaba aphylla</i> , <i>Euclea undulata</i> , <i>Grewia robusta</i> , <i>Gymnosporia buxifolia</i> , <i>Melianthus comosus</i>
<b>Low Shrubs</b>	<i>Asparagus striatus</i>
<b>Succulent Shrubs</b>	<i>Lycium cinereum</i> (d), <i>Amphiglossa callunoides</i> , <i>Lycium hirsutum</i> , <i>L. oxycarpum</i>

Important Taxa: Rocky slopes of river canals

<b>Graminoids</b>	<i>Stipagrostis namaquensis</i> (d).
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Important Taxa: Alluvial shrublands and herblands

<b>Low shrubs</b>	<i>Ballota africana</i> , <i>Bassia salsoloides</i> , <i>Carissa haematocarpa</i> , <i>Pentzia incana</i>
<b>Succulent shrubs</b>	<i>Malephora uitenhagensis</i> (d), <i>Salsola aphylla</i> (d), <i>S. arborea</i> (d), <i>Drosanthemum lique</i> , <i>Salsola geminiflora</i> , <i>S. gemmifera</i>
<b>Graminoids</b>	<i>Cynodon incompletus</i> (d), <i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i> , <i>Cyperus marginatus</i>
<b>Megagraminoids</b>	<i>Phragmites australis</i> (d).

Endemic Taxa: Alluvial shrublands and herblands

<b>Graminoid</b>	<i>Isolepis expallescens</i>
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Remarks

Plants of drainage lines may be resistant to damage by hail storms. At the Tierberg Karoo Research site, 36 of the 44 species in drainage lines were undamaged after a hail storm, with the remaining species only slightly damaged (Milton & Collins 1989). This contrasted with much higher levels of damage to plants of the surrounding habitats (flats and heuweltjies).

**Tarkastad Montane Shrubland**

Distribution

Eastern Cape and marginally into Northern Cape Province: Noupoot, Middelburg and a point west of Cradock define the western extent of this unit and Cathcart, Queenstown and Sterkstroom the eastern extent. The unit falls within the area between the Great Escarpment in the north, marked by the Bamboesberg and Stormberg Mountains, and the minor escarpment, marked by the Winterberg and Amathole Mountains in the south. Altitude 1 020–1 780 m.

Vegetation & Landscape Features

Ridges, hills and isolated mountain slopes, characterised by high surface rock cover, this often consisting of large, round boulders. The vegetation is low, semi-open, mixed shrubland with 'white' grasses and dwarf shrubs forming a prominent component of the vegetation.

Geology & Soils

Sedimentary rocks of the Tarkastad Subgroup (Beaufort Group, Karoo Supergroup), widely affected by intrusions of Jurassic dolerites forming numerous dykes and sills. Soils typical of land types Ib, Fb and Fc.

Climate

Rainfall in late summer to autumn (peak in February–March). MAP 280–720 mm (overall MAP 470 mm), increasing from west to east. Coefficient of variation of MAP from 22–35% across the unit (31% overall APCV), decreasing with distance eastwards. Incidence of frost 7–68 days (average: 39 days), increasing with proximity to the Escarpment.

Important Taxa

<b>Succulent tree</b>	<i>Aloe ferox</i> (d).
<b>Small trees</b>	<i>Acacia karroo</i> .
<b>Tall shrubs</b>	<i>Diospyros austro-africana</i> (d), <i>Cadaba aphylla</i> , <i>Ehretia rigida</i> , <i>Rhus burchellii</i> , <i>Tarchonanthus minor</i>
<b>Woody Climbers</b>	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> , <i>A. retrofractus</i> .
<b>Low Shrubs</b>	<i>Euryops annae</i> (d), <i>Aptosimum elongatum</i> , <i>Asparagus striatus</i> , <i>Blepharis mitrata</i> , <i>B. villosa</i> , <i>Chrysocoma ciliata</i> , <i>Diospyros pallens</i> , <i>Eriocephalus ericoides</i> , <i>Felicia filifolia</i> subsp. <i>filifolia</i> , <i>F. muricata</i> , <i>Gymnosporia heterophylla</i> , <i>Helichrysum dregeanum</i> , <i>H. zeyheri</i> , <i>Hermannia filifolia</i> , <i>Indigofera sessilifolia</i> , <i>Lantana rugosa</i> , <i>Limeum aethiopicum</i> , <i>Melolobium microphyllum</i> , <i>Nenax microphylla</i> , <i>Pegolettia retrofracta</i> , <i>Pentzia globosa</i> , <i>Phymaspermum parvifolium</i> , <i>Rosenia humilis</i> , <i>Sutera pinnatifida</i> , <i>Wahlenbergia albens</i> .
<b>Succulent Shrubs</b>	<i>Lycium schizocalyx</i> , <i>Pachypodium succulentum</i> , <i>Sarcocaulon camdeboense</i>
<b>Semiparasitic shrub</b>	<i>Thesium hystrix</i>
<b>Graminoids</b>	<i>Aristida adscensionis</i> (d), <i>A. congesta</i> (d), <i>A. diffusa</i> (d), <i>Cynodon incompletus</i> (d), <i>Enneapogon scoparius</i> (d), <i>Eragrostis chloromelas</i> (d), <i>E. lehmanniana</i> (d), <i>E. obtusa</i> (d), <i>Heteropogon contortus</i> (d), <i>Tragus berteronianus</i> (d), <i>T. koelerioides</i> (d), <i>Chloris virgata</i> , <i>Cymbopogon pospischilii</i> , <i>Digitaria eriantha</i> , <i>Eragrostis curvula</i> , <i>Eustachys paspaloides</i> , <i>Fingerhuthia africana</i> , <i>Sporobolus fimbriatus</i> , <i>Themeda triandra</i> , <i>Tragus racemosus</i>
<b>Herbs</b>	<i>Commelina africana</i> , <i>Gazania krebsiana</i> subsp. <i>krebsiana</i> , <i>Hibiscus pusillus</i> , <i>Indigofera alternans</i> , <i>Lepidium africanum</i> subsp. <i>africanum</i> , <i>Tribulus terrestris</i>
<b>Geophytic Herbs</b>	<i>Asplenium cordatum</i> , <i>Boophone disticha</i> , <i>Cheilanthes deltoidea</i> , <i>C. hirta</i> , <i>Oxalis depressa</i>
<b>Succulent Herbs</b>	<i>Crassula muscosa</i>

Biogeographically Important Taxa (<sup>§</sup>ESub-Escarpment Grassland endemic, <sup>£</sup>Eastern distribution limit)

<b>Small tree</b>	<i>Encephalartos friderici-guilielmi</i> <sup>§£</sup>
<b>Low shrubs</b>	<i>Eriocephalus africanus</i> <sup>£</sup> , <i>Senecio acutifolius</i> <sup>£</sup>

Remarks

Physiographically similar landscapes to the north support Gh 4 Besemkaree Koppies Shrubland and to the west (along the Great Escarpment) NKU 2 Upper Karoo Hardeveld. These two units and the current unit are all shrublands primarily associated with dolerite intrusions. The Upper Karoo Hardeveld has lower rainfall, but the Besemkaree Koppies Shrubland is distinguishable climatically (on the basis of slightly lower minimum temperatures and higher summer rainfall) and floristically.

**Karoo Escarpment Grassland**

Distribution

Eastern, Northern and Western Cape Province: Occurs on the Karoo Escarpment, running in an east-west direction from Molteno to Noupoot in the north, and from Somerset East in a northwesterly direction towards Nieu-Bethesda. Also found on the north-facing slopes of the Winterberg Mountains around Tarkastad. The westernmost locality is on the highest-altitude flat-topped mesas of the Escarpment in the Karoo National Park near Beaufort West. Altitude about 1 100–2 502 m at the summit of the Kompasberg.

Vegetation & Landscape Features

Mountain summits, low mountains and hills with wiry, tussock grasslands, usually dominated by *Merxmuellera disticha*. Other common species include the grasses typical of dry grasslands (genera *Eragrostis*, *Tetrachne*, *Karoochloa*, *Helictotrichon*, *Melica*, *Tragus*, *Elionurus* and *Aristida*). An important low shrub component occurs throughout this grassland unit.

Geology & Soils

Shallow soils typical of Ib, Fb and Fc land types on mudstones and sandstones of the Beaufort Group (Karoo Supergroup). Jurassic dolerite intrusions form ridges in the area.

Climate

Rainfall showing minor (possibly insignificant) peaks in March and November–December. Very dry winters. MAP 300–580 mm, increasing from west to east as well as with increasing elevation. The coefficient of variation of MAP 27–36% across the unit. The incidence of frost is from less than 20 to more than 100 days, the higher values occurring at higher elevation. There may be a number of days of snow per year, especially at higher elevations and near the edge of the Great Escarpment.

Important Taxa

<b>Graminoids</b>	<i>Aristida congesta</i> (d), <i>A. diffusa</i> (d), <i>Cynodon incompletus</i> (d), <i>Ehrharta calycina</i> (d), <i>Eragrostis chloromelas</i> (d), <i>Heteropogon contortus</i> (d), <i>Merxmuellera disticha</i> (d), <i>Themeda triandra</i> (d), <i>Tragus koelerioides</i> (d), <i>Cymbopogon pospischilii</i> , <i>Cynodon dactylon</i> , <i>Elionurus muticus</i> , <i>Eragrostis curvula</i> , <i>E. lehmanniana</i> , <i>E. obtusa</i> , <i>Eustachys paspaloides</i> , <i>Karoochloa purpurea</i> , <i>Melica decumbens</i> , <i>Panicum stapfianum</i> , <i>Tetrachne dregei</i> .
<b>Herbs</b>	<i>Berkheya pinnatifida</i> , <i>Convolvulus sagittatus</i> , <i>Dianthus caespitosus</i> subsp. <i>caespitosus</i> , <i>Diascia capsularis</i> , <i>Dimorphotheca zeyheri</i> , <i>Galium capense</i> subsp. <i>capense</i> , <i>Gazania krebsiana</i> subsp. <i>krebsiana</i> , <i>Hebenstretia dentata</i> , <i>Helichrysum nudifolium</i> var. <i>nudifolium</i> , <i>H. tysonii</i> , <i>Lasiospermum bipinnatum</i> , <i>Lepidium africanum</i> subsp. <i>africanum</i> , <i>Rumex lanceolatus</i> , <i>Senecio asperulus</i>
<b>Geophytic Herbs</b>	<i>Boophone disticha</i> , <i>Cheilanthes bergiana</i> , <i>C. hirta</i> , <i>Eucomis autumnalis</i> subsp. <i>autumnalis</i> , <i>Haemanthus humilis</i> subsp. <i>humilis</i> , <i>Oxalis depressa</i> .
<b>Succulent Herbs</b>	<i>Tripteris aghillana</i> var. <i>integrifolia</i>
<b>Low Shrubs</b>	<i>Chrysocoma ciliata</i> (d), <i>Felicia muricata</i> (d), <i>Anthospermum rigidum</i> subsp. <i>pumilum</i> , <i>Atriplex semibaccata</i> var. <i>appendiculata</i> , <i>Elytropappus rhinocerotis</i> , <i>Erica caespitosa</i> , <i>E. caffrorum</i> var. <i>caffrorum</i> , <i>E. woodii</i> , <i>Eriocephalus eximius</i> , <i>Euryops annae</i> , <i>E. anthemoides</i> subsp. <i>astrotrichus</i> , <i>E. candollei</i> , <i>E. floribundus</i> , <i>E. oligoglossus</i> subsp. <i>oligoglossus</i> , <i>Felicia filifolia</i> subsp. <i>filifolia</i> , <i>Helichrysum asperum</i> var. <i>albidulum</i> , <i>H. dregeanum</i> , <i>H. lucilioides</i> , <i>H. niveum</i> , <i>H. rosum</i> , <i>H. zeyheri</i> , <i>Indigofera sessilifolia</i> , <i>Limeum aethiopicum</i> , <i>Nemesia fruticans</i> , <i>Passerina montana</i> , <i>Selago albida</i> , <i>S. saxatilis</i> , <i>Senecio burchellii</i> , <i>Sutera pinnatifida</i> , <i>Wahlenbergia albens</i>
<b>Succulent Shrubs</b>	<i>Euphorbia clavarioides</i> var. <i>clavarioides</i> , <i>E. mauritanica</i>
<b>Tall shrubs</b>	<i>Cliffortia arborea</i> , <i>Diospyros austro-africana</i> , <i>Rhus lucida</i> .

Biogeographically Important Taxa (<sup>C</sup>Camdebo endemic, <sup>D</sup>Link to Drakensberg Alpine CE)

<b>Graminoids</b>	<i>Pentaschistis cirrhulosa</i> <sup>D</sup> , <i>P. microphylla</i> <sup>D</sup> .
<b>Low shrubs</b>	<i>Helichrysum sessile</i> <sup>D</sup> , <i>Pentzia cooperi</i> <sup>D</sup> .
<b>Succulent shrub</b>	<i>Delosperma congestum</i> <sup>D</sup>
<b>Succulent herb</b>	<i>Duvalia modesta</i> <sup>C</sup>

Endemic Taxa

<b>Graminoid</b>	<i>Schoenoxiphium rufum</i> var. <i>dregeanum</i>
<b>Herbs</b>	<i>Lithospermum diversifolium</i> , <i>Wahlenbergia sphaerica</i>
<b>Geophytic herbs</b>	<i>Kniphofia acraea</i> , <i>Syringodea pulchella</i>
<b>Low shrubs</b>	<i>Euryops dentatus</i> , <i>E. trilobus</i> , <i>Helichrysum scitulum</i> , <i>Selago bolusii</i> .
<b>Succulent shrub</b>	<i>Delosperma gramineum</i>

Remarks

Remark 1 This unit occurs across a wide geographical area with associated floristic variability. The biome classification of this unit is controversial since both Karoo and Grassland elements are strongly represented in the species composition. However, the presence of many (and dominant) C3 grasses surrounded by vegetation containing C4 grasses as well as the remarkable share of fynbos-related elements (*Elytropappus rhinocerotis*, *Erica caffra*, *Cliffortia ramosissima*, *Ursinia montana*, *Pentzia cooperi*, *Euryops* species, *Passerina montana*, *Cliffortia arborea* and also a new species of *Erica*—E.G.H. Oliver, personal communication) supports the decision to classify this vegetation within the Grassland Biome (see also Acocks 1988, Low & Rebelo 1996).

Remark 2 The mountain ranges with this arid type of grassland are one of the centres of diversification of the genus *Euryops* (Nordenstam 1968).

## Conservation status of broad vegetation types

On the basis of a scientific approach used at national level by SANBI (Driver *et al.*, 2005), vegetation types can be categorised according to their conservation status which is, in turn, assessed according to the degree of transformation relative to the expected extent of each vegetation type. The status of a habitat or vegetation type is based on how much of its original area still remains intact relative to various thresholds. The original extent of a vegetation type is as presented in the most recent national vegetation map (Mucina, Rutherford & Powrie 2005) and is the extent of the vegetation type in the absence of any historical human impact. On a national scale the thresholds are as depicted in Table 4 below, as determined by best available scientific approaches (Driver *et al.*, 2005). The level at which an ecosystem becomes Critically Endangered differs from one ecosystem to another and varies from 16% to 36% (Driver *et al.*, 2005).

**Determining ecosystem status (Driver *et al.*, 2005).** \*BT = biodiversity target (the minimum conservation requirement).

Habitat remaining (%)	80–100	least threatened	LT
	60–80	vulnerable	VU
	*BT–60	endangered	EN
	0–*BT	critically endangered	CR

Table 2: Conservation status of different vegetation types occurring in the study area.

Vegetation Type	Target (%)	Conserved (%)	Transformed (%)	Conservation status	
				Driver <i>et al.</i> 2005; Mucina <i>et al.</i> , 2006	National Ecosystem List (NEM:BA)
Eastern Upper Karoo	21	3	2	Least threatened	Not listed
Besemkaree Koppies Shrubland	28	5	3	Least threatened	Not listed
Southern Karoo Riviere	24	3	12	Least threatened	Not listed
Tarkastad Montane Shrubland	28	1	3	Least threatened	Not listed
Karoo Escarpment Grassland	24	3	3	Least threatened	Not listed

According to scientific literature (Driver *et al.*, 2005; Mucina *et al.*, 2006), as shown in Table 3, all regional vegetation types described here are listed as Least Threatened. The National List of Ecosystems that are Threatened and need of protection (GN1002 of 2011), published under the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10, 2004), lists national vegetation types that are afforded protection on the basis of rates of transformation. The thresholds for listing in this legislation are higher than in the scientific literature, which means there are fewer ecosystems listed in the National Ecosystem List versus in the scientific literature. None of the vegetation types described here are listed in the National List of Ecosystems that are Threatened and need of protection (GN1002 of 2011).

## Biodiversity Conservation Plans

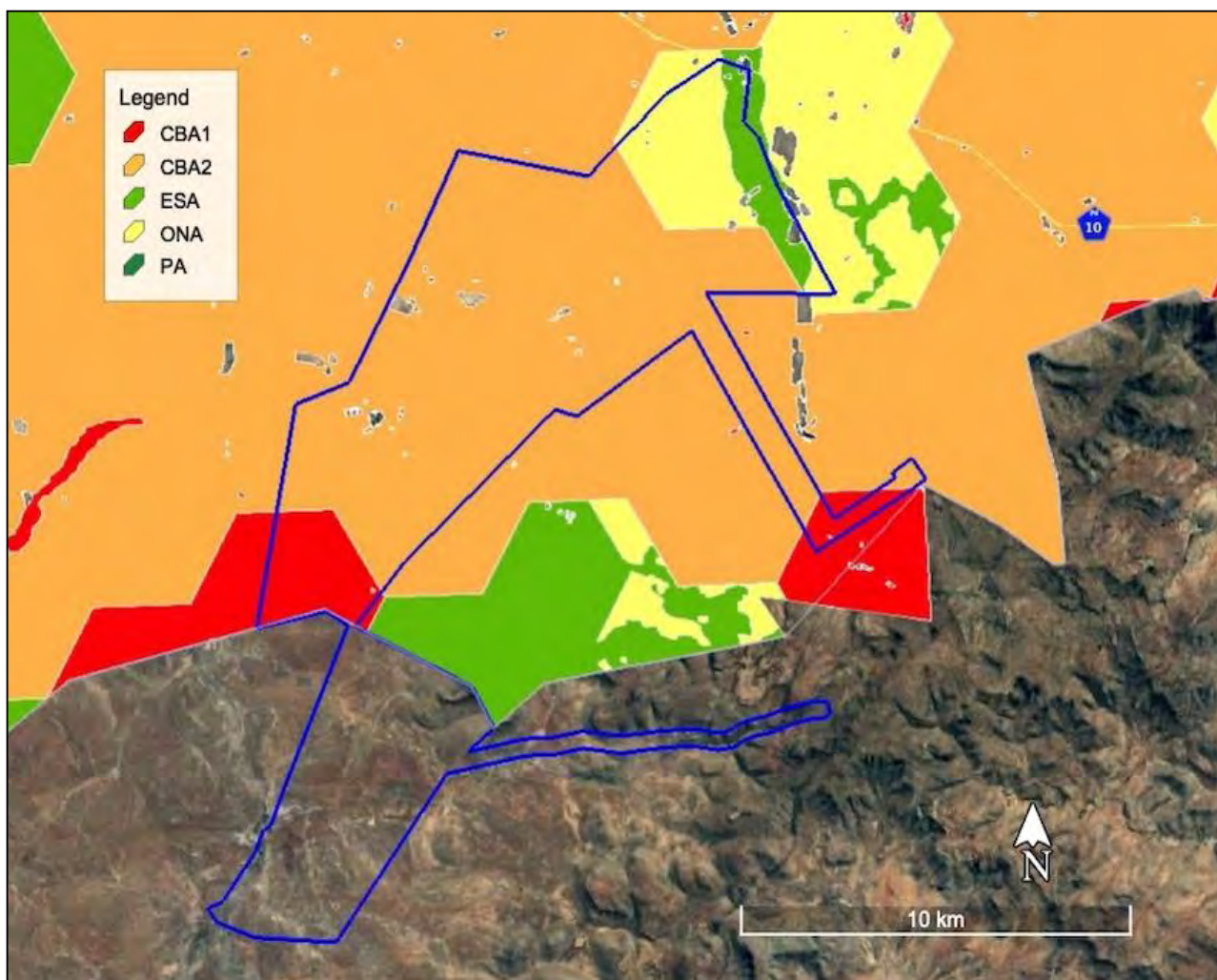
The study area straddles the provincial boundary between the Northern Cape and the Eastern Cape. There are biodiversity conservation plans for both provinces, but the closest designated feature in the Eastern Cape Biodiversity Conservation Plan for the site is over 20 km away. There are therefore no features of concern from the Eastern Cape conservation plan and only the conservation plan for the Northern Cape is considered further here.

The Northern Cape Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) Map (Figure 7) was published in 2016 (Holness & Oosthuysen 2016) and it “updates, revises and replaces all older systematic biodiversity plans and associated products for the province”. This includes the Namakwa District Biodiversity Sector Plan (Desmet & Marsh 2008), from which the Northern Cape CBA Map derived identified CBA1 and CBA2 areas (and added additional CBA1 and CBA2 areas). This is important, since the rationale for defining the recent (2016) CBA areas is derived from the earlier (2008) conservation plan. CBA1 and CBA2 areas in the 2016 map include the following areas:

1. Important Bird Areas;
2. SKEP expert identified areas;
3. Threatened species locations;
4. Features from previous conservation plans (including CBA1 and CBA2 areas from the Namakwa District Biodiversity Sector Plan);
5. Areas supporting climate change resilience, e.g. areas of high diversity, topographic diversity, strong biophysical gradients, climate refugia, including kloofs, south-facing slopes and river corridors;
6. Conservation Plans from adjacent provinces; and
7. Landscape structural elements, e.g. rocky outcrops, koppies, dolerite dykes, boulder fields, woody vegetation on outwash plains.

The Northern Cape CBA map classifies the natural vegetation of the province according to conservation value in decreasing value, as follows:

1. Protected
2. Critical Biodiversity Area One (Irreplaceable Areas)



**Figure 4: Northern Cape CBA map for the study area.**

3. Critical Biodiversity Area Two (Important Areas)
4. Ecological Support Area
5. Other Natural Area

This map shows features within the study area within three of these classes, as follows:

1. Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA): Most of the northern site is within a CBA2 area with two patches of CBA1 areas, one in the Wonderheuwel project area and one in the corridor area associated with the Hydra D MTS .
2. Ecological Support Areas (ESA): The drainage valley in the extreme north-eastern part of the study area (within the Mooi Plaats project area) is within an ECA.
3. Other Natural Areas (ONA): Areas surrounding the drainage valley in the north-eastern part of the study area (within the Mooi Plaats project area) are within an area mapped as ONA

The presence of CBA areas 1 and 2 in the Wonderheuwel and Mooi Plaats parts of the study area, as well as the Hydra D MTS corridor affecting all three projects, indicate that these areas are considered important for biodiversity conservation in the Northern Cape. Additionally, the ESA in the northern half and to the south of the site indicate that the site has importance in a wider ecological context for supporting biodiversity patterns.

The Namakwa District Biodiversity Sector Plan (Desmet & Marsh 2008) provides recommended guidelines for land-use activities within different CBA categories. Those that are relevant to the current project are as follows:

Land use	CBA1	CBA2	ESA	ONA
Major/extensive development projects	N	N	R	R
Linear engineering structures	R	R	R	R

N=No, not permitted, R=Restricted, only when unavoidable, not usually permitted.

In CBA1 areas, the land management objective is to maintain the area in a natural state with no biodiversity loss and no biodiversity offsets are possible for developments that result in the transformation of natural habitat. It is interpreted here that solar arrays would not be desirable within CBA1 areas, but that linear infrastructure could be constructed there, if impacts are comprehensively managed to avoid habitat loss or degradation.

In CBA2 areas the land management objective is to maintain the landscape in a near natural state, possibly allowing some loss in ecosystem integrity and functioning. Biodiversity compatible land uses are strongly encouraged, and industries encouraged to adopt and implement acceptable biodiversity management plans. It is further recommended to restrict expansion of any activity that would cause loss of natural habitat and where possible utilise existing transformation or degraded areas for hard development. Biodiversity offsets are required where development impacts on land management objectives. This affects proposed solar arrays for all of Wonderheuwel and most of Mooi Plaats.

## Proposed protected areas

According to the National Parks Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES), there are only small areas within the study area that have been identified as priority areas for inclusion in future protected areas. These are located approximately where the two Eskom substations will be built (see Figure 5). The majority of the study area is therefore **outside the NPAES focus area**. There is a large core block of area to the south-east of the study site that is included as being part of future protected areas (see Figure 5).

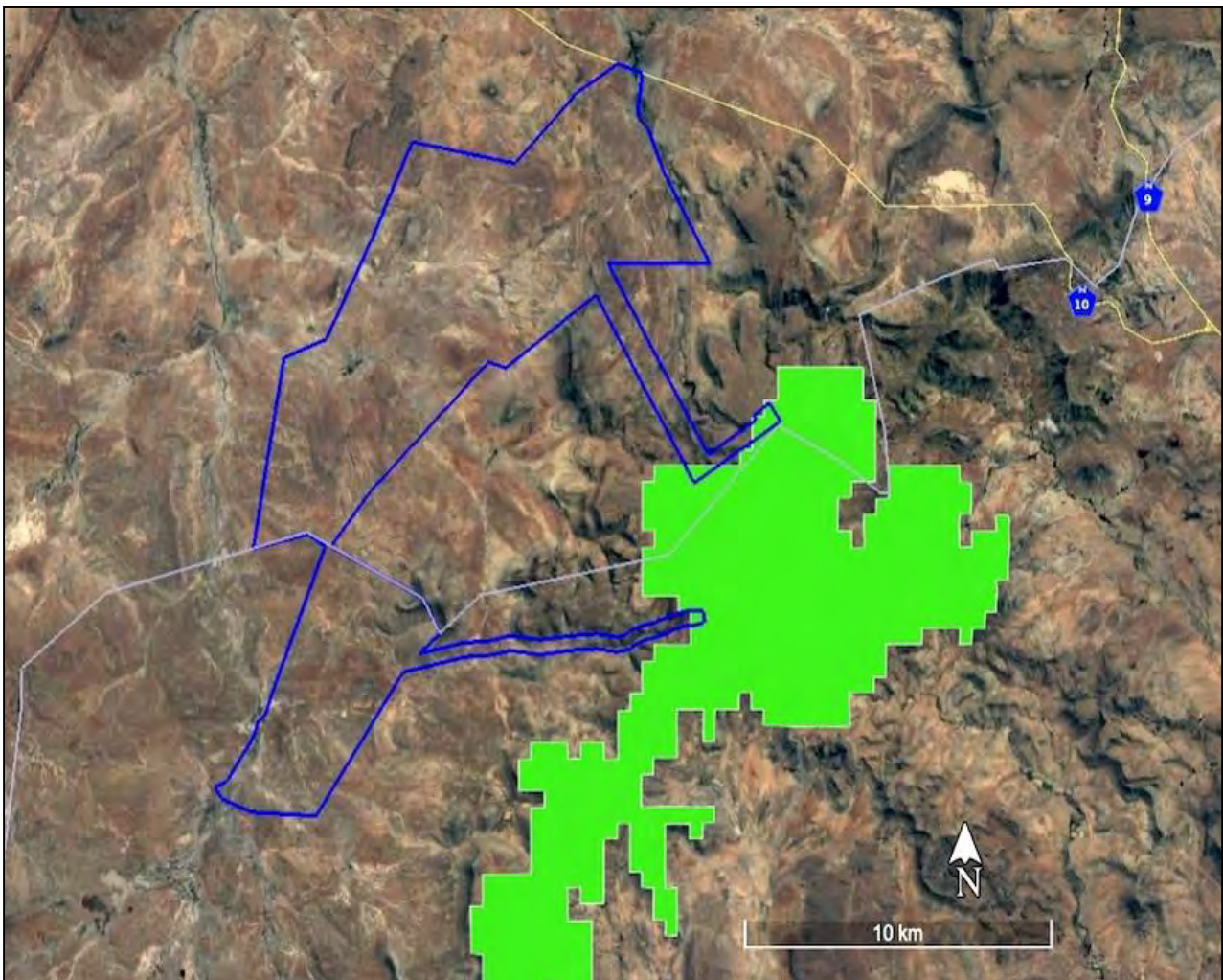


Figure 5: Proposed protected areas, according to the NPAES.



## Red List plant species of the study area

Lists of plant species previously recorded in the study area were obtained from the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) website (<http://newposa.sanbi.org/>). These are listed in Appendix 3. There are very few collection records for this part of the country so a much larger area was searched for potential species of concern. Despite this broader search, there are very few species that were identified of conservation concern that could potentially occur in the broad area that includes the project area.

Table 3: Explanation of IUCN Version 3.1 categories (IUCN 2001) and Orange List categories (Victor & Keith 2004).

IUCN / Orange List category	Definition	Class
EX	Extinct	Extinct
CR	Critically Endangered	Red List
EN	Endangered	Red List
VU	Vulnerable	Red List
NT	Near Threatened	Orange List
Declining	Declining taxa	Orange List
Rare	Rare	Orange List
Critically Rare	Rare: only one subpopulation	Orange List
Rare-Sparse	Rare: widely distributed but rare	Orange List
DDD	Data Deficient: well known but not enough information for assessment	Orange List
DDT	Data Deficient: taxonomic problems	Data Deficient
DDX	Data Deficient: unknown species	Data Deficient

The list contains 2 species listed in an IUCN threat category (Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable (see Table 5 above) of which **2 have a moderate possibility of occurring in the general area** and in the type of habitats available in the study area. This does not mean that they will occur there, only that the review has identified that these are species that should be assessed as possibly occurring in the area. None of these species were encountered on site. The first of the two species, *Gnaphalium simii*, listed as DDT, would only occur in calcareous vleis, which could occur in any of the drainage lines in any of the three project areas. The second species, *Trichodiadema rogersiae*, also listed as DDT, is found in mountain areas. Both power line corridor areas affect mountain areas, but none of the main project areas.

None of the species recorded on site (see Appendix 3) are listed in any threat category.

## Protected plants (National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act)

Plant species protected under the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act 10 of 2004) are listed in Appendix 6. None of the species on this list were encountered on site and none are considered likely to occur there, because they do not have a geographical distribution that includes the study area.

## Protected plants (Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act)

Plant species protected under the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act, 2009 (Act 9 of 2009) are listed in Appendix 5. A number of species were found on site that are protected according to the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act, 2009 (Act 9 of 2009). From the field survey, this includes the following: *Ruschia intricata* (Aizoaceae), *Ruschia* species (Aizoaceae), *Trichodiadema setulifera* (Aizoaceae), *Pelargonium abrotanifolium*, *Pelargonium exhibens*, *Cotyledon*

*orbiculata* (Crassulaceae), *Erica* species (Ericaceae), *Deverra denudata* (Apiaceae), and *Aloe broomii* (Asphodelaceae). Despite not being threatened, any impacts on these species will require a permit from the relevant authorities. Note that many of these species are widespread and not of any conservation concern, but protected due to the fact that the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act, 2009 (Act 9 of 2009) protects entire families of flowering plants irrespective of whether some members are rare or common. The implication is that a comprehensive list of species occurring within the footprint of the proposed infrastructure is required and a permit application submitted for any of those listed as protected. The current list is therefore not considered to be complete and must be supplemented by a comprehensive walk-through survey, once the final footprint of infrastructure has been decided.

## Protected trees

Tree species protected under the National Forest Act are listed in Appendix 2. There are none with a geographical distribution that includes the region in which the proposed project is located. There are two species that have a geographical distribution that ends south of the study area, namely *Boscia albitrunca* and *Pittosporum viridiflorum*.

### ***Boscia albitrunca***

This is a small to medium-sized of up to 7 m tall with a dense, roundish crown and smooth, white to greyish-white trunk. It is found in the drier parts of South Africa, as well as in the northern savanna parts of the country, but also extending some of the way down the eastern seaboard. There are scattered records of this species in the general area that includes the project site, although it's main area of occurrence is further north. It is therefore possible that it could occur in the study area. However, no trees of this species were seen on site and it is considered unlikely that it occurs there. In the unlikely event that it is found to occur there, it is unlikely that any more than a few individuals would be found.

### ***Pittosporum viridiflorum***

This species occurs primarily in a band along the southern part of the country, extending up the east coast, where, from Lesotho northwards, it extends further inland. In the part of the country around the study area, the occurrence is generally south of the Great Escarpment, although there is one record from Phillipstown and two from near Graaff-Reinet. It is considered unlikely that it occurs in the study area. In the unlikely event that it is found to occur there, it is unlikely that any more than a few individuals would be found.

In summary, no species of protected trees were found or are likely to occur in the geographical area that includes the site.

## Vertebrate animal species of the study area

Vertebrate species (mammals, reptiles, amphibians) with a geographical distribution that includes the study area are listed in Appendix 4. All threatened (Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable) or near threatened vertebrate animals that could occur in the study area and have habitat preference that includes habitats available in the study area, are discussed further below.

### ***Mammals***

There are 79 mammal species that have a geographical distribution that includes the study area, of which eleven are listed in a conservation category of some level (see Appendix 3). This is a relatively moderate diversity of mammals compared to other parts of South Africa. Based on the natural state of the study area and surrounding areas, it is considered likely that some of these species could occur on site. Listed species with a geographical range that includes the site are discussed in more detail below to evaluate the potential for them to occur on site.

### ***Black Rhinoceros***

The Black Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*), listed as Endangered, has a geographical distribution that includes the study area. The species is confined to formal conservation areas as well as a few individuals held on private land.

**Although the habitat on site is suitable for this species, it does not occur there and would not be found there unless deliberately introduced.**

#### Grey Rhebok

The Grey Rhebok (*Pelea capreolus*), listed as Near Threatened, is endemic to South Africa, Lesotho and parts of Swaziland. In the south and southwest, their distribution is associated with the rocky hills of mountain Fynbos and the Little Karoo (Taylor et al. 2016). They are predominantly browsers, feeding on ground-hugging forbs, and largely water independent, obtaining most of their water requirements from their food (Taylor et al. 2016). Local declines in their population have been attributed to increased densities of natural predators, such as Black-backed Jackal, Caracals and Leopards. It has not been recorded in the grid in which the site is located, but has been recorded in the grid to the north-east and many grids further to the south, so the site is within the overall distribution range of the species. There is therefore a moderate likelihood that it could occur on site within any suitable habitat. However, it is a relatively mobile species and not necessarily dependent on any particular habitat. It is likely to move away from the path of any construction and development of parts of the study area. **The proposed development is therefore highly unlikely to have any negative effect on the species, even though it could possibly occur there.**

#### Black-footed Cat

The Black-footed Cat (*Felis nigripes*), listed as Vulnerable, has been previously recorded in the grid in which the project is located, as well as in most surrounding grids. It's known distribution is on the inland part of most of South Africa, but seemingly not within the winter-rainfall part of the country. It also occurs in Botswana and Namibia. The current project area is within the core of the distribution range of the species and the species is therefore highly likely to occur in the area. The species is nocturnal and carnivorous, favouring any vegetation cover that is low and not too dense. They make use of dens in the daytime, which can be abandoned termite mounds, or dens dug by other animals, such as aardvark, springhares or cape ground squirrels. Local declines in their population have been attributed to increased densities of natural predators, such as Black-backed Jackal, Caracals and Leopards. They are highly vulnerable to domestic carnivores. The study area is definitely suited to this species and it probably occurs there. It is possible that it has interbred with cats on the farm – two kittens seen on site had colour characteristics of this species, such as black paws and markings similar to black-footed cats. **The proposed developments may possibly have a negative effect on the species.**

#### Leopard

The Leopard (*Panthera pardus*), listed as Vulnerable, has a wide habitat tolerance, but with a preference for densely wooded areas and rocky areas. In montane and rocky areas of the Eastern, Western and Northern Cape, they prey on dassies and klipspringers. They have large home ranges, but do not migrate easily, males having ranges of about 100 km<sup>2</sup> and females 20 km<sup>2</sup>. It has not been recorded in any of the adjacent or nearby grids and the overall distribution shows a gap in its distribution that includes the current study area. There is therefore a low probability of this species occurring on site, and if it did occur there it would probably be at very low densities. **The proposed project could possibly displace individuals, in the unlikely event that they occur there, but is unlikely to have a significant effect on overall population densities.**

#### Cape Clawless Otter

The Cape Clawless Otter (*Aonyx capensis*), listed as Near Threatened, is widely but patchily distributed throughout South Africa, and is also the most widely found otter in Africa. It is aquatic and seldom found far from permanent water, which needs to be fresh. They may be found in seasonal rivers in the Karoo, provided suitable-sized pools persist. The site is within the known distribution of this species and there are historical records for one adjacent grid to the south, although not from the current grid. There is suitable habitat for this species on site. Paw-prints in the mud adjacent to water on site were identified as belonging to an otter and it is considered most likely that it would be this species. The area where it occurs is in the power line corridor associated with the Hydra D MTS, which is an option for all three projects. **It is therefore considered definite that it occurs on site and that individuals could be affected by construction activities, if suitable habitat is damaged.**

#### African Striped Weasel

The African Striped Weasel (*Poecilogale albinucha*), listed as Near Threatened, is found throughout most of South Africa, except for the arid interior, and into central Africa (excluding Namibia). It has not been recorded in the grid in which the site is located or any surrounding grid, but the site is within the overall distribution range for the species. It

is found primarily in moist grasslands and fynbos, where adequate numbers of prey may be found. **It is considered unlikely to occur in the study area and the proposed development will therefore not affect this species.**

#### Brown Hyaena

The Brown Hyaena (*Hyaena brunnea*), listed as Near Threatened, is found in a band running down the centre of the country, expanding into the entire northern parts of the the country. There is a gap in the distribution around the current study area, but there is a possibility that vagrant individuals could extend into this area. The species is found in desert areas, particularly along the west coast, semi-desert, open scrub and open woodland savannah (Mills & Hes 1997). It is a solitary scavenger that travels vast distances every day in search of food. It has a medium chance of occurring in the study area since the distribution range includes the study area, however there are no historical records from nearby. It is a mobile animal that is likely to move away from the path of any construction and development of parts of the site is therefore highly unlikely to have any negative effect on the species. **It is considered that there is a low likelihood of it occurring on site or that individuals could be affected by construction activities.**

#### South African Hedgehog

The South African Hedgehog (*Atelerix frontalis*), listed as Near Threatened, is found in a large part of the central part of South Africa, extending down to the south-eastern coast, and is also found in Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Swaziland. It requires ample ground cover for cover, nesting and foraging and prefers dense vegetation and rocky outcrops. The site is well-within the known distribution of this species and there are historical records for nearby grids in all directions, and it has been recorded from the current grid. There is therefore a high probability of the study area being suitable for this species, including all three projects. **It is considered likely that it could occur on site and individuals could be affected by construction activities, if suitable habitat is damaged.**

#### White-tailed Rat

The White-tailed Rat (*Mystromys albicaudatus*), listed as Vulnerable, is endemic to South Africa and Lesotho, where it is found primarily in Highveld grasslands, but extending into adjacent Fynbos and Karoo areas. It is terrestrial, but never found in soft, sandy substrates, rocks, wetlands or river banks, and do not occur in transformed habitat. The study area is on the edge of the known distribution of this species, but there are historical records for the grid in which the projects are located, as well as two adjacent grids. There is therefore a high probability of the study area being suitable for this species. **It is considered likely that it could occur on site and individuals could be affected by construction activities, if suitable habitat is damaged.**

#### Vlei Rat

The Vlei Rat (Grassland-type) (*Otomys auratus*), listed as Near Threatened, is near-endemic to South Africa, occurring in the north-eastern half of the country, associated with mesic grasslands and wetlands within alpine, montane and sub-montane regions. It is likely to be associated with sedges and grasses in densely-vegetated wetlands with wet soils. The study area is on the very edge of the known distribution of this species and there are no historical records for grid in which the study area is located, not any adjacent grids. There is therefore a low probability of the study area being suitable for this species. **It is considered unlikely that it occurs on site and the proposed development will therefore probably not affect this species.**

#### Spectacled Dormouse

The Spectacled Dormouse (*Graphiurus ocellaris*), listed as Near Threatened, is endemic to South Africa, where it is found in the Northern, Eastern and Western Cape Provinces. It is associated with rock piles, crevices, outcrops and stone kraals. They may be territorial. The study area is within the known distribution of this species and there are historical records for three adjacent grids to the north, north-east and east, although not from the current grid. There is therefore a moderate probability of the study area being suitable for this species, including suitable habitat within all three project areas. **It is considered likely that it could occur on site and individuals could be affected by construction activities, if suitable habitat is damaged.**

Of the species currently listed as threatened or protected (see Appendix 5 for list of protected species), those listed in Table 4 are considered to have a probability of occurring on site and being potentially negatively affected by proposed activities associated with the proposed projects.

Table 4: Mammal species of conservation concern with a likelihood of occurring on site.

Scientific name	Common name	Status	Likelihood of occurrence
<i>Felis nigripes</i>	Black-footed Cat	Vulnerable, protected	Very High
<i>Aonyx capensis</i>	Cape Clawless Otter	Near Threatened, protected	Very high
<i>Atelerix frontalis</i>	South African Hedgehog	Near Threatened, protected	High
<i>Pelea capreolus</i>	Grey Rhebok	Near Threatened, protected	Medium
<i>Mystromys albicaudatus</i>	White-tailed Rat	Vulnerable	Medium
<i>Graphiurus ocellaris</i>	Spectacled dormouse	Near Threatened	Medium
<i>Panthera pardus</i>	Leopard	Vulnerable, protected	Low
<i>Poecilogale albinucha</i>	African Striped Weasel	Near Threatened	Low
<i>Hyaena brunnea</i>	Brown hyaena	Near Threatened	Low
<i>Otomys auratus</i>	Vlei Rat	Near Threatened	Low

### Reptiles

A total of 55 reptile species have a geographical distribution that includes the study area in which the three project sites are found (Alexander & Marais 2007, Bates *et al.* 2014, Branch 1988, Marais 2004, Tolley & Burger 2007). This is a moderate diversity compared to average diversity in other parts of the country. Of the reptile species that could potentially occur in the study area, none have been listed in a threat category.

There are therefore no reptile species of conservation concern that could potentially occur in the study area and that may therefore be affected by the proposed projects.

Table 5: Reptile species of conservation concern with a likelihood of occurring on site.

Scientific name	Common name	Status	Likelihood of occurrence
None	None	N/A	N/A

### Amphibians

A total of only 10 frog species have a geographical distribution that includes the general study area in which the project sites are found (Du Preez & Carruthers 2009). Some of these species are only marginally present in the study area due to the fact that their distribution range ends close to the study area. Of the frog species that could potentially occur in the study area, none are listed in a threat category, but one species is listed as protected, according to National legislation, the Giant Bullfrog.

#### The Giant Bull Frog

The Giant Bull Frog (*Pyxicephalus adspersus*) previously listed as Near Threatened, is found in seasonal shallow grassy pans, vleis and other rain-filled depressions in open flat areas of grassland or savanna and, at the limits of its distribution, in Nama Karoo and thicket. For most of the year the species remains buried up to 1 m underground. They emerge only during the peak of the rainy season to forage and breed. If conditions are extremely dry, they may remain cocooned underground for several years. Long distances often separate suitable breeding sites. In order to breed, they require shallow, rain-filled depressions that retain water long enough for the tadpoles to metamorphose. Before and after breeding, bullfrogs forage in open grassland, feeding mostly on insects, but also on other frogs, lizards, snakes, small birds and rodents. After breeding males generally bury themselves within 100 m of the breeding site, but females may disperse up to 1 km away. Based on habitat requirements, there is a medium probability that this species occurs in the study area.

It is concluded that the site contains habitat that is suitable for various frog species, although only one species of conservation concern is likely to occur in the study area. One frog species of concern is therefore potentially likely to be affected by development in the study area, including all three proposed projects, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Amphibian species of conservation concern with a likelihood of occurring on site.

Scientific name	Common name	Status	Likelihood of occurrence
<i>Pyxicephalus adspersus</i>	Giant Bullfrog	Protected	Medium

## Protected animals

There are a number of animal species protected according to the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004). According to this Act, *“a person may not carry out a restricted activity involving a specimen of a listed threatened or protected species without a permit issued in terms of Chapter 7”*. Such activities include any that are *“of a nature that may negatively impact on the survival of a listed threatened or protected species”*. This implies that any negative impacts on habitats in which populations of protected species occur or are dependent upon would be restricted according to this Act.

Those species protected according to the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004) that have a geographical distribution that includes the site are listed in Appendix 6, marked with the letter “N”. This includes the following species: Black Rhinoceros (does not occur on site), Black-footed Cat, Leopard (probably does not occur on site), Cape Clawless Otter, Cape Fox, South African Hedgehog, Brown Hyena, and Giant Bullfrog.

Due to habitat and forage requirements, and the fact that some species are restricted to game farms and/or conservation areas, only the Black-footed Cat, Cape Clawless Otter, Cape Fox, South African Hedgehog, and Giant Bullfrog have any likelihood of occurring on site. Most of these species are territorial with small home ranges or may be dependent on specific habitat to exist on site. They could therefore be affected by the development of the three proposed projects.

## Habitats on site

A preliminary map of habitats within the study area and adjacent areas is provided in Figure 6. Transformed areas where no vegetation occurs were insignificant in area and were not mapped. This included roads, farm buildings and similar existing disturbances. The broad natural habitat units on site are as follows:

1. Lowland plains vegetation (karroid dwarf shrubland);
2. Mountain vegetation (shrubland);
3. Low ridges (shrubland);
4. Broad drainage areas;
5. Mountain stream.

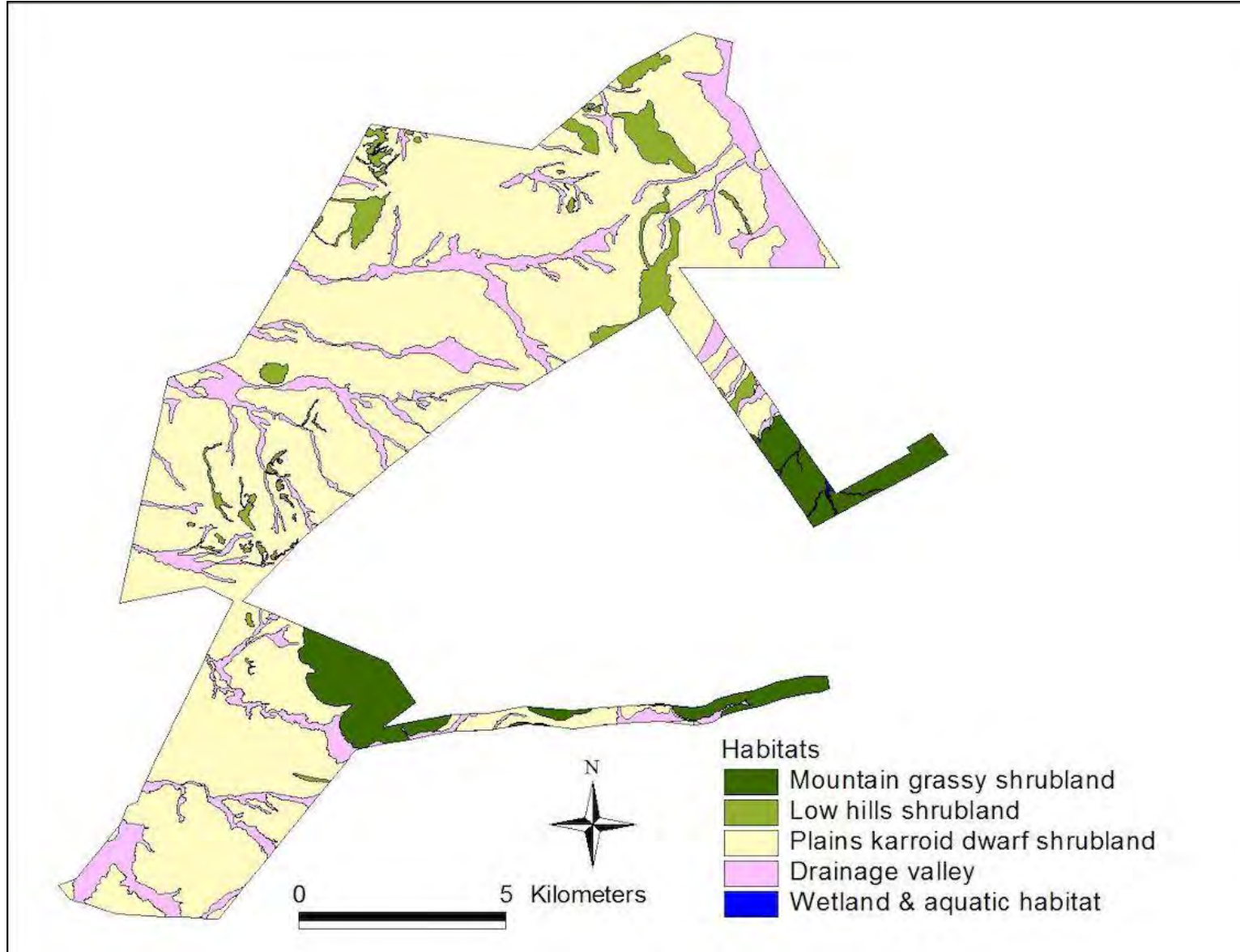
### **Lowland plains vegetation**

The general study area is characterised by a low succulent, dwarf shrubland, typical of the regional vegetation type, **Eastern Upper Karoo**, which is described as “dwarf microphyllous shrubs, with ‘white’ grasses of the genera *Aristida* and *Eragrostis*” (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). A typical view of this vegetation, as found on site in all three project areas, is shown in Figure 7. This was the most widespread vegetation community on site, occurring on all the relatively flat plains areas.

The general floristic character of this vegetation on site is fairly uniform across wide areas, often dominated by the same suite of species, including *Ruschia intricata*, *Aristida diffusa*, *Tragus koelerioides*, *Eragrostis lehmanniana*, *Amphiglossa triflora*, *Wahlenbergia nodosa*, *Lycium cinereum*, *Pteronia glomerata*, *Pteronia mucronata*, *Chrysocoma ciliata* and *Eriocephalus spinescens*. However, any local variation in topography can lead to localized increase in richness associated with a more diverse species composition.



**Figure 7: Photo showing Nama-karoo vegetation on plains with steeper topography in background.**



**Figure 6: Main habitats of the study area.**



### **Mountain vegetation**

This vegetation is somewhat typical of **Besemkaree Koppies Shrubland**, described in a section above, in terms of structure, species composition and location in the landscape, with the exception of having the common presence of the grass, *Tenaxia stricta*, which is more expected in **Karoo Escarpment Grassland**. The vegetation community is found in all the more significant mountains in the study area, with steep topography and higher elevation than the surrounding plains. At the time of the field survey, most of these mountain areas had been recently burnt, but unburnt patches showed a consistency in species composition and structure across the study area that suggested that observed patterns could be generally extrapolated to burnt areas. An example is shown in Figure 9. This species composition and structure included a shrub layer dominated by woody species, such as *Searsia erosa*, *Euclea crispa*, *Felicia filifolia*, *Elytropappus rhinocerotis*, *Diospyros lycioides*, *Tarchonanthus minor*, and *Diospyros austro-africanus*, and a grass layer dominated by *Tenaxia stricta*, along with *Themeda triandra*, *Eriocephalus ericoides*, *Chrysocoma ciliata*, *Ehrharta calycina*, *Cheilanthes eckloniana* and *Cymbopogon pospischilii*. There is likely to be some ecological variation in structure and species composition in different parts of the landscape, although this could not be verified within burnt vegetation. The topography introduces variation in slope and aspect, with some slopes facing hotter northern or western directions and others facing cooler southern and eastern directions, all of which introduces ecological variation into the landscape, providing new habitats for different species. Due to the sedimentary origin of the substrates, there are often bands of more resistant rock layers at specific heights on the mountain slopes. These substrates manifest themselves as small cliffs and rocky outcrops. There is a known diversity relationship between increased surface rockiness and increased local floristic species richness, which is likely to be true for the current study area. This generalization is supported by the fact that many of the more rare floristic sitings on site were within rocky areas.

### **Low ridges and koppies**

There are low ridges and koppies scattered throughout the plains area of the study area. They appear to mostly be associated with dolerite outcrops. The soils in these areas are mostly shallow and rocky, there are often more boulders



**Figure 8: Shrubby vegetation in unburnt mountainous areas in the study area.**

and the vegetation consists of a distinct open shrub canopy with a sparse grassy understorey. The floristic diversity is slightly higher in these areas than in surrounding plains and the structure of the vegetation almost certainly provides shelter and refuge for animals. Common shrubs on these ridges include *Rhus erosa*, *Euclea crispa*, *Lycium cinereum*, *Diospyros austro-africana* and *Diospyros lycioides*. The species composition is not similar to any of the main vegetation units described for the study area and surrounding areas, but is probably most similar to *Tarkastad Montane Shrubland*. An example of typical vegetation found on low ridges is shown in Figure 9.

#### **Broad drainage areas**

There is a network of shallow drainage areas throughout the lower-lying parts of the study area. These are sometimes indistinct from surrounding areas, but often resolve into channels, or include areas with woody shrubs. It also includes bare areas, erosion gulleys, and empty farm dams (at the time of the survey). Most of the homesteads in the study area are built on or adjacent to drainage areas, including buildings, roads, camps and often stands of exotic trees, some of which are dense and fairly substantial in extent. The small amount of formal cultivation also occurs almost entirely within this unit.

The unit is equivalent to the vegetation unit, Southern Karoo Riviere, although there is considerable variation from one part of the study area to another: in the wide open plains, the vegetation on site is more in line with the description for **Southern Karoo Riviere**, but closer to hills, it becomes more grassy, but with the inclusion of typical wetland species, such as *Afroscirpoides dioeca*, *Pseudoschoenus inanis* and *Juncus rigidus*. Some areas where permanent channel formation had taken place were almost completely dominated by the robust grass, *Miscanthus ecklonii*, along with *Pennisetum sphacelatum* and *Searsia pyroides*. Where these channelled systems were larger and approaching being more perennial in terms of water presence, there was increasing dominance by woody species, such as *Diospyros*



**Figure 9: Typical habitat on low ridges and koppies in the study area.**

*lycioides*, *Helichrysum trilineatum*, *Melianthus comosus*, *Lycium cinereum*, *Deverra burchellii*, *Asparagus laricinus* and *Diospyros austro-africana*. A typical view of this more structurally developed habitat is shown in Figure 10.

The drainage areas are important habitat for animals, providing refuge and shelter, water, when it is available, palatable vegetation, when surrounding areas are in drought, and softer and deeper soils for burrowing animals. The habitat is also an important flood-attenuation component of the landscape, and a reservoir for soil water. If it occurs on site, this is the habitat in which the protected Giant Bullfrog would be found.

**Mountain stream**

Strictly, this is part of the broad drainage area in the study area, which varies from broad, wide areas with no aquatic characteristics, to semi-permanent pools, but is discussed separately due to the fact that they are within the mountains and have different characteristics to other parts of the landscape. The mountain stream map unit occurs only in the eastern part of the study area in the mountains (within the power line corridor associated with Hydra D MTS), and is part of a valley that eventually exits into a wider drainage valley, as described in the previous section. Within the mountains, the stream is contained by the surrounding rocky mountain slopes, has a rocky bed with sandy banks in places, and consists of permanent wetlands, aquatic habitats, rocky slabs and other micro-habitats. A typical view is shown in Figure 11.

The riparian areas have a species composition and structure that is almost completely different to the surrounding landscape. The habitat contains a combination of bare rock and deeper sands, so it is able to support a flora that is adapted to these substrate conditions, in addition to the sporadic flooding and scouring that takes place in these habitats as a result of rare large rainfall events. Although not necessarily floristically sensitive, the habitat that is derived under these ecological conditions is critically important for fauna, providing food and shelter as well as corridors for



**Figure 10: Typical drainage line habitat in the study area.**

undetected movement. In times of drought, riparian areas may offer the only slightly green vegetation as a source of food. The deeper sands are important for burrowing animals and the shrubs and low trees offer shelter and browse.

Riparian habitats are disproportionately important in terms of the proportion of the area that they occupy in the landscape – they provide a unique and important habitat for both flora and fauna in this arid part of the country. The plant species occurring within these habitats are not necessarily rare in a global sense, but degradation of this interconnected system can cause floristic loss and change in areas far removed from any impact. For this reason, and for the utilitarian importance to fauna, the riparian vegetation is considered to be ecologically sensitive. In addition, this is the habitat in which the Near Threatened and nationally protected Cape Clawless Otter is found on site.

## Habitat sensitivity

To determine ecological sensitivity in the study area, local and regional factors were taken into account. There are some habitats in the study area that have been described as sensitive in their own right, irrespective of regional assessments. This includes primarily the stream beds and associated riparian zones and adjacent floodplains. A detailed assessment of these areas has been undertaken by an aquatic specialist and they are only considered here in terms of being important habitat for flora and fauna. Mountain areas and steep slopes, especially at higher elevations are more sensitive than surrounding areas, mainly due to higher floristic diversity and the likelihood of plant species with low local abundance occurring there.

At a regional level, the Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) map for Northern Cape indicates various parts of the study area as being important for conservation. There are two small patches of CBA1 in the eastern and western parts of the study



**Figure 11: Mountain stream habitat.**

area (see Figure 4 on page 43) – it is speculated that these are the location of species of concern, although this is not confirmed from any other information and the assumption is therefore speculative. Most of the remainder of the study area is CBA2, indicating regional importance for the entire escarpment region in which the study area is located. It should be assumed that, over and above the designation of CBAs in other parts of the study area, all high-lying areas should be treated as ESAs. This co-incides with the areas mapped here as Mountain Vegetation.

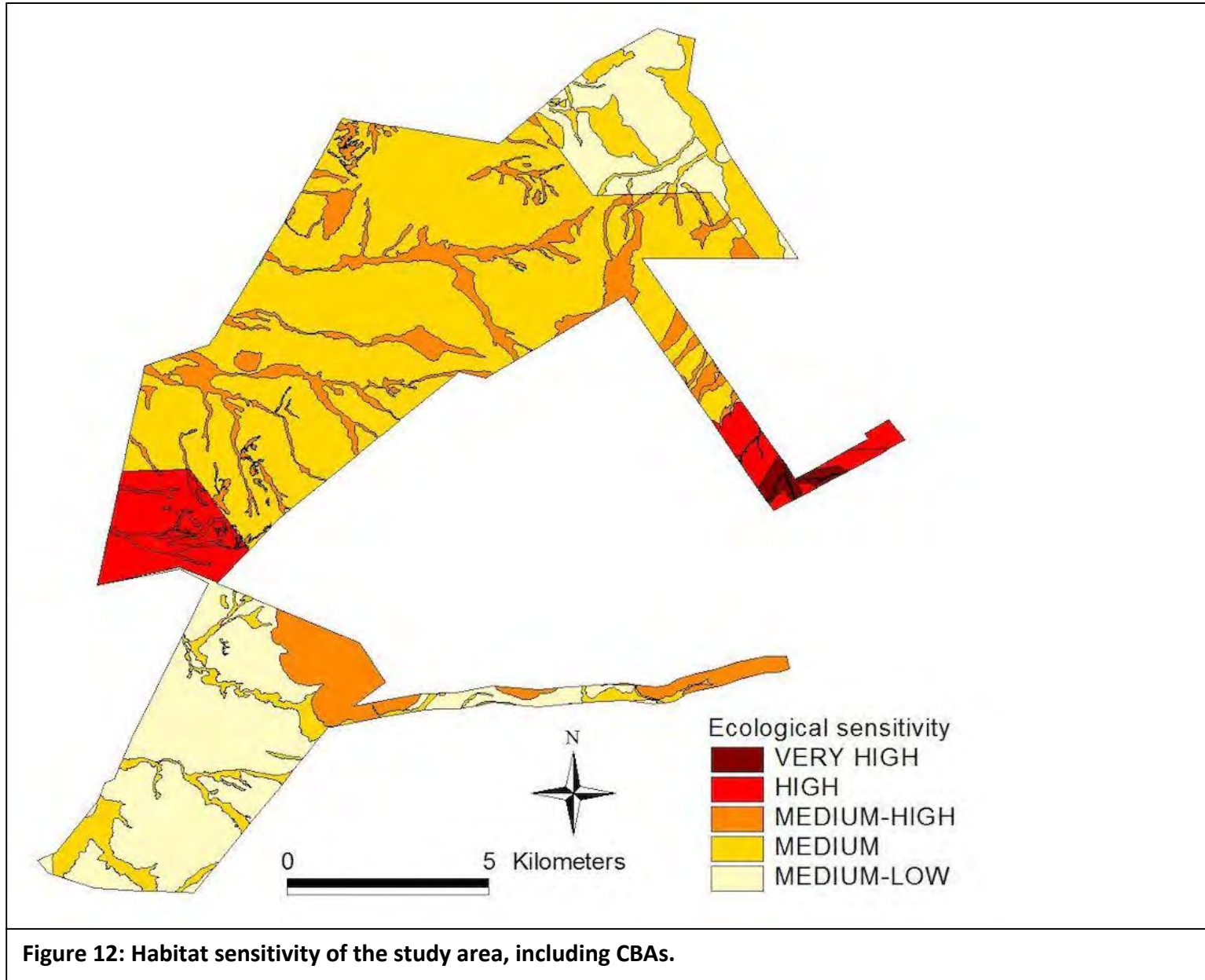
In terms of other species of concern, including both plants and animals (with the exception of the Cape Clawless Otter that has already been discussed), there are no specific locations where conservation of habitat would benefit a specific species based on the existing data available. All mammal species of concern and all protected plant species described previously could occur on any part of the site, whether in the mountains or on the lowlands, although it is probable that low ridges and drainage areas are of more importance than plains areas.

A summary of sensitivities that occur on site and that may be vulnerable to damage from the proposed project are as follows:

1. Drainage areas;
2. Mountain stream;
3. High-lying areas, i.e. mountain vegetation;
4. CBA areas, especially CBA1.

Based on this information, a map of habitat sensitivity on site is provided in Figure 12. This shows main habitat sensitivity classes on site, as follows:

1. MEDIUM-LOW for lowland plains vegetation outside of CBAs. In the absence of CBAs, all lowland plains on site would be within this sensitivity class.
2. MEDIUM for all rocky ridges and drainage areas outside of CBAs. In the absence of CBAs, all rocky ridges and drainage areas would be within this sensitivity class.
3. MEDIUM-HIGH for mountain areas outside of CBAs.
4. HIGH for CBA1 areas, and mountain areas surrounding aquatic habitat where the Cape Clawless Otter occurs. The aquatic habitat and surrounding mountain slopes would be within this sensitivity class in the absence of the CBA1 classification.
5. VERY HIGH for aquatic habitat where the Cape Clawless Otter occurs and a buffer, also inside a CBA1 area.



# DESCRIPTION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Potential issues relevant to impacts on the ecology of the study area include the following:

- Impacts on biodiversity: this includes any impacts on populations of individual species of concern (flora and fauna), including protected species, and on overall species richness. This includes impacts on genetic variability, population dynamics, overall species existence or health and on habitats important for species of concern.
- Impacts on sensitive habitats: this includes impacts on any sensitive or protected habitats, including indigenous grassland and wetland vegetation that leads to direct or indirect loss of such habitat.
- Impacts on ecosystem function: this includes impacts on any processes or factors that maintain ecosystem health and character, including the following:
  - disruption to nutrient-flow dynamics;
  - impedance of movement of material or water;
  - habitat fragmentation;
  - changes to abiotic environmental conditions;
  - changes to disturbance regimes, e.g. increased or decreased incidence of fire;
  - changes to successional processes;
  - effects on pollinators;
  - increased invasion by alien plants.

Changes to factors such as these may lead to a reduction in the resilience of plant communities and ecosystems or loss or change in ecosystem function.

- Secondary and cumulative impacts on ecology: this includes an assessment of the impacts of the proposed project taken in combination with the impacts of other known projects for the area or secondary impacts that may arise from changes in the social, economic or ecological environment.
- Impacts on the economic use of vegetation: this includes any impacts that affect the productivity or function of ecosystems in such a way as to reduce the economic value to users, e.g. reduction in grazing capacity, loss of harvestable products. It is a general consideration of the impact of a project on the supply of so-called ecosystem goods and services.

## Potential sensitive receptors in the general study area

A summary of the potential ecological issues for the study area is as follows (issues assessed by other specialists, e.g. on birds and on wetland and hydrological function, are not included here):

- Presence of natural vegetation on site, much of which has high conservation value due to being within Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA1 and CBA2). Although in CBAs, the vegetation types are not nationally transformed to a high degree and none are listed.
- Presence of shallow drainage valleys and associated vegetation on site, assessed as being sensitive to impacts associated with development as well as being important habitat for various plant and animal species.
- Presence of various plant species protected according to the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act (Act 9 of 2009). The identity of such species requires detailed floristic surveys within the footprint of the proposed project.
- Potential presence of one protected frog species, namely the Giant Bullfrog, not listed, but protected according to the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004).
- Presence of two mammal species of concern, the Black-footed Cat (Vulnerable), and Cape Clawless Otter (Near Threatened), both protected according to the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004).
- Potential presence of other mammal species of concern, the South African Hedgehog (Near Threatened), Grey Rhebok, White-tailed Rat (Vulnerable) and Spectacled Dormouse (Near Threatened), the first three also protected according to the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004).

- Potential invasion of natural habitats by alien invasive plants, thus causing additional impacts on biodiversity features. There are a large number of alien invasive species present on site or in neighbouring areas, all of which have the potential to invade more widely, given the right circumstances.

## Construction Phase Impacts

### ***Direct impacts***

Direct impacts include the following:

1. Loss and/or fragmentation of indigenous natural vegetation due to clearing;
2. Loss of individuals of plant species of conservation concern and/or protected plants;
3. Loss of faunal habitat and refugia;
4. Direct mortality of fauna due to machinery, construction and increased traffic;
5. Displacement and/or disturbance of fauna due to increased activity and noise levels;
6. Increased poaching and/or illegal collecting due to increased access to the area.

## Operational Phase Impacts

### ***Direct impacts***

Ongoing direct impacts will include the following:

1. Direct mortality of fauna through traffic, illegal collecting, poaching and collisions and/or entanglement with infrastructure;

### ***Indirect impacts***

These will include the following:

1. Establishment and spread of alien invasive plant species due to the presence of migration corridors and disturbance vectors;
2. Runoff and erosion due to the presence of hard surfaces that change the infiltration and runoff properties of the landscape;

## Decommissioning Phase Impacts

### ***Direct impacts***

These will include the following:

1. Loss and disturbance of natural vegetation due to the removal of infrastructure and need for working sites;
2. Direct mortality of fauna due to machinery, construction and increased traffic;
3. Displacement and/or disturbance of fauna due to increased activity and noise levels;

### ***Indirect impacts***

These will occur due to renewed disturbance due to decommissioning activities, as follows:

1. Continued establishment and spread of alien invasive plant species due to the presence of migration corridors and disturbance vectors;
2. Continued runoff and erosion due to the presence of hard surfaces that change the infiltration and runoff properties of the landscape;



# ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

This section of the report provides an assessment of identified impacts for each of the three proposed projects. The assessment is identical for all three projects and therefore the tables below apply to all three projects.

## Solar PV Infrastructure

There are various impacts that have been assessed as having medium significance prior to mitigation, but for which the significance is low after mitigation. This means that, with one exception, all impacts are assessed as having low significance after mitigation. The exception is the impact on indigenous natural vegetation, with a significance of medium before and after mitigation, where construction will lead to a loss of vegetation. The impact will definitely occur, will be permanent and is irreversible, and no mitigation can change these factors.

Table 7: Assessment of impacts for the solar PV infrastructure for all three facilities.

SOLAR PV FACILITY																				
ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION							RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION										
		E	P	R	L	D	I/M	TOTAL		STATUS (+ OR -)	S	E	P	R	L	D	I/M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S
<b>Construction Phase</b>																				
Indigenous natural vegetation	Loss and/or fragmentation of vegetation due to clearing for construction of infrastructure.	1	4	4	2	4	2	30	-	Medium	Use existing road infrastructure for access roads. Avoid construction of infrastructure within sensitive habitats. Minimise vegetation clearing and disturbance to footprint areas only. Compile a rehabilitation programme and rehabilitate disturbed areas.	1	4	3	2	4	2	28	-	Medium
Plant species of concern and protected plants	Loss of individuals due to clearing for construction of infrastructure.	1	4	2	2	3	2	24	-	Medium	Undertake a walk-through survey of footprint areas. Obtain all necessary permits.	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low

Fauna	Loss of habitat due to clearing for construction of infrastructure	1	3	2	2	3	2	22	-	Low	Use existing road infrastructure for access roads. Avoid construction of infrastructure within sensitive habitats. Minimise vegetation clearing and disturbance to footprint areas only. Compile a rehabilitation programme and rehabilitate disturbed areas.	1	2	2	2	3	1	10	-	Low
Fauna	Direct mortality due to machinery, construction and increased traffic	1	2	2	2	1	2	16	-	Low	Avoid construction of infrastructure within sensitive habitats. Implement traffic control measures, including speed limits and no-go zones.	1	2	2	2	1	1	8	-	Low
Fauna	Displacement and disturbance due to increased activity and noise levels	1	2	2	2	1	2	16	-	Low	Avoid construction of infrastructure within sensitive habitats. Implement traffic control measures, including speed limits and no-go zones.	1	2	2	2	1	1	8	-	Low
Flora and fauna	Increased poaching and/or illegal collecting due to improved access to the area.	1	2	2	2	1	2	16	-	Low	Strict access control to the site. Environmental awareness education for staff and visitors. Report any infringements to law enforcement.	1	2	2	2	1	1	8	-	Low
<b>Operational Phase</b>																				

Fauna	Direct mortality of fauna through traffic, illegal collecting, poaching and collisions and/or entanglement with infrastructure	1	2	2	2	1	2	16	-	Low	Implement traffic control measures, including speed limits. Environmental awareness education for staff and visitors.	1	2	2	2	1	1	8	-	Low
Vegetation	Establishment and spread of alien invasive plant species due to the presence of migration corridors and disturbance vectors	1	3	2	3	3	2	24	-	Medium	Compile and implement Alien Invasive Management Plan. Rehabilitate disturbed areas.	1	2	2	2	3	1	10	-	Low
Vegetation	Runoff and erosion due to the presence of hard surfaces that change the infiltration and runoff properties of the landscape	1	3	2	3	3	2	24	-	Medium	Compile and implement a stormwater management plan, which highlights control priorities and areas and provides a programme for long-term control. Undertake regular monitoring to detect erosion features early so that they can be controlled. Implement control measures. Avoid building on or near steep or unstable slopes. Construct proper culverts, bridges and/or crossings at drainage-line crossings, and other attenuation devices to limit overland flow	1	2	2	2	3	1	10	-	Low
<b>Decommissioning Phase</b>																				
Vegetation	Loss and disturbance of natural vegetation	1	3	2	2	2	2	20	-	Low	No additional clearing of vegetation should take place without a proper assessment of	1	3	2	2	2	1	10	-	Low



Fauna	Displacement and/or disturbance of fauna due to increased activity and noise levels	1	2	2	1	1	1	7	-	Low													
Vegetation	Continued establishment and spread of alien invasive plant species due to the presence of migration corridors and disturbance vectors	1	3	2	3	3	2	24	-	Medium													



# Grid Infrastructure

All assessed impacts have a low significance after the application of mitigation measures.

Table 8: Assessment of impacts of the grid connection infrastructure for all three projects.

GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE																				
ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION									RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION								
		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S
<b>Construction Phase</b>																				
Indigenous natural vegetation	Loss and/or fragmentation of vegetation due to clearing for construction of infrastructure.	1	3	2	2	3	2	22	-	Low	Use existing road infrastructure for access roads. Avoid construction of infrastructure within sensitive habitats. Minimise vegetation clearing and disturbance to footprint areas only. Compile a rehabilitation programme and rehabilitate disturbed areas.	1	3	2	2	2	2	20	-	Low



Plant species of concern and protected plants	Loss of individuals due to clearing for construction of infrastructure.	1	3	2	2	3	2	22	-	Low	Undertake a walk-through survey of footprint areas. Obtain all necessary permits.	1	3	1	2	1	1	8	-	Low
Fauna	Loss of habitat due to clearing for construction of infrastructure	1	3	2	2	3	2	22	-	Low	Use existing road infrastructure for access roads. Avoid construction of infrastructure within sensitive habitats. Minimise vegetation clearing and disturbance to footprint areas only. Compile a rehabilitation programme and rehabilitate disturbed areas.	1	2	2	2	3	1	10	-	Low
Fauna	Direct mortality due to machinery, construction and increased traffic	1	2	2	2	1	2	16	-	Low	Avoid construction of infrastructure within sensitive habitats. Implement traffic control measures, including speed limits and no-go zones.	1	2	2	2	1	1	8	-	Low
Fauna	Displacement and disturbance due to increased activity and noise levels	1	2	2	2	1	2	16	-	Low	Avoid construction of infrastructure within sensitive habitats. Implement traffic control measures, including speed limits and no-go zones.	1	2	2	2	1	1	8	-	Low

Flora and fauna	Increased poaching and/or illegal collecting due to improved access to the area.	1	2	2	2	1	2	16	-	Low	Strict access control to the site. Environmental awareness education for staff and visitors. Report any infringements to law enforcement.	1	2	2	2	1	1	8	-	Low
<b>Operational Phase</b>																				
Fauna	Direct mortality of fauna through traffic, illegal collecting, poaching and collisions and/or entanglement with infrastructure	1	2	2	2	1	2	16	-	Low	Implement traffic control measures, including speed limits. Environmental awareness education for staff and visitors.	1	2	2	2	1	1	8	-	Low
Vegetation	Establishment and spread of alien invasive plant species due to the presence of migration corridors and disturbance vectors	1	3	2	3	3	2	24	-	Medium	Compile and implement Alien Invasive Management Plan. Rehabilitate disturbed areas.	1	2	2	2	3	1	10	-	Low
Vegetation	Runoff and erosion due to the presence of hard surfaces that change the infiltration and runoff properties of the landscape	1	2	2	3	3	2	22	-	Medium	Compile and implement a stormwater management plan, which highlights control priorities and areas and provides a programme for long-term control. Undertake regular monitoring to detect erosion features early so that they can be controlled. Implement control measures. Avoid building on or near steep or unstable slopes. Construct proper	1	2	2	2	3	1	10	-	Low





	species due to the presence of migration corridors and disturbance vectors																				
Vegetation	Continued runoff and erosion due to the presence of hard surfaces that change the infiltration and runoff properties of the landscape	1	3	2	3	3	2	24	-	Medium	Implement a stormwater management plan, which highlights control priorities and areas and provides a programme for long-term control. Following decommissioning, undertake regular monitoring for an appropriate length of time to detect erosion features early so that they can be controlled. Implement any control measures that may become necessary. Avoid undertaking any activities on or near steep or unstable slopes.	1	2	2	2	3	1	10	-	Low	

# CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The projects listed in Table 7 have been identified within a 50 km radius of the project area (shown in Figure 16 below) and are included in the Cumulative Impact Assessment. There are 17 projects listed that cover a fairly broad area, mostly to the east, north-east and north of the current project. The combination of all projects together also includes most of the natural environment in this quadrant relative to the current project (see Figure 13).

Table 9: Projects within a 50 km radius of the Umsombomvu PV Solar Energy Facility.

Project	DEA reference no.	Technology	Capacity	Status
Allemans Fontein SEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/730	Solar	20MW	Approved
Carolus Poort SEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/729	Solar	20MW	Approved
Damfontein SEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/728	Solar	20MW	Approved
Gillmer SEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/735	Solar	20MW	Approved
Inkululeko SEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/553	Solar	20MW	Approved
Kleinfontein SEF	12/12/20/2654	Solar	20MW	Approved
Klip Gat SEF	14/12/16/3/3/2/354	Solar	75M	Approved
Linde SEF	12/12/20/2258	Solar	40MW	In Operation
Linde SEF (Expansion)	14/12/16/3/3/1/1122	Solar	75MW	Approved
Middelburg Solar Park 1	12/12/20/2465/2	Solar	75MW	Approved
Middelburg Solar Park 2	12/12/20/2465/1	Solar	75MW	Approved
Naauw Poort SEF	14/12/16/3/3/2/355	Solar	75MW	Approved
Toitdale SEF	12/12/20/2653	Solar	20MW	Approved
Noupoort Wind Farm	12/12/20/2319	Wind	188MW	In Operation
Phezukomoya WEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/1028	Wind	315MW	EIA in Process
San Kraal WEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/1069	Wind	390MW	EIA in Process
Umsobomvu WEF	14/12/16/3/3/2/730	Wind	140MW	Approved

Environmental Impact Reports for a number of these projects were made available to assess cumulative impacts for the current project. A summary of the main impacts and associated mitigation measures are provided in the table below (Table 10).

Table 10: Ecological impacts and proposed mitigation measures for projects within a 50 km radius of the three projects.

Impact	Mitigation measures	Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of vegetation</li> <li>Increase in runoff and erosion</li> <li>Loss of and alteration of microhabitats</li> <li>Establishment and spread of alien invasive species</li> <li>Ecological degradation and loss of ecological integrity</li> <li>Fragmentation and reduction in core habitat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make use of existing tracks</li> <li>Plant search and rescue</li> <li>Minimise habitat loss</li> <li>Remove and collect all succulent and bulbous plants from cleared areas and transplant into newly redistributed topsoils</li> <li>Prevent pollution of the environment</li> <li>Re-establish vegetation where possible</li> <li>Implement an invasive/exotic species eradication programme</li> <li>Keep new developments close to existing developed areas and/or keep components of the new development as close together as possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allemans Fontein Solar Energy Facility</li> <li>Carolus Poort Solar Energy Facility</li> <li>Damfontein PV Solar Energy Facility</li> <li>Gillmer Solar Energy Facility</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New powerlines should follow existing servitudes.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Loss of vegetation</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase in runoff and erosion</i></li> <li>• <i>Loss of and alteration of microhabitats</i></li> <li>• <i>Altered vegetation cover</i></li> <li>• <i>Altered distribution of rainfall</i></li> <li>• <i>Spread and establishment of alien invasive species</i></li> <li>• <i>Oil and chemical contamination of habitats</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use existing roads</li> <li>• Keep affected footprint to a minimum</li> <li>• Create structures under roads to permit free-flow of water</li> <li>• Re-inforce existing roads and create berms to limit erosion</li> <li>• Prevent leakage of oil and other chemicals</li> <li>• Remove topsoil and redistribute to mimic microtopography of the original vegetation</li> <li>• Monitor the establishment of alien vegetation and remove as soon as detected</li> <li>• After decommissioning, rehabilitate disturbed areas</li> <li>• Maintain natural vegetation cover under panels</li> <li>• Place power line pylons as far as possible outside drainage lines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inkululeko Solar Energy Facility</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Loss of protected plants</i></li> <li>• <i>Loss of faunal habitat</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause minimum damage to the environment with construction equipment</li> <li>• Restrict construction activities to development footprint</li> <li>• Use existing roads as far as possible</li> <li>• Check final footprint for burrows of small mammals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kleinfontein Solar Energy Facility</li> <li>• Toitdale Solar Energy Facility</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Direct loss of vegetation</i></li> <li>• <i>Spread of declared weeds and alien invader plants</i></li> <li>• <i>Loss of faunal habitat</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep development impact within footprint area.</li> <li>• Disturbed areas should be rehabilitated as soon as possible.</li> <li>• Establish a monitoring programme to detect alien invasive plant species.</li> <li>• An active re-vegetation plan should be implemented to assist the return of natural indigenous species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Klip Gat Solar Energy Facility</li> <li>• Tollie PV</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Alteration of vegetation cover</i></li> <li>• <i>Erosion</i></li> <li>• <i>Disruption of ethology of species</i></li> </ul>	No specific measures proposed, habitat considered to be of low value.	Nine Scatec sites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Loss of individuals of species of concern</i></li> <li>• <i>Loss of habitat / indigenous natural vegetation</i></li> <li>• <i>Impacts on ecosystem function</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contain impacts to within footprint of infrastructure</li> <li>• Implement measures to minimize erosion</li> <li>• Implement a storm-water management plan</li> <li>• Limit disturbance to vegetation surrounding infrastructure</li> <li>• Rehabilitate disturbed areas as quickly as possible</li> <li>• Avoid translocating soil stockpiles from areas containing alien plants</li> <li>• Control a line plants</li> <li>• Establish a monitoring programme to detect and control alien plants</li> </ul>	Middelburg Solar Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Direct loss of vegetation</i></li> <li>• <i>Disturbance to vegetation and associated habitats</i></li> <li>• <i>Spread of declared weeds and alien invasive species</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search and Rescue all translocatable indigenous plants</li> <li>• Prevent contamination by oil, diesel and other contaminants</li> <li>• Mitigate disturbance or loss of natural vegetation</li> <li>• Control declared weeds and alien invasive plants</li> </ul>	Naauwpoort Solar Energy Facility

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigate loss of fauna</li> <li>• Prevent damage to drainage systems</li> <li>• Minimise soil degradation and erosion</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Loss of natural vegetation</i></li> <li>• <i>Loss of habitat for red data and general species</i></li> <li>• <i>Loss of species richness</i></li> <li>• <i>Edge effects</i></li> <li>• <i>Erosion</i></li> <li>• <i>Introduction of exotic species</i></li> <li>• <i>Loss of habitat for fauna</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain footprint strictly during construction</li> <li>• Conduct walk-through survey prior to construction to conduct a search and rescue</li> <li>• Retain indigenous vegetation, where possible</li> <li>• Demarcate sensitive areas prior to construction</li> <li>• Vegetation to be removed only when necessary</li> <li>• No vegetation to be used for firewood</li> <li>• Implement a programme of weed control</li> <li>• Grass soil stockpiles to prevent weed invasion</li> <li>• Avoid emergence of alien invasive species</li> <li>• Use existing access roads</li> <li>• Compile a rehabilitation plan</li> <li>• Revegetate any disturbed areas as a priority to avoid erosion</li> <li>• Put in place suitable storm water / wind controls until rehabilitation is completed</li> </ul>	Noupoort Wind Farm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Faunal habitat loss</i></li> <li>• <i>Loss of vegetation and listed/protected plant species</i></li> <li>• <i>Impacts on fauna</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid placement of infrastructure within High sensitivity areas and drainage lines</li> <li>• Preconstruction walk-through of approved development footprint</li> <li>• Rehabilitate disturbed areas, for example laydown areas, after use</li> <li>• Minimise development footprint</li> <li>• Rehabilitate disturbed areas that are no longer required by the operational phase of the development</li> <li>• Exact routing of roads should be adjusted to avoid sensitive habitats</li> <li>• Preconstruction environmental induction for all construction staff</li> <li>• Demarcate sensitive areas in close proximity to the development footprint as no-go areas</li> <li>• During construction, any fauna directly threatened by construction activities should be removed to a safe location</li> <li>• Illegal collection, hunting or harvesting should be strictly forbidden</li> <li>• No fires in open veld</li> <li>• No fuelwood collection on site</li> <li>• No dogs or cats should be allowed on site</li> <li>• Control type, nature and timing of night-time lighting</li> <li>• Store all hazardous materials in an appropriate manner</li> <li>• No unauthorized persons to be allowed on site and implement site access control</li> <li>• Enforce speed limits</li> <li>• If electric fencing is required anywhere, this should be designed to minimize impacts on fauna</li> <li>• Manage erosion according to an Erosion Management Plan and Rehabilitation Plan</li> </ul>	Phezukomoya Wind Energy Facility San Kraal Wind Farm



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All roads and hardened surfaces should have runoff control features</li> <li>• Regular monitoring of erosion</li> <li>• All cleared areas should be revegetated with indigenous species from the local area</li> <li>• Wherever excavation is necessary, topsoil should be set aside and replaced after construction</li> <li>• Implement a long-term alien plant management plan</li> <li>• Regular monitoring for alien plants within the development footprint as well as surrounding areas</li> <li>• Undertake regular clearing of alien plants using best-practice methods for the species concerned</li> <li>• No excavated holes or trenches should be left open for extended periods</li> <li>• Regular monitoring for at least two years after decommissioning to ensure that no erosion problems develop</li> <li>• All erosion problems observed should be rectified as soon as possible using appropriate erosion control methods</li> </ul>	
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Note that none of the projects recorded threatened plant species or protected trees.

## Description of cumulative impacts

There are various cumulative impacts that may occur as a result of the combined impact of a number of similar projects in the area, as follows:

1. Loss and/or fragmentation of indigenous natural vegetation due to clearing;
2. Loss of individuals of plant species of conservation concern and/or protected plants;
3. Changes to ecological processes at a landscape level;
4. Mortality, displacement and/or disturbance of fauna;
5. General increase in the spread and invasion of new habitats by alien invasive plant species;
6. Reduction in the opportunity to undertake or plan conservation, including effects on CBAs and ESAs, as well as on the opportunity to conserve any part of the landscape;
7. Positive cumulative impact on climate change.

### ***Cumulative impacts on indigenous natural vegetation***

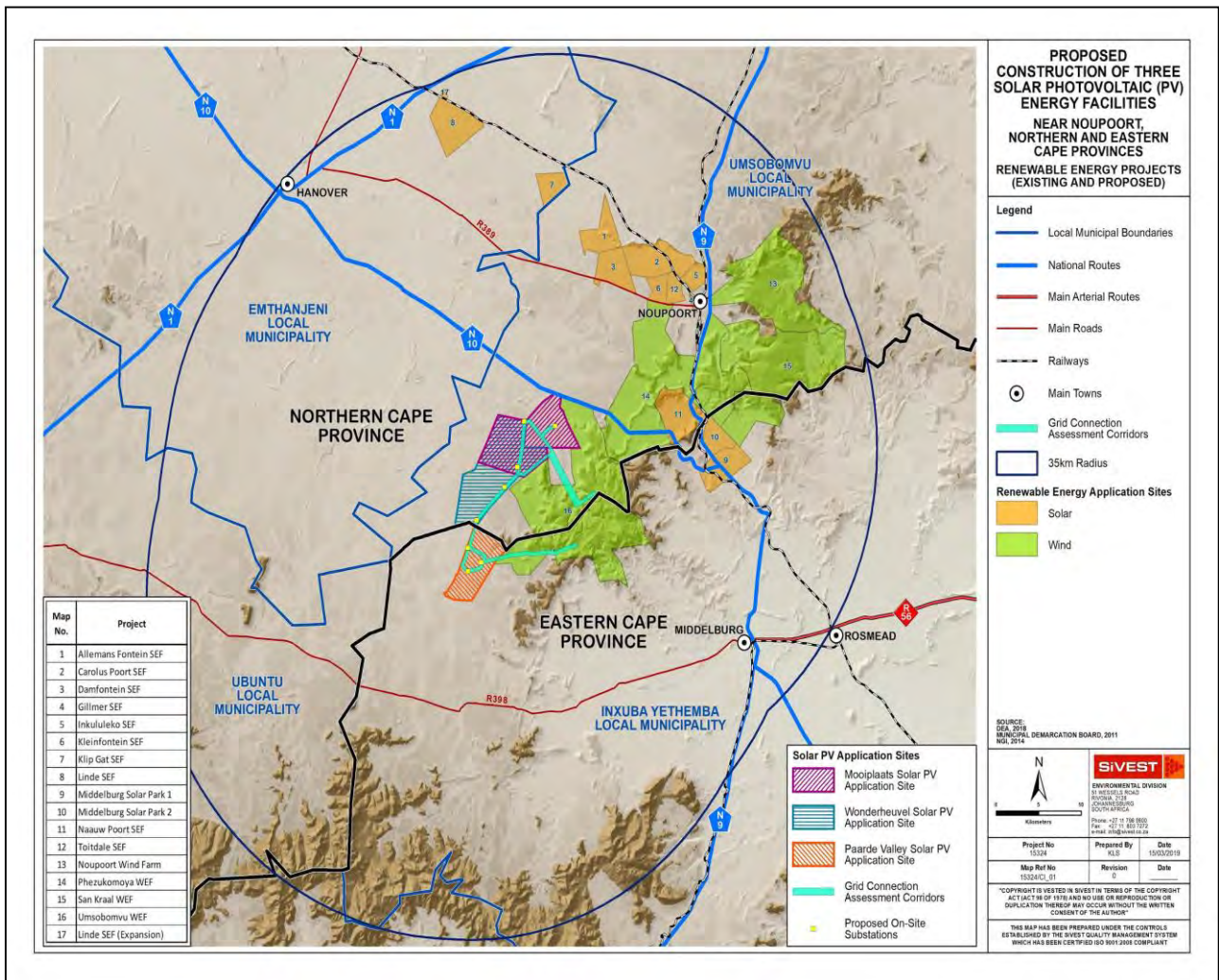
The regional terrestrial vegetation types in the broad study area are listed as Least Threatened and generally have large areas. Loss of habitat will definitely occur for each project, each of which will be a small area in comparison to the total area of the vegetation type. The total loss of habitat due to a number of projects together will be greater than for any single project, so a cumulative effect will occur. However, the area lost in total will be small compared to the total area of the vegetation types concerned. Of more concern is the total degree of fragmentation due to the combination of all projects, which will be much more significant than gross loss of habitat, measured in hectares. Direct loss of habitat will not result in a change in the conservation status of the vegetation types, but overall degradation due to fragmentation effects may be cause for concern. The cumulative effect will therefore be low for vegetation loss, but possibly significant for fragmentation. In addition, the current project is located in a rural area with the no existing infrastructure nearby, as is the case with all the other proposed projects. This will fundamentally change the character of this area in terms of its remoteness and natural state.

**Cumulative impacts on plant species of concern and protected plant species**

There are no plant species of conservation concern for the site, but there are various protected plant species that may occur in the study area, all of which are relatively widespread. Constructing the current project increases the likelihood of individuals being affected, but unless large numbers of individuals are directly affected, there will only be small cumulative effects.

**Cumulative impacts on ecological processes**

There are various ecological processes that may be affected at a landscape level by the presence of multiple projects. This includes obvious processes, such as migration, pollination and dispersal, but also more difficult to interpret factors, such as spatial heterogeneity, community composition and environmental gradients, that can become disrupted when landscapes are disturbed at a high level. Disturbance can alter the pattern of variation in the structure or function of ecosystems. Fragmentation is the breaking up of a habitat, ecosystem, or land-use type into smaller parcels. An important consequence of repeated, random clearing is that contiguous cover can break down into isolated patches. This happens when the area cleared exceed a critical level and landscapes start to become disconnected. Spatially heterogenous patterns can be interpreted as individualistic responses to environmental gradients and lead to natural patterns in the landscape. Disrupting gradients and creating disturbance edges across wide areas is very disruptive of natural processes and will lead to fundamental changes in ecosystem function. It is possible that this could be a cumulative consequence of the combined projects, but is difficult to determine without a detailed assessment of fragmentation of the combination of all the projects.



**Figure 13: Other proposed renewable energy developments within 50 km radius.**

### ***Cumulative impacts on fauna***

Construction activities, loss of habitat, noise, dust and general activity associated with the construction phase of the project are likely to cause all mobile species to move away from the area. This effect will be increased if there are a number of projects being constructed at the same time or in quick succession, so the effect is likely to be cumulative. However, the geographical ranges of the species of concern is wide and it is considered that the significance of the effect will be low in the long-term, although probably significant during the combined construction phase of the projects. It is possible that some species will be more significantly negatively affected than others, especially shy species, territorial species that get displaced, or those with large territories that get shrunk. It is also possible that some species will benefit from the increased presence of humans and will migrate into the area. This will possibly cause additional shifts in other species that are affected by the increase in numbers or new species.

### ***Cumulative impacts due to spread of declared weeds and alien invader plants***

There is a moderate to high possibility that alien plants could be introduced to areas within the footprint of the proposed infrastructure from surrounding areas in the absence of control measures. The greater the number of projects, the more likely this effect will happen; therefore, the effect is cumulative. For the current site, the impact is predicted to be a moderate to high risk due to the current presence of various invasive species on site and in surrounding areas. The significance will probably be low if control measures are implemented. However, the increased overall disturbance of the landscape will create invasion opportunities and, if new invasions are not controlled, can create nodes that spread to new locations due to the heightened disturbance levels.

### ***Cumulative impacts due to loss of protected animals***

There are various animal species protected according to National legislation that occur in the geographical area covered by the combined projects. Some of these animals may be vulnerable to secondary impacts, such as hunting, road kill and illegal collecting. The greater the number of projects, the more likely this effect will happen; therefore, the effect is cumulative. However, in all cases, the geographical distribution of each species is much wider than the combined project areas. The significance will therefore be low, especially if control measures are implemented.

### ***Cumulative impacts on CBAs and conservation planning***

Significant proportions of the site and surrounding sites are included in Critical Biodiversity Areas for the Northern Cape. Disruption of these areas means that conservation planners have to find alternative sites to include in future CBAs according to an algorithm that seeks a least-cost outcome for preserving biodiversity, i.e. the least amount of land space for preserving the greatest amount of area of biodiversity importance, as well as meeting specific conservation targets. At some point, the loss of suitable sites leads to a situation where it is no longer possible to plan effective conservation networks or the cost of doing so increases due to a lack of choice. The higher the density of similar projects in a uniform area, the less chance there is of finding sites suitable for conservation that contain all the attributes that are desired to be conserved, including both ecological processes and ecological patterns.

### ***Cumulative impact on climate change***

One of the primary reasons for promoting renewable energy projects is the desire to make South Africa compliant with international treaties regarding climate-change effects. The combined generation capacity of all the renewable energy projects considered here is just less than 1 600 MW, which is more than half of the average size of one of the 14 coal power stations in South Africa (Eskom's Generation Division has 14 coal-fired power stations with an installed capacity of 38 548 MW, [www.eskom.co.za](http://www.eskom.co.za)). A reduction in reliance on coal power would improve the air quality of the Mpumalanga Highveld (where many of these power stations are located), reduce the amount of coal-mining that would take place (which has a devastating effect on biodiversity resources and water quality) and would reduce the per capita carbon footprint of our country. Greater uptake of renewable energy would furthermore reduce the global risk of climate change, one of the factors taken into account in designing the conservation network in South Africa. The construction of renewable energy projects can be viewed as an offset for other carbon-generating technology.

## **Assessment of cumulative impacts**

Cumulative impacts are identical for all three projects (Mooi Plaats, Wonderheuwel and Paarde Valley). The table below (Table 10) therefore applies to all three projects.

Based on the assessment provided, all cumulative impacts can be reduced to a LOW significance with mitigation measures, with the exception of *“Reduction in the opportunity to undertake or plan conservation, including effects on CBAs and ESAs, as well as on the opportunity to conserve any part of the landscape”*, which has a residual significance of MEDIUM. Based on this assessment, it is considered that the cumulative impacts are acceptable.

Table 11: Assessment of cumulative impacts for all three proposed PV solar energy facilities.

MOOI PLAATS, WONDERHEUWEL AND PAARDE VALLEY SOLAR PV FACILITIES																				
ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION									RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION								
		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S
<b>Cumulative</b>																				
Vegetation	Loss and/or fragmentation of indigenous natural vegetation due to clearing	2	4	4	2	4	2	32	-	Medium	Limit development within conservation zones, especially CBA1 areas.	2	4	4	2	4	1	16	-	Low
Plant species of concern and protected plants	Loss of individuals	2	4	2	3	3	2	28	-	Medium	It is a legal requirement to obtain permits for specimens that will be lost. Undertake a detailed pre-construction walk-through survey will be required during a favourable season to locate any additional individuals of protected plants. This survey must cover the footprint of all approved infrastructure, including internal access roads. Plants lost to the development can be rescued and planted in appropriate places in	2	4	2	2	2	1	12	-	Low





# POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES

This section of the report provides a description of mitigation measures that could be applied to minimize identified impacts for this project. However these will be confirmed during the detailed site assessment in the EIA phase.

## Mitigation measures

### ***Use existing road infrastructure***

There are existing gravel roads in the study area, as well as access roads along existing power lines. Where possible, these roads should be used for access to the proposed project areas.

### ***Adjust infrastructure positions to avoid sensitive habitats***

Where one infrastructure option is preferable over another, but there are still sensitive habitats affected, the infrastructure should be moved to avoid the sensitivity, wherever possible.

### ***Install adequate structures at watercourse crossings***

Where infrastructure, such as roads, crosses a watercourse, the crossing point must either consist of an adequately constructed dip or else must have sufficient culverts to allow natural function of the system. This means that the crossing structure must not reduce the width of the watercourse, nor result in impedence to flow of water and material. It must be both high enough and wide enough to allow natural function.

### ***Minimise vegetation clearing and disturbance***

For all construction activities, the amount of vegetation cleared should be as small as possible to minimize the amount of habitat that is lost as well as to minimize the amount of rehabilitation of disturbed areas that will be required. Areas outside the direct construction camp footprint must be fenced off or marked in some other appropriate manner and no activities must be permitted there. Vehicles and personnel must be prohibited from being in natural areas outside the footprint of the proposed construction. Access for unauthorised personnel must also be limited.

### ***Rehabilitation Programme***

A Biodiversity Rehabilitation Programme should be established before operation. The programme must address the rehabilitation of the existing habitats as well as rehabilitation after closure. This Rehabilitation Programme must be approved by the relevant government departments.

### ***Botanical walk-through survey***

This is a requirement only to ensure legal compliance and should take place once the final layout has been determined. A Biodiversity pre-construction walk-through survey should be undertaken to list the identity and location of all listed and protected species within the footprint of the proposed infrastructure. The results of the walk-through survey should provide an indication of the number of individuals of each listed species that are likely to be impacted by the proposed development. Required permits can then be obtained. This permit is the TOPS permit for which an application is submitted to the provincial department and requires the identity and an estimate of numbers for each species that will be affected.

### ***Obtain permits for protected plants***

It is a legal requirement that permits will be required for any species protected according to National or Provincial legislation. The identity of species affected by such permit requirements can only be identified during the walk-through survey (previous mitigation measure). It is common practice for the authorities that issue the permits to require search and rescue of affected plants. As indicated for the previous mitigation measure, this permit is the TOPS permit for which an application is submitted to the provincial department.



***Search and rescue***

Search and rescue operation of appropriate species within the activity footprint. This is not appropriate for all species and should only include species for which this action would be beneficial. The identity of such species will be determined during the more detailed floristic survey to be undertaken for the EIA phase. For each individual plant that is rescued, the plant must be photographed before removal, tagged with a unique number or code and a latitude longitude position recorded using a hand-held GPS device. The plants must be handled according to recommendations provided by the horticulturalist that will do the removal. If planted into natural habitat, the position must be marked to aid in future monitoring of that plant. If rescued plants are housed in a temporary nursery, they may be used in one of two ways: (1) transplanted into suitable natural habitats near to where they were rescued, or (2) used for replanting in rehabilitation areas. Receiver sites must be matched as closely as possible with the origin of the plants and, where possible, be placed as near as possible to where they originated.

***Alien plant management plan***

It is recommended that a monitoring programme be implemented to enforce continual eradication of alien and invasive species. An Alien Invasive Programme is an essential component to the successful conservation of habitats and species. Alien species, especially invasive species are a major threat to the ecological functioning of natural systems and to the productive use of land. In terms of the amendments of the regulations under Sections 70-77 of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004)), landowners are legally responsible for the control of alien species on their properties. This programme should include monitoring procedures.

***Undertake regular monitoring***

Monitoring should be undertaken to evaluate the success of mitigation measures. More detailed monitoring requirements will be compiled at the EIA phase of this project when more detailed information is available on potential impacts and how they will be managed.

# COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Two grid connection infrastructure alternatives have been provided for each PV project. These alternatives essentially provide for two different route alignments with associated substations contained within an assessment corridor of approximately 400m wide. These alternatives are described below for each project.

## Mooi Plaats Solar PV Facility

There are two grid connection options for this project, as follows (see Figure 14):

- Corridor Option 1 is approximately 13kms in length, linking Substations 1 and 2 to Hydra D MTS.
- Corridor Option 2 is approximately 27kms in length, linking Substations 1 and 2 to Hydra D MTS via the proposed Central Collector substation located on the Wonderheuvel PV project application site.

### ***Grid Connection Option 1***

This route is the shorter of the two options. It traverses habitat in all sensitivity classes (see Figure 15), including areas of HIGH and VERY HIGH sensitivity near to Hydra D MTS (see Figure 15). The option excludes the proposed Central Collector substation located on the Wonderheuvel PV project application site. By virtue of traversing a shorter distance and requiring one less substation, this option is preferred.

### ***Grid Connection Option 2***

This route is the longer of the two options (approximately double the length). It traverses habitat in all sensitivity classes, including areas of HIGH and VERY HIGH sensitivity near to Hydra D MTS (see Figure 15). The option includes the proposed Central Collector substation located on the Wonderheuvel PV project application site. By virtue of traversing a longer distance and requiring one more substation, this option is least preferred.

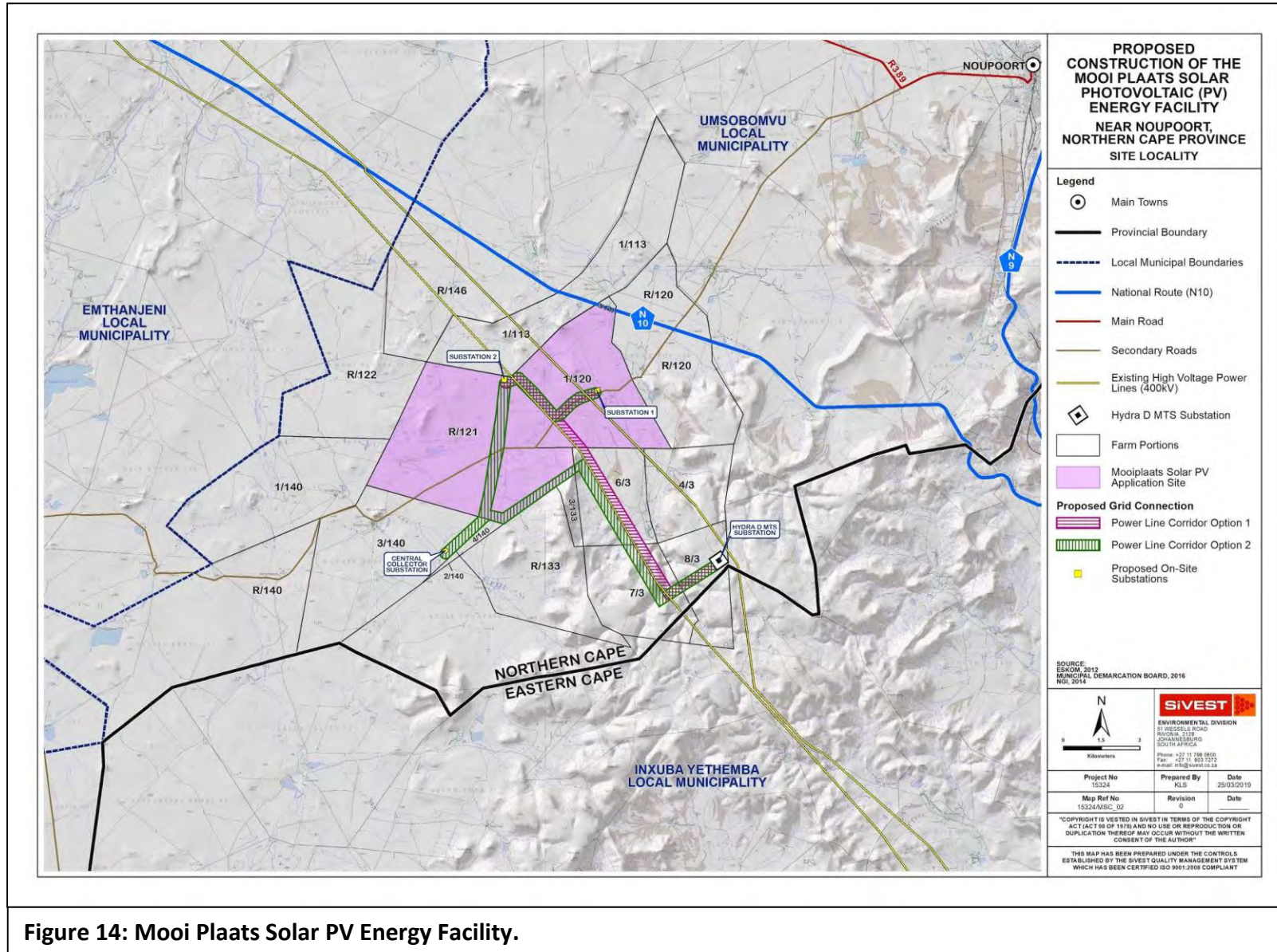
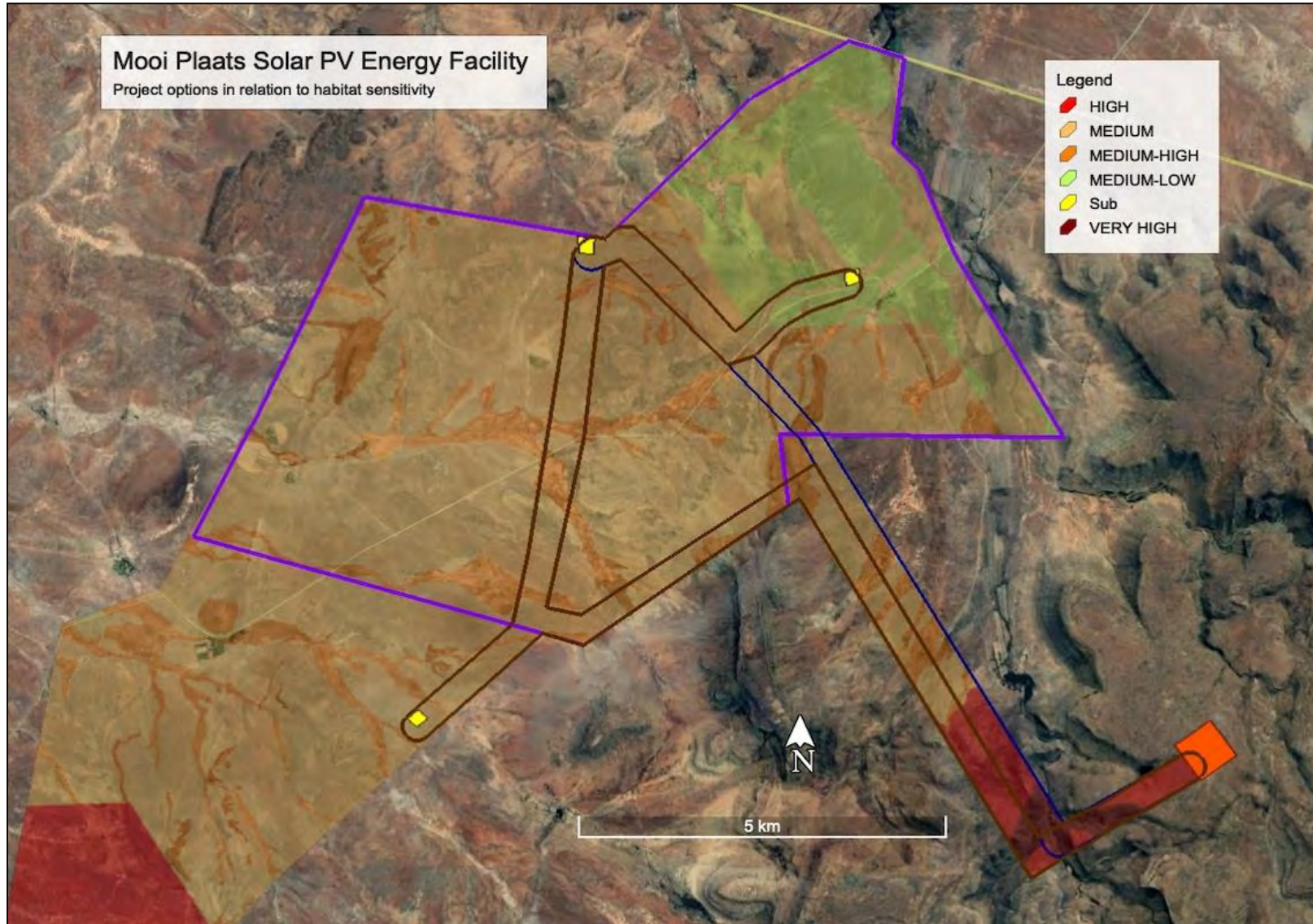


Figure 14: Mooi Plaats Solar PV Energy Facility.



**Figure 15: Mooi Plaats Solar PV Energy Facility in relation to sensitive habitats.**

## Wonderheuwel Solar PV Facility

There are two grid connection options for this project, as follows (see Figure 16):

- Corridor Option 1 involves two separate grid connections to serve the northern and southern sectors of the application site. The northern connection is approximately 18kms in length, linking the proposed on-site Substation 3 to Hydra D MTS via the Northern Collector substation. The southern connection is approximately 17kms in length, linking Substation 4 to the proposed Coleskop WEF substation via the Southern Collector substation located on the Paarde Valley PV project application site.
- Corridor Option 2 is approximately 20kms in length, linking Substations 3 and 4 to Hydra D MTS via the proposed Central Collector substation located on the Wonderheuwel PV project application site.

### ***Grid Connection Option 1***

This route is the longer of the two options (almost double the length). It traverses habitat in all sensitivity classes, including areas of HIGH and VERY HIGH sensitivity near to Hydra D MTS (see Figure 17). The option includes the proposed Central Collector substation located on the Wonderheuwel PV project application site. By virtue of traversing a longer distance, this option is least preferred.

### ***Grid Connection Option 2***

This route is the shorter of the two options. It traverses habitat in all sensitivity classes, including areas of HIGH and VERY HIGH sensitivity near to Hydra D MTS (see Figure 17). The option includes the proposed Central Collector substation located on the Wonderheuwel PV project application site. By virtue of traversing a shorter distance, this option is preferred.

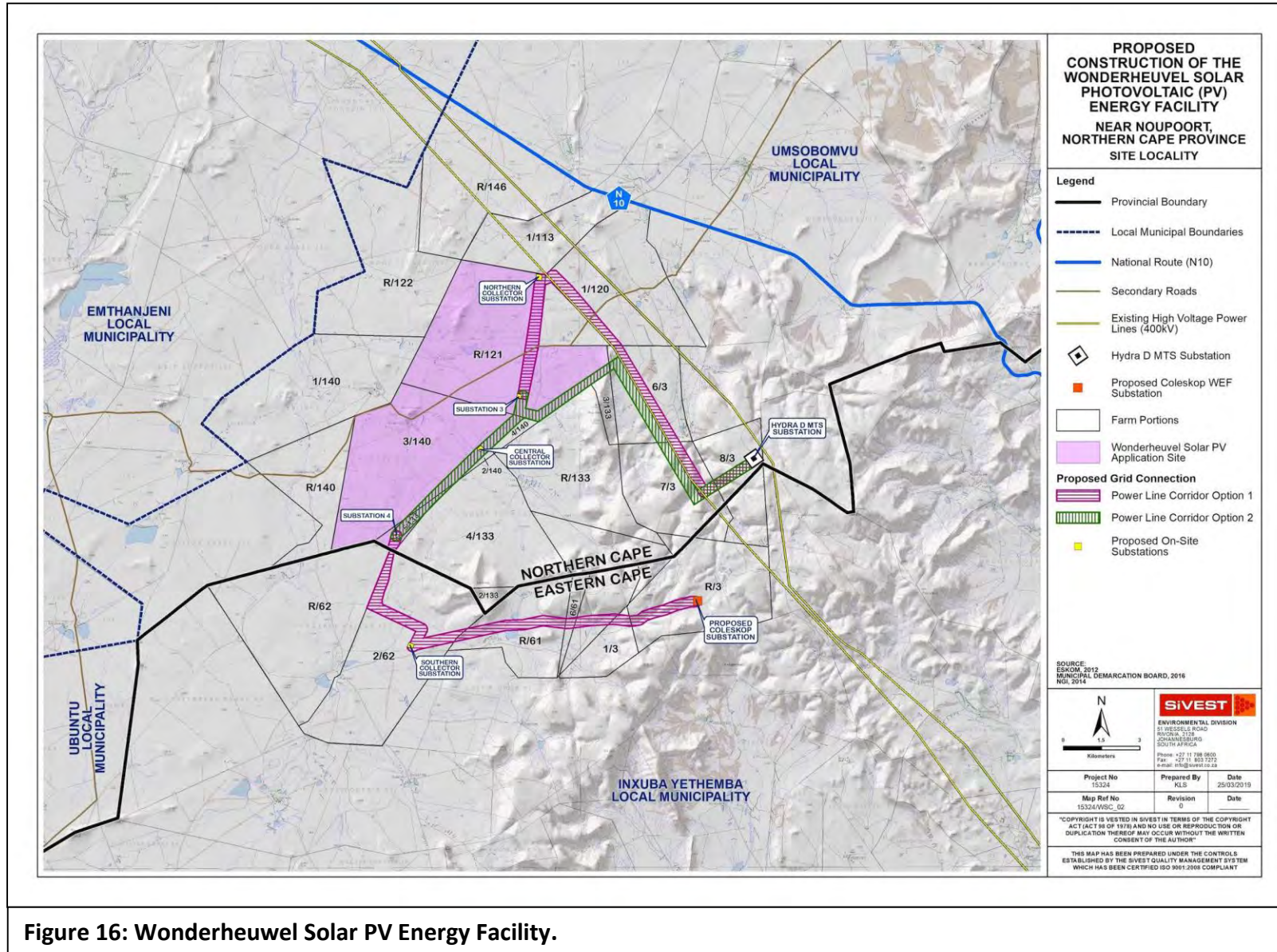


Figure 16: Wonderheuwel Solar PV Energy Facility.

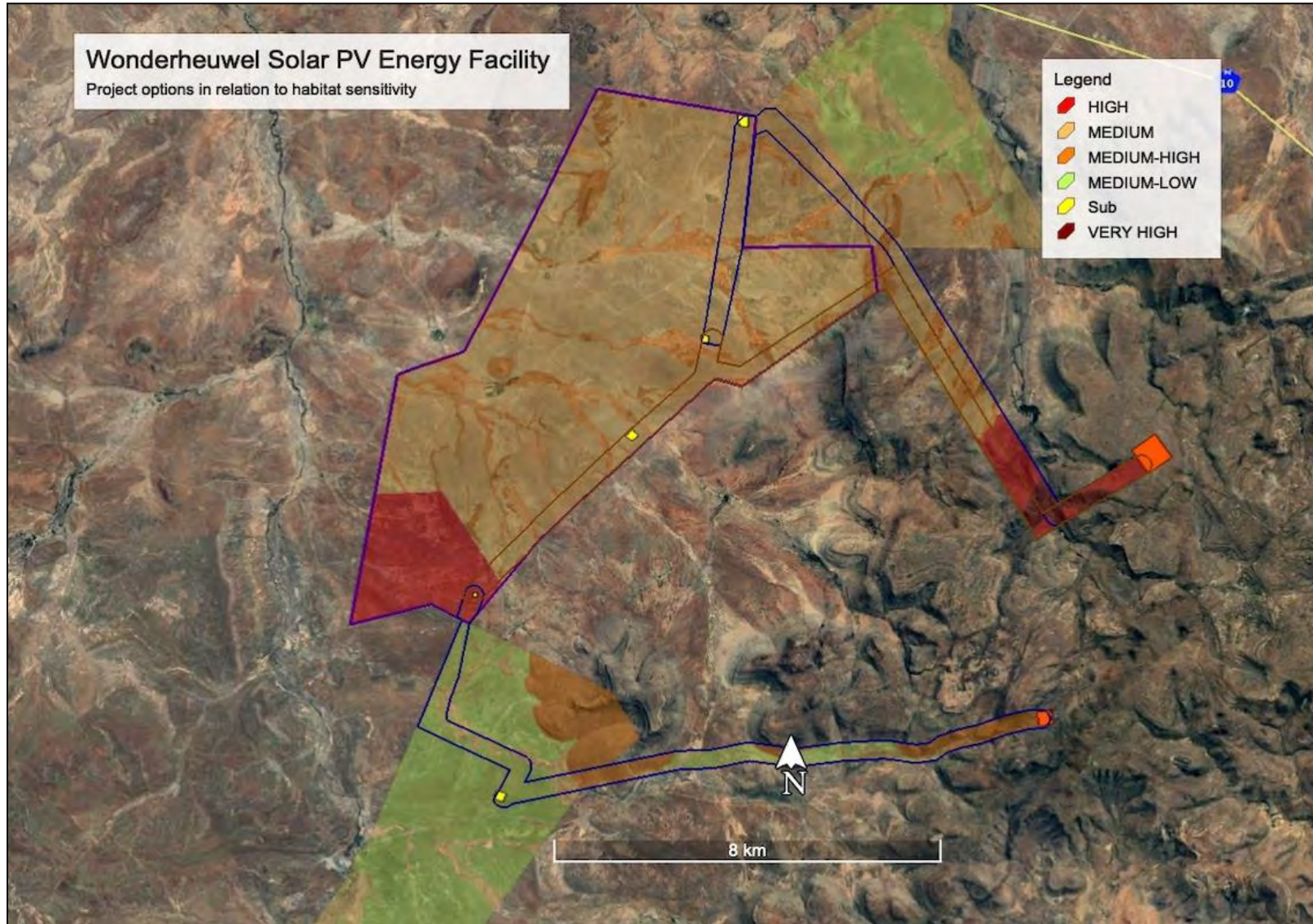


Figure 17: Wonderheuwel Solar PV Energy Facility in relation to sensitive habitats.

## Paarde Valley Solar PV Facility

There are two grid connection options for this project, as follows (see Figure 18):

- Corridor Option 1 is approximately 14kms in length, linking Substation 6 to the proposed Coleskop WEF substation via the Southern Collector substation.
- Corridor Option 2 is approximately 26kms in length, linking Substations 5 and 6 to Hydra D MTS via the proposed Central Collector substation located on the Wonderheuvel PV project application site.

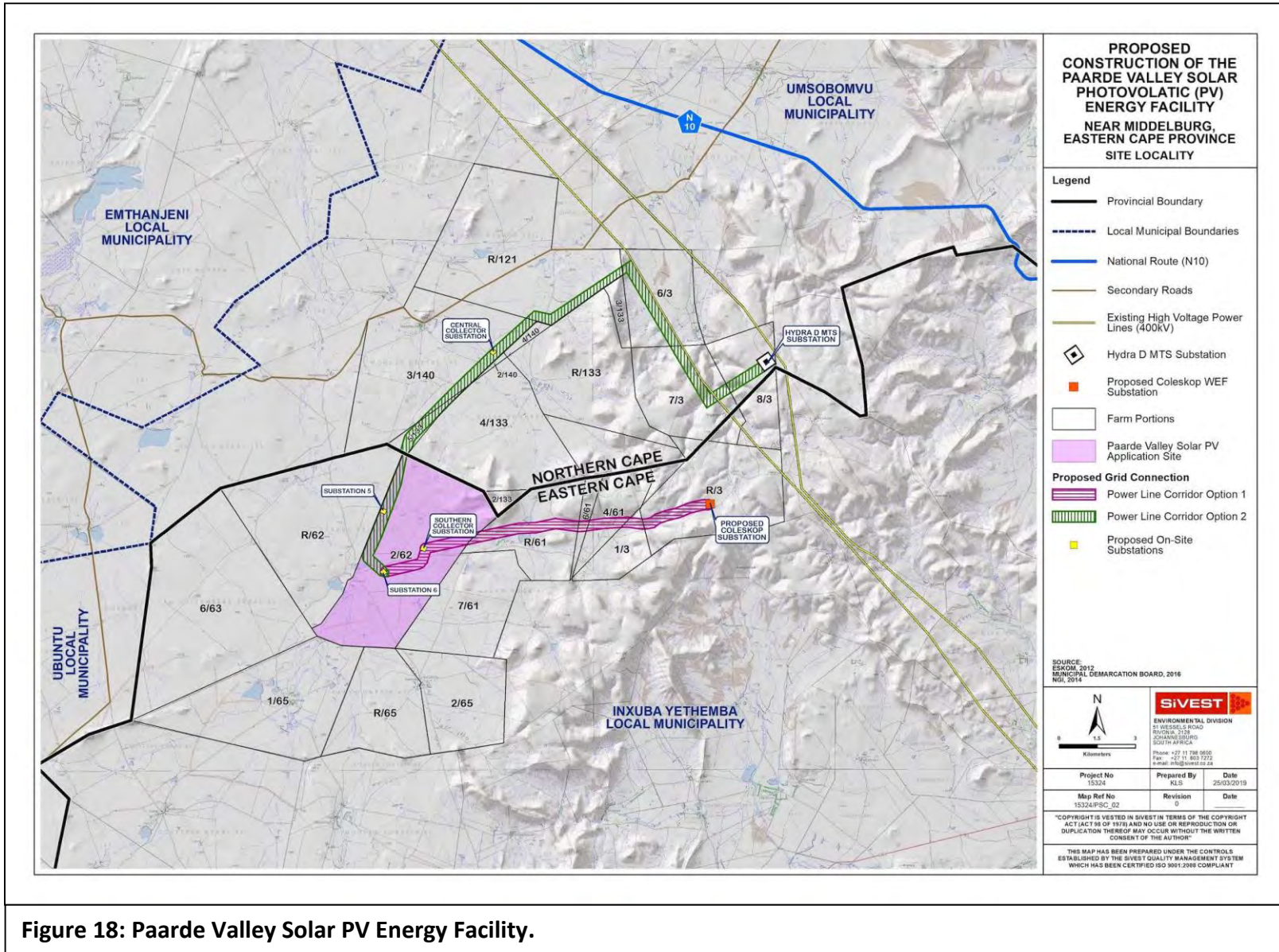
### ***Grid Connection Option 1***

This route is the shorter of the two options. It traverses habitat in three sensitivity classes, from MEDIUM-LOW to MEDIUM-HIGH (see Figure 19). By virtue of traversing a shorter distance, this option is preferred.

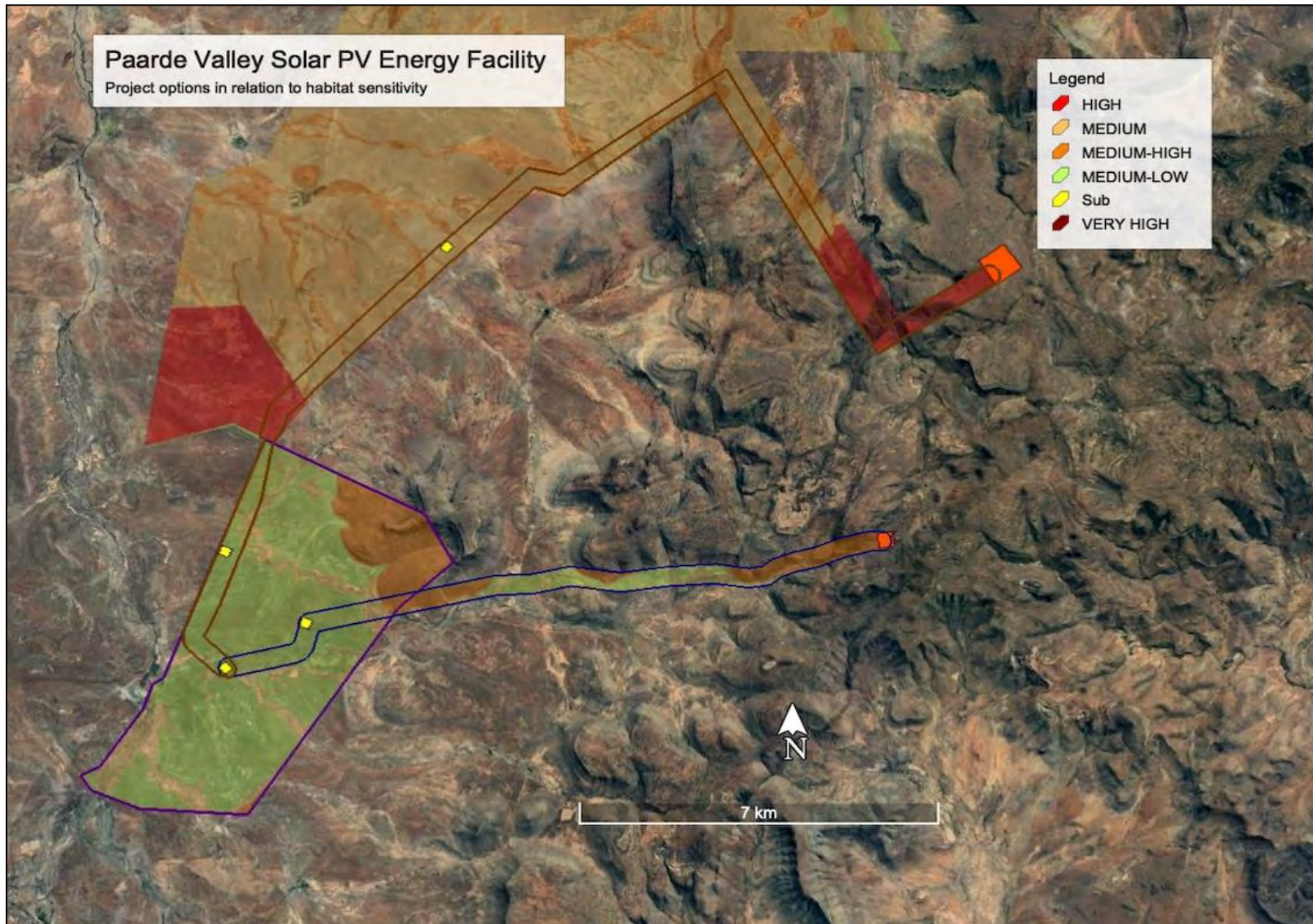
### ***Grid Connection Option 2***

This route is the longer of the two options (almost double the length). It traverses habitat in all sensitivity classes, including areas of HIGH and VERY HIGH sensitivity near to Hydra D MTS (see Figure 19). The option includes the proposed Central Collector substation located on the Wonderheuvel PV project application site. By virtue of traversing a longer distance and being more complex (two separate routes), this option is least preferred.





**Figure 18: Paarde Valley Solar PV Energy Facility.**



**Figure 19: Paarde Valley Solar PV Energy Facility in relation to sensitive habitats.**

**Key**

<b>PREFERRED</b>	The alternative will result in a low impact / reduce the impact
<b>FAVOURABLE</b>	The impact will be relatively insignificant
<b>LEAST PREFERRED</b>	The alternative will result in a high impact / increase the impact
<b>NO PREFERENCE</b>	The alternative will result in equal impacts

*Table 12: Comparative assessment of layout alternatives.*

<b>GRID INFRASTRUCTURE ALTERNATIVES (POWER LINE CORRIDORS AND ASSOCIATED SUBSTATIONS)</b>	<b>Preference</b>	<b>Reasons (incl. potential issues)</b>
<b>MOOI PLAATS SOLAR PV FACILITY:</b>		
Grid Connection Option 1	<b>PREFERRED</b>	Shorter distance, does not require proposed central collector substation, crosses habitat in HIGH and VERY HIGH sensitivity classes.
Grid Connection Option 2	<b>LEAST PREFERRED</b>	Double the distance and requires an additional substation (central collector substation) , crosses habitat in HIGH and VERY HIGH sensitivity classes.
<b>WONDERHEUVEL SOLAR PV FACILITY:</b>		
Grid Connection Option 1	<b>LEAST PREFERRED</b>	Almost double the distance and more complex, crosses habitat in HIGH and VERY HIGH sensitivity classes.
Grid Connection Option 2	<b>PREFERRED</b>	Shorter distance, crosses habitat in HIGH and VERY HIGH sensitivity classes.
<b>PAARDE VALLEY SOLAR PV FACILITY:</b>		
Grid Connection Option 1	<b>PREFERRED</b>	Shorter distance, does not require proposed central collector substation.
Grid Connection Option 2	<b>LEAST PREFERRED</b>	Double the distance, crosses habitat in HIGH and VERY HIGH sensitivity classes, and requires an additional substation (central collector substation).

# DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The project study area for the combined three projects consists of natural habitat within a largely rural area. This is within an area where portions of the natural habitat have been assessed as having potential conservation value, although this project site mostly falls outside of the NPAES entirely and are therefore not earmarked for future conservation. Currently, the rates of transformation within the vegetation in this area is low. The regional vegetation types that occur on site, Eastern Upper Karoo and Besemkaree Koppies Shrubland, as well as three nearby units, Southern Karoo Riviere, Tarkastad Montane Shrubland and Karoo Escarpment Grassland, are listed as Least Threatened in the National List of Ecosystems that are Threatened and need of protection (GN1002 of 2011), published under the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10, 2004). However, significant parts of the study area in the Northern Cape side are within Provincial Critical Biodiversity Areas. Any remaining natural habitat on site therefore has to be considered to possibly have biodiversity value. The proposed project will therefore have impacts on areas of natural habitat that have potential biodiversity value.

There are no plant species occurring on site or likely to occur there that are protected according to the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act. There are a number of species protected according to the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act that were recorded on site (all three projects) and it is highly probable that additional species protected according to this Act occur on site. None of these species are of conservation concern, but the fact that they are protected means that a permit will be required for their removal. This is a standard flora permit obtained from the provincial department, but which requires detailed field information to be collected.

There are a small number of fauna of possible conservation concern that were assessed as having a possibility of occurring on site (all three project sites). This includes the Vulnerable Black-footed Cat and the Near Threatened Cape Clawless Otter, for which there is evidence that they almost certainly currently occur on site. There is also a likelihood of the Vulnerable White-tailed Rat and the Near Threatened South African Hedgehog, Grey Rhebok and Spectacled Dormouse occurring on site, and a number of protected species, including the Cape Fox, Brown Hyena, and Giant Bullfrog. Some of them (Cape Fox, Brown Hyena, Grey Rhebok) are **highly mobile species that are unlikely to be affected by any activities on site, but others are more restricted or territorial and could be more significantly affected**. Of those that are more likely to be affected, are the Black-footed Cat, the Cape Clawless Otter, the White-tailed Rat, the Spectacled Dormouse, the South African Hedgehog and the Giant Bullfrog.

The vegetation on site is similar for all three project sites and consists largely of karroid dwarf shrubland on the plains and grassy shrubland in the mountains, more-or-less typical of the regional vegetation type, Eastern Upper Karoo and Besemkaree Koppies Shrubland. However, the pattern observed on site is that local diversity increases with increased elevation and with higher local surface rockiness. This means that the greatest diversity is in the mountains, outside the main proposed footprint of the proposed projects. For all infrastructure components, loss of habitat will occur. This will be relatively insignificant in comparison to the total area of the regional vegetation types concerned but may be significant in terms of local patterns and diversity that could be affected. Other than this general biodiversity pattern, the main sensitivity on site is the presence of various dry to periodic watercourses. This habitat is disproportionately important due to the functional value of these watercourses and the important habitat and forage that they provide for animal populations. The habitat is also interconnected and any damage to one point will affect all downstream areas.

The projects involve construction of arrays of solar panels with access roads, sub-stations, and power lines to take the power to the grid. The plains are relatively flat and accessible from existing roads, but the power lines will need to travel into the mountains to tie into the sites for grid substations that are going to be built. The topography of the mountains is relatively steep and this poses a challenge for construction, but also for causing damage to natural ecosystems – the most sensitive ecological receptors on site are within the mountains. There are some existing power lines crossing the study area and the opportunity exists to align with these, using existing service roads, which would assist in managing potential impacts.

## Conclusions

At the site-specific scale, some sensitivities have been identified, primarily related to natural habitat, but also to some individual species. However, it is possible that these can be minimised or avoided with the application of appropriate mitigation or management measures. There will be residual impacts, primarily on natural habitat. **The amount of habitat that will be lost to the project is insignificant compared to the area in hectares of the regional vegetation type that occurs on site but may be significant in terms of local patterns and diversity that could be affected.** It is therefore important that the infrastructure be located to minimize impacts on sensitive receptors. From this perspective it is unlikely that the proposed project will have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment. The preliminary view is that it should be authorised.

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# APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Plant species of conservation importance (Threatened, Near Threatened and Declining) that have historically been recorded in the study area.

Sources: see text.

Taxon	Latest (IUCN version 3.1) Conservation Status**	Habitat	Flowering Time	Probability of occurrence*
Trichodiadema rogersiae AIZOACEAE	DDT	Terrestrial. Appears to be largely confined to mountainous areas associated with Cape mountains and the Great Escarpment. Current site is along the northern extreme of the known range.	Summer, probably mostly Jan-Mar following good rain.	<b>MODERATE</b>
Gnaphalium simii ASTERACEAE	DDT	Northern Cape, near Hanover. A very poorly known, and possibly localized species last collected in 1952 in the neighbouring grid. The area where it occurs remains botanically poorly explored, and it may be overlooked. It is possibly threatened by overgrazing. Found in calcareous vleis.	Probably summer	<b>MODERATE</b>

\* Conservation Status Category assessment according to IUCN Ver. 3.1 (IUCN, 2001), as evaluated by the Threatened Species Programme of the South African National Biodiversity Institute in Pretoria. \*IUCN (3.1) Categories: VU = Vulnerable, EN = Endangered, CR = Critically Endangered, NT = Near Threatened.



## Appendix 2: List of protected tree species (National Forests Act).

Acacia (Vachellia) erioloba	Acacia haematoxylon
Adansonia digitata	Azelia quanzensis
Balanites subsp. maughamii	Barringtonia racemosa
<b>Boscia albitrunca</b>	Brachystegia spiciformis
Breonadia salicina	Bruguiera gymnorhiza
Cassipourea swaziensis	Catha edulis
Ceriops tagal	Cleistanthus schlechteri var. schlechteri
Colubrina nicholsonii	Combretum imberbe
Curtisia dentata	Elaeodendron (Cassine) transvaalensis
Erythrophysa transvaalensis	Euclea pseudobenus
Ficus trichopoda	Leucadendron argenteum
Lumnitzera racemosa var. racemosa	Lydenburgia abottii
Lydenburgia cassinoides	Mimusops caffra
Newtonia hildebrandtii var. hildebrandtii	Ocotea bullata
Ozoroa namaensis	Philenoptera violacea (Lonchocarpus capassa)
<b>Pittosporum viridiflorum</b>	Podocarpus elongatus
Podocarpus falcatus	Podocarpus henkelii
Podocarpus latifolius	Protea comptonii
Protea curvata	Prunus africana
Pterocarpus angolensis	Rhizophora mucronata
Sclerocarya birrea subsp. caffra	Securidaca longependunculata
Sideroxylon inerme subsp. inerme	Tephrosia pondoensis
Warburgia salutaris	Widdringtonia cedarbergensis
Widdringtonia schwarzii	

*Boscia albitrunca* and *Pittosporum viridiflorum* have a geographical distribution that is close to the study area.

## Appendix 3: Plant species previously recorded in the general area.

This list was compiled by extracting a list of species that have been recorded within a rectangular area that includes the study area as well as similar habitats in surrounding areas, as obtained from <http://newposa.sanbi.org/> accessed on 20 April 2019. It is probable that it includes some species that occur in habitats that do not occur on site. The list was supplemented from field observations, as well as observations from [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org), which are photographic observations verified by an online community.

The list is arranged by family in alphabetical order. Species listed in green are those that were found on site and those in blue are from iNaturalist.

### Acanthaceae

*Aptosimum procumbens*  
*Monechma* sp.

### Aizoaceae

*Chascanum pumilum*  
*Delosperma lootsborgense*  
*Delosperma multiflorum*  
*Galenia subcarnosa*  
*Mesembryanthemum articulatum*  
*Mesembryanthemum coriarium*  
*Plinthus karoocicus*  
*Ruschia intricata*  
*Ruschia* sp.  
*Stomatium middelburgense*  
*Stomatium* sp.  
*Trichodiadema pomeridianum*  
*Trichodiadema setulifera*

### Amaranthaceae

*Alternanthera pungens*; Naturalised  
*Atriplex lindleyi* subsp. inflata; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b  
*Dysphania multifida*; Naturalised; Invasive  
*Salsola glabrescens*

### Amaryllidaceae

*Brunsvigia radulosa*  
*Haemanthus humilis*

### Anacardiaceae

*Searsia dregeana*  
*Searsia erosa*  
*Searsia lucida*  
*Searsia pyroides*

### Apiaceae

*Deverra burchellii*

### Apocynaceae

*Gomphocarpus cancellatus*  
*Pachypodium succulentum*  
*Xysmalobium gomphocarpoides* var. *gomphocarpoides*

**Araliaceae**

*Cussonia spicata*

**Areaceae**

*Phoenix canariensis*; Naturalised

**Asparagaceae**

*Albuca cooperi*

*Agave americana*; Naturalised

*Asparagus larycinus*

*Asparagus suaveolens*

*Asparagus sp.*

*Eriospermum zeyheri*

*Ledebouria sp.*

**Asphodelaceae**

*Aloe broomii*

*Astroloba foliolosa*

*Haworthiopsis tessellata*

**Aspleniaceae**

*Asplenium cordatum*

**Asteraceae**

*Amphiglossa triflora*

*Arctotis arctotoides*

*Artemisia afra*

*Athanasia minuta* subsp. *minuta*

*Berkheya sp.*

*Bidens bipinnata*

*Chrysocoma ciliata*

*Cichorium intybus*

*Conyza deserticola*

*Conyza podocephala*

*Crassothonna sedifolia*

*Dicerotheramnus rhinocerotis*

*Dimorphotheca caulescens*

*Dimorphotheca cuneata*

*Eriocephalus eximius*

*Eriocephalus spinescens*

*Eriocephalus tenuifolius*

*Felicia filifolia* subsp. *bodkinii*

*Felicia hirsuta*

*Felicia muricata*

*Felicia ovata*

*Garuleum pinnatifidum*

*Gazania jurineifolia*

*Gazania krebsiana*

*Helichrysum trilineatum*

*Helichrysum zeyherii*

*Hertia pallens*

*Launaea rarifolia*

*Metalasia densa*

*Nidorella resedifolia*

*Nolletia ciliaris*

*Osteospermum scariosum* var. *scariosum*

*Osteospermum spinescens*

*Osteospermum tomentosum*  
*Othonna pavonia*  
*Pegolettia retrofracta*  
*Pentzia quinquefida*  
*Pentzia tortuosa*  
*Phymaspermum*  
*Phymaspermum scoparium*  
*Pteronia glomerata*  
*Pteronia mucronata*  
*Pteronia sordida*  
*Senecio inornatus*  
*Senecio junceus*  
*Tarchonanthus minor*  
*Ursinia nana*  
*Xanthium spinosum*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b  
*Xanthium strumarium*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b

#### **Cactaceae**

*Cereus hildmannianus*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b  
*Cylindropuntia imbricata*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b  
*Opuntia ficus-indica*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b  
*Opuntia humifusa*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b  
*Opuntia robusta*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1a  
*Opuntia stricta*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b  
*Trichocereus spachianus* (previously *Echinopsis spachiana*); Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b

#### **Campanulaceae**

*Wahlenbergia albens*  
*Wahlenbergia nodosa*

#### **Celastraceae**

*Euonymus japonicus*; Naturalised

#### **Colchicaceae**

*Colchicum melanthoides*

#### **Convolvulaceae**

*Convolvulus* sp.

#### **Crassulaceae**

*Cotyledon orbiculata* var *dactyloopsis*  
*Crassula capitella*  
*Crassula sarcocaulis* subsp. *sarcocaulis*  
*Crassula umbellata*  
*Crassula vaillantii*; Naturalised

#### **Cupressaceae**

*Cupressus sempervirens*; Naturalised

#### **Cyperaceae**

*Afroscirpoides dioeca*  
*Cyperus austro-africanus*  
*Cyperus capensis*  
*Cyperus usitatus*  
*Ficinia cinnamomea*  
*Pseudoschoenus inanis*

**Dipsacaceae**

*Scabiosa columbaria*

**Ebenaceae**

*Diospyros austro-africana*

*Diospyros lycioides*

*Euclea coriacea*

**Ericaceae**

*Erica* sp.

**Euphorbiaceae**

*Euphorbia caterviflora*

*Euphorbia flaganii*

*Euphorbia mauritanica*

**Fabaceae**

*Acacia pendula*; Naturalised

*Caesalpinia gilliesii*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b

*Indigostrum niveum*

*Indigofera alternans*

*Lessertia frutescens*

*Lotononis pungens*

*Medicago polymorpha*; naturalized

*Medicago sativa*; naturalized

*Melolobium microphyllum*

*Vachellia karroo*

**Fagaceae**

*Quercus robur*; Naturalised

**Frankeniaceae**

*Frankenia pulverulenta*

**Geraniaceae**

*Pelargonium abrotanifolium*

*Pelargonium aridum*

*Pelargonium exhibens*

*Pelargonium glutinosum*

**Gigaspermaceae**

*Gigaspermum repens*

**Grimmiaceae**

*Grimmia pulvinata*

**Hyacinthaceae**

*Massonia* sp.

**Iridaceae**

*Moraea falcifolia*

*Moraea polystachya*

**Juncaceae**

*Juncus rigidus*

**Lamiaceae**

*Marrubium vulgare*  
*Mentha longifolia*  
*Salvia runcinate*  
*Stachys rugosa*

#### **Malvaceae**

*Hermannia coccocarpa*  
*Hermannia cuneifolia* var. *glabrescens*  
*Hermannia filifolia*  
*Hermannia pulchella*  
*Malva parviflora*

#### **Melanthaceae**

*Melianthus comosus*

#### **Menispermaceae**

*Cissampelos capensis*

#### **Moraceae**

*Morus nigra*; Naturalised

#### **Myrsinaceae**

*Myrsine africana*

#### **Myrtaceae**

*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b in riparian areas  
*Eucalyptus grandis*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b in riparian areas

#### **Oleaceae**

*Ligustrum lucidum*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b

#### **Orobanchaceae**

*Alectra orobanchoides*

#### **Orthotrichaceae**

*Orthotrichum diaphanum*

#### **Papaveraceae**

*Argemone ochroleuca*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b

#### **Pinaceae**

*Pinus* sp. ; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b or 2

#### **Plantaginaceae**

*Plantago lanceolata*; Naturalised;  
*Veronica persica*; Naturalised;

#### **Poaceae**

*Aristida adscensionis*  
*Aristida congesta* subsp. *congesta*  
*Aristida diffusa*  
*Bromus leptoclados*  
*Cymbopogon pospischilii*  
*Digitaria erianthe*  
*Dinebra retroflexa* var. *condensata*  
*Ehrharta calycina*  
*Enneapogon scoparius*

*Eragrostis bergiana*  
*Eragrostis chloromelas*  
*Eragrostis curvula*  
*Eragrostis lehmanniana*  
*Eragrostis mexicana* subsp. *virescens*; Naturalised  
*Eustachys paspaloides*  
*Heteropogon contortus*  
*Hordeum stenostachys*; Naturalised  
*Koeleria capensis*  
*Miscanthus ecklonii*  
*Panicum coloratum*  
*Pennisetum clandestinum*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b in wetlands  
*Pennisetum sphacelatum*  
*Pennisetum villosum*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b  
*Pentameris microphylla*  
*Schismus barbatus*  
*Setaria verticillate*  
*Sporobolus fimbriatus*  
*Tenaxia stricta*  
*Tetrachne dregei*  
*Themeda triandra*  
*Tragus koelerioides*

#### **Polygalaceae**

*Polygala ephedroides*

#### **Polygonaceae**

*Rumex lanceolatus*

#### **Portulacaceae**

*Portulaca quadrifida*

#### **Pottiaceae**

*Didymodon australasii*  
*Didymodon umbrosus*  
*Didymodon xanthocarpus*  
*Pseudocrossidium crinitum*  
*Tortula atrovirens*  
*Trichostomum brachydontium*

#### **Pteridaceae**

*Cheilanthes eckloniana*  
*Cheilanthes hirta*

#### **Rosaceae**

*Rosa rubiginosa*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b

#### **Rubiaceae**

*Anthospermum rigidum* subsp. *rigidum*  
*Nenax microphylla*

#### **Salicaceae**

*Populus x canescens*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 2  
*Populus deltoides*; Naturalised  
*Populus nigra*; Naturalised  
*Salix babylonica*; Naturalised

**Santalaceae**

*Thesium confine*

*Thesium hystrix*

*Thesium namaquense*

**Scrophulariaceae**

*Cromidon corrigioloides*

*Gomphostigma virgatum*

*Jamesbrittenia filicaulis*

*Manulea plurirosulata*

*Selago* sp.

**Solanaceae**

*Datura stramonium*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b

*Lycium cinereum*

*Lycium horridum*

*Solanum elaeagnifolium*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b

**Tamaricaceae**

*Tamarix ramosissima*; Naturalised; Invasive, NEMBA Category 1b

**Urticaceae**

*Urtica urens*

**Zygophyllaceae**

*Roepera lichtensteiniana*



## Appendix 4: Animal species with a geographical distribution that includes the study area.

### Notes:

1. Species of conservation concern are in red lettering.
2. Species protected according to the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act of 2004 (Act 10 of 2000) (see Appendix 6) marked with "N"

### Mammals:

#### ARTIODACTYLA:

##### Bovidae:

Red hartebeest  
Springbok  
Black wildebeest  
Blesbok  
Klipspringer  
Gemsbok  
Grey rhebok **NT**  
Steenbok  
Common duiker  
Eland

#### PERRISODACTYLA:

##### Rhinocerotidae:

<sup>N</sup>Black rhinoceros (arid ecotype) **EN**

#### HYRACOIDEA:

##### Procavidae:

Rock hyrax

#### CARNIVORA:

##### Felidae:

Caracal  
<sup>N</sup>Black-footed cat **VU**  
African wild cat  
<sup>N</sup>Leopard **VU**

##### Mustelidae:

<sup>N</sup>Cape clawless otter **NT**  
Striped polecat  
<sup>N</sup>Honey badger  
African striped weasel **NT**

##### Herpestidae:

(Water mongoose)  
Yellow mongoose  
Small grey mongoose  
(White-tailed mongoose)

##### Suricate

##### Canidae:

Black-backed jackal  
Bat-eared fox  
<sup>N</sup>Cape fox

##### Viveridae:

Small-spotted genet

##### Hyaenidae:

<sup>N</sup>(Brown hyaena) **NT**

Aardwolf

#### CHIROPTERA:

##### Vespertilionidae:

Lesueur's hairy bat  
Lesser long-fingered bat  
Natal long-fingered bat  
Cape serotine bat  
Yellow house bat

##### Nycteridae:

Egyptian slit-faced bat

##### Rhinolophidae:

Geoffroy's horseshoe bat  
Darling's horseshoe bat

##### Molossidae:

Egyptian free-tailed bat

#### INSECTIVORA:

##### Eulipotyphla:

<sup>N</sup>South African hedgehog **NT**  
Reddish-grey musk shrew  
Tiny musk shrew  
Lesser grey-brown musk shrew  
Forest shrew  
Chrysochloridae:  
(Sclater's golden mole)

#### LAGOMORPHA:

##### Leporidae:

Cape/desert hare  
Scrub/savannah hare  
Hewitt's red rock rabbit

#### PRIMATA:

##### Cercopithecidae:

Chacma baboon

#### RODENTIA:

##### Muridae:

Grant's rock mouse  
Namaqua rock mouse  
Grey climbing mouse  
Short-tailed gerbil  
Hairy-footed gerbil  
Large-eared mouse  
Multimammate mouse  
Pygmy mouse

White-tailed rat **VU**  
Vlei rat (grassland type) **NT**  
Saunders's vlei rat  
Slogett's rat  
Karoo bush rat  
(Brant's whistling rat)  
Striped mouse  
Pouched mouse  
Highveld gerbil  
Bathyergidae:  
Common mole rat  
Myoxidae:  
Spectacled dormouse **NT**  
Hystricidae:  
Cape porcupine  
Pedelidae:  
Springhare  
Thryonomyidae:  
Greater cane rat  
Scluridae:  
Cape ground squirrel

MACROSCELIDEA:  
Macroscelididae:  
Cape rock sengi  
Karoo rock sengi  
Eastern rock sengi  
Western rock sengi  
Karoo round-eared sengi

TUBULIDENTATA:  
Orycteropodidae:  
Aardvark

### **Reptiles:**

Pelomedusidae:  
Marsh terrapin  
Testudinidae:  
Greater dwarf tortoise  
Tent tortoise  
Leopard tortoise  
Gekkonidae:  
Bibron's gecko  
Cape gecko  
Spotted gecko  
Common banded gecko  
Golden spotted gecko  
(Purcell's gecko)  
Amphisbaenidae:  
Lacertidae:  
(Spotted desert lizard)  
(Spotted sandveld lizard)  
(Delalande's sandveld lizard)  
(Karoo sandveld lizard)  
Burchell's sand lizard  
Karoo sand lizard

Common sand lizard  
Namaqua sand lizard  
Cordylidae:  
Cape girdled lizard  
Southern karusa lizard  
Karoo crag lizard  
Gerrhosauridae:  
(Karoo plated lizard)  
Cape long-tailed seps  
Scincidae:  
Short-headed legless skink  
Cape skink  
Red-sided skink  
Western three-striped skink  
Western rock skink  
Variegated skink  
Varanidae:  
Southern rock monitor  
Nile monitor  
Chamaeleonidae:  
Eastern Cape dwarf chameleon  
Agamidae:  
Western ground agama  
Southern rock agama  
Typhlopidae:  
Delelande's beaked blind snake  
Leptotyphlopidae  
Pythonidae  
Viperidae:  
Puff adder  
Horned adder  
Lamprophiidae:  
Common house snake  
Aurora snake  
Spotted rock snake  
Dwarf beaked snake  
Cross-marked grass snake  
Karoo sand snake  
Fork-marked sand snake  
Spotted grass snake  
(South African slug eater)  
Sundevall's shovel-snout  
Mole snake  
Elapidae:  
Coral shield cobra  
Rinkhals  
Cape cobra  
Colubridae:  
Red-lipped snake  
Rhombic egg eater  
(Boomslang)  
(Beetz's tiger snake)  
Natricidae:

### **Amphibians**

Southern pygmy toad

Karoo toad  
Bubbling kassina  
Common platanna  
Boettger's caco  
Common river frog  
Cape river frog

<sup>N</sup>Giant bullfrog  
Clicking stream frog  
Tandy's sand frog

## Appendix 5: Flora protected under the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act No. 9 of 2009.

### SCHEDULE 1: SPECIALLY PROTECTED SPECIES

As per the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act, No. 9 of 2009, Schedule 1

Family: AMARYLLIDACEAE		
<i>Clivia mirabilis</i>	Oorlofskloof bush lily / <i>Clivia</i>	Nieuwoudtville
<i>Haemanthus graniticus</i>	April fool	Namaqualand
<i>Hessea pusilla</i>		Nieuwoudtville
<i>Strumaria bidentata</i>		Alexander Bay
<i>Strumaria perryae</i>		Nieuwoudtville
Family: ANACARDIACEAE		
<i>Ozoroa</i> spp.	All species	
Family: APIACEAE		
<i>Centella tridentata</i>		Namaqualand and Fynbos biome
<i>Chamarea snijmaniae</i>		Nieuwoudtville
Family: APOCYNACEAE		
<i>Hoodia gordonii</i>		
<i>Pachypodium namaquanum</i>	Elephant's trunk	
Family: ASPHODOLACEAE		
<i>Aloe buhrii</i>		
<i>Aloe dichotoma</i>		
<i>Aloe dichotoma</i> var. <i>rumosissima</i>	Maiden quiver tree	
<i>Aloe dabenorisana</i>		
<i>Aloe erinacea</i>		
<i>Aloe meyeri</i>		
<i>Aloe pearsonii</i>		
<i>Aloe pillansii</i>		
<i>Trachyandra prolifera</i>		
Family: ASTERACEAE		
<i>Athanasia adenantha</i>		
<i>Athanasia spathulata</i>		
<i>Cotula filifolia</i>		
<i>Euryops mirus</i>		
<i>Euryops rosulatus</i>		
<i>Euryops virgatus</i>		
<i>Felicia diffusa</i> subsp. <i>khamiesbergensis</i>		
<i>Othonna armiana</i>		
Family: CRASSULACEAE		
<i>Tylecodon torulosus</i>		
Family: DIOSCORACEAE		
<i>Dioscorea</i> spp.	Elephant's foot, all species	
Family: ERIOSPERMACEAE		
<i>Eriospermum erinum</i>		
<i>Eriospermum glaciale</i>		
Family: FABACEAE		
<i>Amphithalea obtusiloba</i>		
<i>Lotononis acutiflora</i>		
<i>Lotononis polycephala</i>		
<i>Lessertia</i> spp.		
<i>Sceletium toruosum</i>		
<i>Sutherlandia</i> spp.	Cancer Bush, all species	

Wiborgia fusca subsp. macrocarpa		
Family: GERANIACEAE		
Pelargonium spp.	Pelargonium, all species	
Family: HYACINTHACEAE		
Drimia nana		
Ornithogalum bicornutum		
Ornithogalum inclusum		
Family: IRIDACEAE		
Babiana framesii		
Ferraria kamiesbergensis		
Freesia marginata		
Geissorhiza subrigida		
Hesperantha minima		
Hesperantha oligantha		
Hesperantha rivulicola		
Lapeirousia verecunda		
Moraea kamiesensis		
Moraea namaquana		
Romulea albiflora		
Romulea discifera		
Romulea maculata		
Romulea rupestris		
Family: MOLLUGINACEAE		
Hypertelis trachysperma		
Psammotropha spicata		
Family: ORCHIDACEAE		
Corycium ingeanum		
Disa macrostachya	Disa	
Family: OXALIDACEAE		
Oxalis pseudo-hirta	Sorrel	
Family: PEDALIACEAE		
Harpagophytum spp.	Devils' claw	
Family: POACEAE		
Prionanthium dentatum		
Secale strictum subsp. africanum	Wild rye	
Family: PROTEACEAE		
Leucadendron meyerianum	Tolbos	
Mimetes spp.	All species	
Orothamnus zeyheri		
Family: ROSACEAE		
Cliffortia arborea	Sterboom	
Family: SCROPHULARIACEAE		
Charadrophila capensis	Cape Gloxinia	
Family: STANGERIACEAE		
Stangeria spp.	Cycads, all species	
Family: ZAMIACEAE		
Encephalartos spp.	Cycads, all species	

## SCHEDULE 2: PROTECTED SPECIES

As per the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Act, No. 9 of 2009, Schedule 2

Family: ACANTHACEAE	
Barleria paillosa	
Monechme saxatile	

Peristrophe spp.	All species
Family: ADIANTHACEAE	
Adiantum spp.	Maidenhair Fern, all species
Family: AGAPANTHACEAE	
Agapanthus spp.	All species
Family: AIZOACEAE (MESEMBRYANTHEMACEAE)	All species
Family: AMARYLLIDACEAE	All species except those listed in Schedule 1
Family: ANTHERICACEAE	All species
Family: APIACEAE	All species except those listed in Schedule 1
Family: APOCYNACEAE	All species except those listed in Schedule 1
Family: AQUIFOLIACEAE	All species
Ilex mitis	
Family: ARACEAE	
Zantedeschia spp.	Arum lilies, all species
Family: ARALIACEAE	
Cussonia spp.	Cabbage trees, all species
Family: ASPHODOLACEAE	All species except those listed in Schedule 1 and the species <i>Aloe ferox</i>
Family: ASTERACEAE	
Helichrysum jubilatam	
Felicia deserti	
Gnaphalium simii	
Lopholaena longipes	
Senecio albo-punctatus	
Senecio trachylaenus	
Trichogyne lerouxiae	
Tripteris pinnatilobata	
Troglophyton acocksianum	
Vellereophyton lasianthum	
Family: BURMANNIACEAE	
Burmannia madagascariensis	Wild ginger
Family: BURSERACEAE	
Commiphora spp.	All species
Family: CAPPARACEAE	
Boscia spp.	Shepherd's trees, all species
Family: CARYOPHYLLACEAE	
Dianthus spp.	All species
Family: CELASTRACEAE	
Gymnosporia spp.	All species
Family: COLCHICACEAE	
Androcymbium spp.	All species
Gloriosa spp.	All species
Family: COMBRETACEAE	
Combretum spp.	All species
Family: CRASSULACEAE	All species except those listed in Schedule 1
Family: CUPPRESSACEAE	
Widdringtonia spp.	Wild cypress, all species
Family: CYATHEACEAE	
Cyathea spp.	Tree ferns, all species
Cyathea capensis	Tree Fern
Family: CYPERACEAE	
Carex acocksii	
Family: DROSERACEAE	
Drosera spp.	Sundews, all species

Family: DRYOPTERIDACEAE	
Rumohra spp.	Seven Weeks Fern, all species
Family: ERICACEAE	Erica, all species
Family: EUPHORBIACEAE	
Alchornea laxiflora	Venda Bead-string
Euphorbia spp.	All species
Family: FABACEAE	
Aspalathus spp.	Tea Bush, all species
Erythrina zeyheri	Ploughbreaker
Argyrolobium petiolare	
Caesalpinia bracteata	
Calliandra redacta	
Crotalaria pearsonii	
Indigofera limosa	
Lebeckia bowieana	
Polhillia involucrate	
Rhynchosia emarginata	
Wiborgia humilis	
Family: HYACINTHACEAE	
Daubenia spp	
Lachenalia spp.	Daubenia, all species
Veltheimia spp.	Viooltjie, all species
Eucomis spp.	Pineapple flower, all species
Neopatersonia namaquensis	
Ornithogalum spp.	All species
Family: IRIDACEAE	All species except those listed in Schedule 1
Family: LAURACEAE	
Ocotea spp.	Stinkwood, all species
Family: MESEMBRYANTHEMACEAE	All species
Family: MELIACEAE	
Nymania capensis	Chinese Lantern
Family: OLEACEAE	
Olea europea subsp. africana	Wild olive
Family: ORCHIDACEAE	Orchids, all species except those listed in Schedule 1
Family: OROBANCHACEAE	
Harveya spp.	Harveya, all species
Family: OXALIDACEAE	
Oxalis spp.	Sorrel, all species except those listed in Schedule 1
Family: PLUMBAGINACEAE	
Afrolimon namaquanum	
Family: POACEAE	
Brachiaria dura var. dura	
Dregeochloa calviniensis	
Pentaschistis lima	
Family: PODOCARPACEAE	
Podocarpus spp.	Yellowwoods, all species
Family: PORTULACACEAE	
Anacampseros spp.	All species
Avonia spp.	All species
Portulaca foliosa	
Family: PROTEACEAE	All species except those listed in Schedule 1
Family: RESTIONACEAE	All species
Family: RHAMNACEAE	

Phylica spp.	All species
Family: RUTACEAE	
Agathosma spp.	Buchu, all species
Family: SCROPHULARIACEAE	
Diascia spp.	All species
Halleria spp.	All species
Jamesbrittenia spp.	All species
Manulea spp.	All species
Nemesia spp.	All species
Phyllopodium spp.	All species
Polycarena filiformis	
Chaenostoma longipedicellatum	
Family: STRELITZIACEAE	
Strelitzia spp.	All species
Family: TECOPHILACEAE	
Cyanella spp.	All species
Family: THYMELAEACEAE	
Gnidia leipoldtii	
Family: ZINGIBERACEAE	
Siphonochilus aethiopicus	Wild ginger



# Appendix 6: Flora and vertebrate animal species protected under the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act 10 of 2004)

(as updated in R. 1187, 14 December 2007)

## CRITICALLY ENDANGERED SPECIES

### Flora

Adenium swazicum  
Aloidendron pillansii  
Diaphanathe millarii  
Dioscorea ebutsniorum (no such species!!)  
Encephalartos aemulans  
Encephalartos brevifoliolatus  
Encephalartos cerinus  
Encephalartos dolomiticus  
Encephalartos heenanii  
Encephalartos hirsutus  
Encephalartos inopinus  
Encephalartos latifrons  
Encephalartos middelburgensis  
Encephalartos nubimontanus  
Encephalartos woodii

### Reptilia

Loggerhead sea turtle  
Leatherback sea turtle  
Hawksbill sea turtle

### Aves

Wattled crane  
Blue swallow  
Egyptian vulture  
Cape parrot

### Mammalia

Riverine rabbit  
Rough-haired golden mole

## ENDANGERED SPECIES

### Flora

Angraecum stella-africae  
Encephalartos arenarius  
Encephalartos cupidus  
Encephalartos horridus  
Encephalartos laevifolius  
Encephalartos lebomboensis  
Encephalartos msinganus  
Jubaeopsis caffra  
Siphonochilus aethiopicus  
Warburgia salutaris  
Newtonia hildebrandtii

### Reptilia

Green turtle  
Giant girdled lizard  
Olive ridley turtle  
Geometric tortoise

### Aves

Blue crane  
Grey crowned crane  
Saddle-billed stork  
Bearded vulture  
White-backed vulture  
Cape vulture  
Hooded vulture  
Pink-backed pelican  
Pel's fishing owl  
Lappet-faced vulture

### Mammalia

Robust golden mole  
Tsessebe  
Black rhinoceros  
Mountain zebra  
African wild dog  
Gunning's golden mole  
Oribi  
Red squirrel  
Four-toed elephant-shrew

## VULNERABLE SPECIES

### Flora

Aloe albida  
Encephalartos cycadifolius  
Encephalartos Eugene-maraisii  
Encephalartos ngovanus  
Merwillia plumbea  
Zantedeschia jucunda

### Aves

White-headed vulture  
Tawny eagle  
Kori bustard  
Black stork  
Southern banded snake eagle  
Blue korhaan  
Taita falcon  
Lesser kestrel  
Peregrine falcon

Bald ibis  
Ludwig's bustard  
Martial eagle  
Bataleur  
Grass owl

#### **Mammalia**

Cheetah  
Samango monkey  
Giant golden mole  
Giant rat  
Bontebok  
Tree hyrax  
Roan antelope  
Pangolin  
Juliana's golden mole  
Suni  
Large-eared free-tailed bat  
Lion  
Leopard  
Blue duiker

#### **PROTECTED SPECIES**

##### **Flora**

Adenia wilmsii  
Aloe simii  
Clivia mirabilis  
Disa macrostachya  
Disa nubigena  
Disa physodes  
Disa procera  
Disa sabulosa  
Encephelartos altensteinii  
Encephelartos caffer  
Encephelartos dyerianus  
Encephelartos frederici-guilielmi  
Encephelartos ghellinckii  
Encephelartos humilis  
Encephelartos lanatus  
Encephelartos lehmannii  
Encephelartos longifolius  
Encephelartos natalensis  
Encephelartos paucidentatus  
Encephelartos princeps  
Encephelartos senticosus  
Encephelartos transvenosus  
Encephelartos trispinosus  
Encephelartos umbeluziensis  
Encephelartos villosus  
Euphorbia clivicola  
Euphorbia meloformis  
Euphorbia obesa  
Harpagophytum procumbens  
Harpagophytum zeyherii  
Hoodia gordonii  
Hoodia currorii

Protea odorata  
Stangeria eriopus

#### **Amphibia**

Giant bullfrog  
African bullfrog

#### **Reptilia**

Gaboon adder  
Namaqua dwarf adder  
Smith's dwarf chameleon  
Armadillo girdled lizard  
Nile crocodile  
African rock python

#### **Aves**

Southern ground hornbill  
African marsh harrier  
Denham's bustard  
Jackass penguin

#### **Mammalia**

Cape clawless otter  
South African hedgehog  
White rhinoceros  
Black wildebeest  
Spotted hyaena  
Black-footed cat  
Brown hyaena  
Serval  
African elephant  
Spotted-necked otter  
Honey badger  
Sharpe's grysbok  
Reedbuck  
Cape fox

## Appendix 8: Curriculum vitae: Dr David Hoare

### Education

Matric - Graeme College, Grahamstown, 1984

B.Sc (majors: Botany, Zoology) - Rhodes University, 1991-1993

B.Sc (Hons) (Botany) - Rhodes University, 1994 with distinction

M.Sc (Botany) - University of Pretoria, 1995-1997 with distinction

PhD (Botany) – Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth

### Main areas of specialisation

- Vegetation ecology, primarily in grasslands, thicket, coastal systems, wetlands.
- Plant biodiversity and threatened plant species specialist.
- Alien plant identification and control / management plans.
- Remote sensing, analysis and mapping of vegetation.
- Specialist consultant for environmental management projects.

### Membership

Professional Natural Scientist, South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions, 16 August 2005 – present. Reg. no. 400221/05 (Ecology, Botany)

Member, International Association of Vegetation Scientists (IAVS)

Member, Ecological Society of America (ESA)

Member, International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA)

Member, Herpetological Association of Africa (HAA)

### Employment history

1 December 2004 – present, Director, David Hoare Consulting (Pty) Ltd. Consultant, specialist consultant contracted to various companies and organisations.

1 January 2009 – 30 June 2009, Lecturer, University of Pretoria, Botany Dept.

1 January 2013 – 30 June 2013, Lecturer, University of Pretoria, Botany Dept.

1 February 1998 – 30 November 2004, Researcher, Agricultural Research Council, Range and Forage Institute, Private Bag X05, Lynn East, 0039. Duties: project management, general vegetation ecology, remote sensing image processing.

### Experience as consultant

Ecological consultant since 1995. Author of over 380 specialist ecological consulting reports. Wide experience in ecological studies within grassland, savanna and fynbos, as well as riparian, coastal and wetland vegetation.

**Publication record:**

**Refereed scientific articles (in chronological order):**

**Journal articles:**

- HOARE, D.B.** & BREDEKAMP, G.J. 1999. Grassland communities of the Amatola / Winterberg mountain region of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. *South African Journal of Botany* 64: 44-61.
- HOARE, D.B.**, VICTOR, J.E., LUBKE, R.A. & MUCINA, L., 2000. Vegetation of the coastal fynbos and rocky headlands south of George, South Africa. *Bothalia* 30: 87-96.
- VICTOR, J.E., **HOARE, D.B.** & LUBKE, R.A., 2000. Checklist of plant species of the coastal fynbos and rocky headlands south of George, South Africa. *Bothalia* 30: 97-101.
- MUCINA, L, BREDEKAMP, G.J., **HOARE, D.B.** & MCDONALD, D.J. 2000. A National Vegetation Database for South Africa *South African Journal of Science* 96: 1-2.
- HOARE, D.B.** & BREDEKAMP, G.J. 2001. Syntaxonomy and environmental gradients of the grasslands of the Stormberg / Drakensberg mountain region of the Eastern Cape, South Africa.. *South African Journal of Botany* 67: 595 – 608.
- LUBKE, R.A., **HOARE, D.B.**, VICTOR, J.E. & KETELAAR, R. 2003. The vegetation of the habitat of the Brenton blue butterfly, *Orachrysops niobe* (Trimen), in the Western Cape, South Africa. *South African Journal of Science* 99: 201–206.
- HOARE, D.B.** & FROST, P. 2004. Phenological classification of natural vegetation in southern Africa using AVHRR vegetation index data. *Applied Vegetation Science* 7: 19-28.
- FOX, S.C., HOFFMANN, M.T. and HOARE, D. 2005. The phenological pattern of vegetation in Namaqualand, South Africa and its climatic correlates using NOAA-AVHRR NDVI data. *South African Geographic Journal*, 87: 85–94.
- Pfab, M.F., Compaan, P.C., Whittington-Jones, C.A., Engelbrecht, I., Dumalisile, L., Mills, L., West, S.D., Muller, P., Masterson, G.P.R., Nevhutalu, L.S., Holness, S.D., **Hoare, D.B.** 2017. The Gauteng Conservation Plan: Planning for biodiversity in a rapidly urbanising province. *Bothalia*, Vol. 47:1. a2182. <https://doi.org/10.4102/abc.v47i1.2182>.

**Book chapters and conference proceedings:**

- HOARE, D.B.** 2002. Biodiversity and performance of grassland ecosystems in communal and commercial farming systems in South Africa. Proceedings of the FAO's Biodiversity and Ecosystem Approach in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Event: 12–13 October, 2002. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, Rome, Italy. pp. 10 - 27.
- STEENKAMP, Y., VAN WYK, A.E., VICTOR, J.E., **HOARE, D.B.**, DOLD, A.P., SMITH, G.F. & COWLING, R.M. 2005. Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Hotspot. In: Mittermeier, R.A., Gil, P.R., Hoffmann, M., Pilgrim, J., Brooks, T., Mittermeier, C.G., Lamoreux, J. & Fonseca, G.A.B. da (eds.) *Hotspots revisited*. CEMEX, pp.218–229. ISBN 968-6397-77-9
- STEENKAMP, Y., VAN WYK, A.E., VICTOR, J.E., **HOARE, D.B.**, DOLD, A.P., SMITH, G.F. & COWLING, R.M. 2005. Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Hotspot. <http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/hotspots/maputaland/>.
- HOARE, D.B.**, MUCINA, L., RUTHERFORD, M.C., VLOK, J., EUSTON-BROWN, D., PALMER, A.R., POWRIE, L.W., LECHMERE-OERTEL, R.G., PROCHES, S.M., DOLD, T. and WARD, R.A. *Albany Thickets*. in Mucina, L. and Rutherford, M.C. (eds.) 2006. The vegetation of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. *Strelitzia* 19, South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria.
- MUCINA, L., **HOARE, D.B.**, LÖTTER, M.C., DU PREEZ, P.J., RUTHERFORD, M.C., SCOTT-SHAW, C.R., BREDEKAMP, G.J., POWRIE, L.W., SCOTT, L., CAMP, K.G.T., CILLIERS, S.S., BEZUIDENHOUT, H., MOSTERT, T.H., SIEBERT, S.J., WINTER, P.J.D., BURROWS, J.E., DOBSON, L., WARD, R.A., STALMANS, M., OLIVER, E.G.H., SIEBERT, F., SCHMIDT, E., KOBISI, K., KOSE, L. 2006. *Grassland Biome*. In: Mucina, L. & Rutherford, M.C. (eds.) The vegetation of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. *Strelitzia* 19. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria.
- RUTHERFORD, M.C., MUCINA, L., LÖTTER, M.C., BREDEKAMP, G.J., SMIT, J.H.L., SCOTT-SHAW, C.R., **HOARE, D.B.**, GOODMAN, P.S., BEZUIDENHOUT, H., SCOTT, L. & ELLIS, F., POWRIE, L.W., SIEBERT, F., MOSTERT, T.H., HENNING, B.J., VENTER, C.E., CAMP, K.G.T., SIEBERT, S.J., MATTHEWS, W.S., BURROWS, J.E., DOBSON, L., VAN ROOYEN, N., SCHMIDT, E., WINTER, P.J.D., DU PREEZ, P.J., WARD, R.A., WILLIAMSON, S. and HURTER, P.J.H. 2006. *Savanna Biome*. In: Mucina, L. & Rutherford, M.C. (eds.) The vegetation of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. *Strelitzia* 19. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria.
- MUCINA, L., RUTHERFORD, M.C., PALMER, A.R., MILTON, S.J., SCOTT, L., VAN DER MERWE, B., **HOARE, D.B.**, BEZUIDENHOUT, H., VLOK, J.H.J., EUSTON-BROWN, D.I.W., POWRIE, L.W. & DOLD, A.P. 2006. *Nama-Karoo Biome*. In: Mucina, L. & Rutherford, M.C. (eds.) The vegetation of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. *Strelitzia* 19. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria.

MUCINA, L., SCOTT-SHAW, C.R., RUTHERFORD, M.C., CAMP, K.G.T., MATTHEWS, W.S., POWRIE, L.W. and **HOARE, D.B.** 2006. *Indian Ocean Coastal Belt*. In: Mucina, L. & Rutherford, M.C. (eds.) The vegetation of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. *Strelitzia* 19. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria.

#### **Conference Presentations:**

- HOARE, D.B. & LUBKE, R.A. *Management effects on diversity at Goukamma Nature Reserve, Southern Cape*; Paper presentation, Fynbos Forum, Bienne Donne, July 1994
- HOARE, D.B., VICTOR, J.E. & LUBKE, R.A. *Description of the coastal fynbos south of George, southern Cape*; Paper presentation, Fynbos Forum, Bienne Donne, July 1994
- HOARE, D.B. & LUBKE, R.A. *Management effects on fynbos diversity at Goukamma Nature Reserve, Southern Cape*; Paper presentation, South African Association of Botanists Annual Congress, Bloemfontein, January 1995
- HOARE, D.B. & BOTHA, C.E.J. *Anatomy and ecophysiology of the dunegrass *Ehrharta villosa* var. *maxima**; Poster presentation, South African Association of Botanists Annual Congress, Bloemfontein, January 1995
- HOARE, D.B., PALMER, A.R. & BREDENKAMP, G.J. 1996. *Modelling grassland community distributions in the Eastern Cape using annual rainfall and elevation*; Poster presentation, South African Association of Botanists Annual Congress, Stellenbosch, January 1996
- HOARE, D.B. *Modelling vegetation on a past climate as a test for palaeontological hypotheses on vegetation distributions*; Paper presentation, Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit postgraduate symposium, 1997
- HOARE, D.B., VICTOR, J.E. & BREDENKAMP, G.J. *Historical and ecological links between grassy fynbos and afro-montane fynbos in the Eastern Cape*; Paper presentation, South African Association of Botanists Annual Congress, Cape Town, January 1998
- LUBKE, R.A., HOARE, D.B., VICTOR, J.E. & KETELAAR, R. *The habitat of the Brenton Blue Butterfly*. Paper presentation, South African Association of Botanists Annual Congress, Cape Town, January 1998
- HOARE, D.B. & PANAGOS, M.D. *Satellite stratification of vegetation – structure or floristic composition?* Poster presentation at the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress of the Grassland Society of South Africa, Warmbaths, 1-4 February 1999.
- HOARE, D.B. & WESSELS, K. *Conservation status and threats to grasslands of the northern regions of South Africa*, Poster presentation at the South African Association of Botanists Annual Congress, Potchefstroom, January 2000.
- HOARE, D.B. *Phenological dynamics of Eastern Cape vegetation*. Oral paper presentation at the South African Association of Botanists Annual Congress, Grahamstown, January 2002.
- HOARE, D.B., MUCINA, L., VAN DER MERWE, J.P.H. & PALMER, A.R. *Classification and digital mapping of grasslands of the Eastern Cape* Poster presentation at the South African Association of Botanists Annual Congress, Grahamstown, January 2002.
- HOARE, D.B. *Deriving phenological variables for Eastern Cape vegetation using satellite data* Poster presentation at the South African Association of Botanists Annual Congress, Grahamstown, January 2002.
- MUCINA, L., RUTHERFORD, M.C., HOARE, D.B. & POWRIE, L.W. 2003. *VegMap: The new vegetation map of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland*. In: Pedrotti, F. (ed.) *Abstracts: Water Resources and Vegetation*, 46<sup>th</sup> Symposium of the International Association for Vegetation Science, June 8 to 14 – Napoli, Italy.
- HOARE, D.B. 2003. *Species diversity patterns in moist temperate grasslands of South Africa*. Proceedings of the VIIth International Rangeland Congress, 26 July – 1 August 2003, Durban South Africa. *African Journal of Range and Forage Science*. 20: 84.

#### **Unpublished technical reports:**

- PALMER, A.R., HOARE, D.B. & HINTSA, M.D., 1999. *Using satellite imagery to map veld condition in Mpumalanga: A preliminary report*. Report to the National Department of Agriculture (Directorate Resource Conservation). ARC Range and Forage Institute, Grahamstown.
- HOARE, D.B. 1999. *The classification and mapping of the savanna biome of South Africa: methodology for mapping the vegetation communities of the South African savanna at a scale of 1:250 000*. Report to the National Department of Agriculture (Directorate Resource Conservation). ARC Range and Forage Institute, Pretoria.
- HOARE, D.B. 1999. *The classification and mapping of the savanna biome of South Africa: size and coverage of field data that exists on the database of vegetation data for South African savanna*. Report to the National Department of Agriculture (Directorate Resource Conservation). ARC Range and Forage Institute, Pretoria.
- THOMPSON, M.W., VAN DEN BERG, H.M., NEWBY, T.S. & HOARE, D.B. 2001. *Guideline procedures for national land-cover mapping and change monitoring*. Report no. ENV/P/C 2001-006 produced for Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, National Department of Agriculture and Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism. Copyright: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Agricultural Research Council (ARC).

- HOARE, D.B. 2003. Natural resource survey of node O R Tambo, using remote sensing techniques, Unpublished report and database of field data for ARC Institute for Soil, Climate & Water, ARC Range and Forage Institute, Grahamstown.
- HOARE, D.B. 2003. Short-term changes in vegetation of Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve, South Africa, on the basis of resampled vegetation sites. Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Conservation, Environment and Land Affairs, Conservation Division.
- BRITTON, D., SILBERBAUER, L., ROBERTSON, H., LUBKE, R., HOARE, D., VICTOR, J., EDGE, D. & BALL, J. 1997. The Life-history, ecology and conservation of the Brenton Blue Butterfly (*Orachrysops niobe*) (Trimen)(*Lycaenidea*) at Brenton-on-Sea. Unpublished report for the Endangered Wildlife Trust of Southern Africa, Johannesburg. 38pp.
- HOARE, D.B., VICTOR, J.E. & MARNEWIC, G. 2005. Vegetation and flora of the wetlands of Nylsvley River catchment as component of a project to develop a framework for the sustainable management of wetlands in Limpopo Province.

**Consulting reports:**

Total of over 380 specialist consulting reports for various environmental projects from 1995 – present.

**Workshops / symposia attended:**

- International Association for Impact Assessment Annual Congress, Durban, 16 – 19 May 2018.
- Workshop on remote sensing of rangelands presented by Paul Tueller, University of Nevada Reno, USA, VIth International Rangeland Congress, 26 July – 1 August 2003, Durban South Africa.
- VIIth International Rangeland Congress, 26 July – 1 August 2003, Durban South Africa.
- BioMap workshop, Stellenbosch, March 2002 to develop strategies for studying vegetation dynamics of Namaqualand using remote sensing techniques
- South African Association of Botanists Annual Congress, Grahamstown, January 2002.
- 28<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment, Somerset West, 27-31 March 2000.
- Workshop on Vegetation Structural Characterisation: Tree Cover, Height and Biomass, 28<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment, Strand, 26 March 2000.
- South African Association of Botanists Annual Congress, Potchefstroom, January 2000
- National Botanical Institute Vegmap Workshop, Kirstenbosch, Cape Town, 30 September-1 October 1999.
- Sustainable Land Management – Guidelines for Impact Monitoring, Orientation Workshop: Sharing Impact Monitoring Experience, Zithabiseni, 27-29 September 1999.
- WWF Macro Economic Reforms and Sustainable Development in Southern Africa, Environmental Economic Training Workshop, development Bank, Midrand, 13-14 September 1999.
- 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress of the Grassland Society of South Africa, Warmbaths, 1-4 February 1999
- Expert Workshop on National Indicators of Environmental Sustainable Development, Dept. of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Roodevallei Country Lodge, Roodeplaat Dam, Pretoria, 20-21 October 1998.
- South African Association of Botanists Annual Congress, Cape Town, January 1998
- Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit postgraduate symposium, 1997.
- South African Association of Botanists Annual Congress, Bloemfontein, January 1995.



**Appendix 6I**  
**Transportation Impact Assessment**







ON BEHALF OF SiVEST ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION

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# **UMSOBOMVU SOLAR PV ENERGY FACILITIES**

## Transportation Impact Assessment

**Issue Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019  
**Revision No:** 1  
**Project No:** 15324

Date:	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	
Document Title:	UMSOBOMVU SOLAR PV ENERGY FACILITIES – Transportation Impact Assessment	
Revision Number:	1	
Author:	Merchandt Le Maitre (Pr Tech Eng.)	
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External Review:	TBC Report will be reviewed by a suitably qualified external reviewer during the EIA phase of the proposed development	
Signature:	Pr N°: TBC	Date: TBC
For:	SIVEST ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION	
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**National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and Environmental Impact Regulations 2014 (as amended) Requirements for Specialist Reports (Appendix 6)**

<b>Section in EIA Regulations 2014 (as amended)</b>		<b>Clause</b>	<b>Section in Report</b>
Appendix 6	(1)	A specialist report prepared in terms of these Regulations must contain —	
	(a)	details of –	
		(i) the specialist who prepared the report; and	Section 4
		(ii) the expertise of that specialist to compile a specialist report including a curriculum vitae.	Section 4
	(b)	A declaration that the person is independent in a form as may be specified by the competent authority;	Appendix B
	(c)	An indication of the scope of, and the purpose for which, the report was prepared;	Section 3
	(cA)	An indication of the quality and age of base data used for the specialist report;	Section 6
	(cB)	A description of existing impacts on the site, cumulative impacts of the proposed development and levels of acceptable change;	Section 8, 9 & 11
	(d)	The duration, date and season of the site investigation and the relevance of the season to the outcome of the assessment;	Section 3
	(e)	A description of the methodology adopted in preparing the report or carrying out the specialised process; inclusive of equipment and modelling used;	Section 3
	(f)	Details of an assessment of the specific identified sensitivity of the site related to the proposed activity or activities and its associated structures and infrastructure, inclusive of a site plan identifying site alternatives;	Section 6
	(g)	An indication of any areas to be avoided, including buffers;	Section 9
	(h)	A map superimposing the activity including the associated structures and infrastructure on the environmental sensitivities of the site including areas to be avoided, including buffers;	N/A
	(i)	A description of any assumptions made and any uncertainties or gaps in knowledge;	Section 5
(j)	A description of the findings and potential implications of such findings on the impact of the proposed activity, including identified alternatives on the environment or activities;	Section 8 & 9	

	(k)	Any mitigation measures for inclusion in the EMPr;	Section 11
	(l)	Any conditions for inclusion in the environmental authorization;	Section 11
	(m)	Any monitoring requirements for inclusion in the EMPr or environmental authorization;	Section 11
	(n)	A reasoned opinion –	
		(i) as to whether the proposed activity, activities or portions thereof should be authorized;	Section 14
		(iA) regarding the acceptability of the proposed activity or activities; and	Section 14
		(ii) if the opinion is that the proposed activity, activities or portions thereof should be authorized, any avoidance, management and mitigation measures that should be included in the EMPr, and where applicable, the closure plan;	Section 14
	(o)	A description of any consultation process that was undertaken during the course of preparing the specialist report;	N/A
	(p)	A summary and copies of any comments received during any consultation process and where applicable all responses thereto; and	N/A
	(q)	Any other information requested by the authority.	N/A
	(2)	Where a government notice gazetted by the Minister provides for any protocol or minimum information requirement to be applied to a specialist report, the requirements as indicated in such notice will apply.	N/A

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

SiVEST Environmental Division was appointed to complete three separate Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for each of their proposed developments. It is their intention to construct Solar PV facilities on the following farms: -

- Mooi Plaats Solar PV Facility
  - Portion 1 of the farm LEUWE KOP No. 120
  - Remainder of the farm MOOI PLAATS No. 121
  
- Wonder Heuvel Solar PV Facility
  - Remainder of the farm MOOI PLAATS No. 121
  - Portion 3 of the farm WONDER HEUVEL No. 140
  - Portion 5 of the farm HOLLE FONTEIN No. 133
  
- Paarde Valley Solar PV Facility
  - Portion 2 of the farm PAARDE VALLEY No. 62

The locality of the study area is shown in Figure 1:1 below.

The proposed development on the above farms will form part of the South African Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) and will comprise a total of three new Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Energy Facilities with a total proposed generation capacity of up to 1 200MW. The project is not located within any pre-defined or approved 'Renewable Energy Development Zone', and therefore in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA) an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will need to be completed in order to understand the impact of the proposed development on the environment.

We note that subsequent to discussions with the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), it was confirmed that only one scoping report and one impact phasing report will be required from each specialist and hence must cover all three developments. Each development will however require a separate chapter / section within the report outlining the impact of each proposed development.

Therefore, forming part of the EIA will be a Transportation Impact Assessment outlining the impact /s, the additional Traffic generated on the environment as a result of each development.

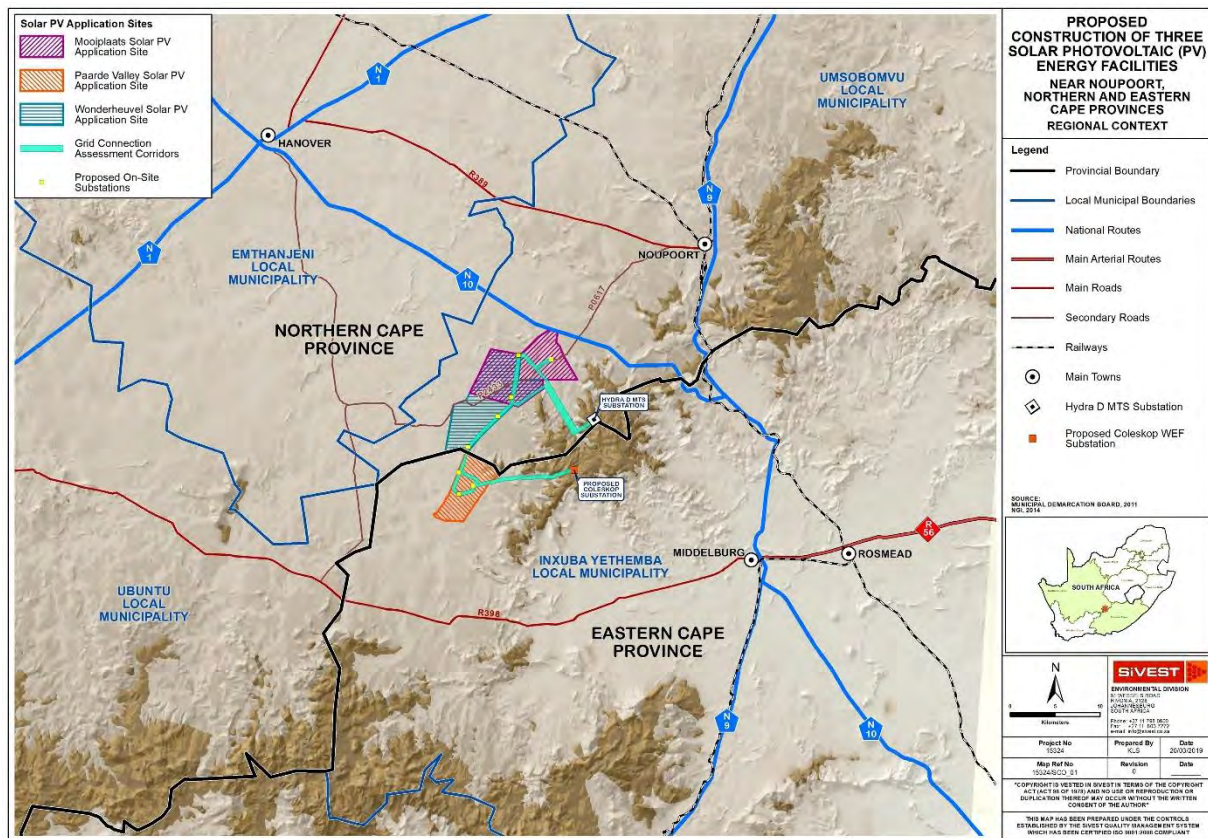


Figure 1:1 Locality Plan

## 2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Mooi Plaats—and Wonder Heuvel Solar PV Energy Facilities are located in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa, and more specifically in the Umsobomvu Local Municipality district, whilst the Paarde Valley Solar PV Energy Facility is located in the Eastern Cape Province and within the Inxuba Local Municipality district as shown in Figure 1:1 above. The development is located ±33km north west of Middelburg and ±30km south west of Noupoort and covers a combined area of ±10 629ha.

The three Solar PV facilities will include PV fields (arrays) comprising multiple PV panels. The number of panels, the generation capacity of each facility and the layout of the arrays will be dependent on the outcome of the specialist studies conducted during the EIA process.

Forming part of this assessment will be the respective Grid Connection Infrastructure for each of the PV Energy Facilities.

## 3 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF WORK

The main objective of the ‘Transportation Impact Assessment’ is to determine the impact/s of the proposed PV development on the area with respect to transportation. The assessment will comprise of a desktop assessment and will include preliminary transportation related matters arising during the construction phase, through the Operation & Maintenance Phase, up to and



including the decommissioning phase of the development. The assessment of these phases, will take into account the transportation of normal and abnormal vehicles, which are made up of *inter alia*; - PV components, construction materials, equipment, construction workers and employees.

The scope of works consist of the following:

- A site investigation which was completed between the 6 – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019
- Consultations with the relevant authorities and / or stakeholders which includes the collection of traffic data and information.
- Desktop analysis of traffic data and information from the various authorities and / or stakeholders. Analysis to include the evaluation of the capacity of the road network (if required)
- Evaluate the impact of the proposed development on the existing road network / traffic volumes and populating of a suitable 'Impact Rating System'
- Determine specific traffic needs during the different phases of implementation.
- Conclude & propose possible mitigation measures
- Identify the position and suitability of the preferred access road alternatives.
- Confirm the associated clearances required for the necessary equipment to be transported from the point of delivery to the various sites.
- Confirm freight and transport requirements during construction, operation and maintenance period.
- Propose origins and destinations of equipment
- Determine Abnormal load requirements (if any)
- Seasonal impacts do not affect the assessment.

## **4 SPECIALIST CREDENTIALS**

We confirm this Transportation Impact Assessment has been compiled by Mr. Merchandt Le Maitre from SiVEST Consulting Engineers. He has a B Tech (Baccalaureus Technologiae) in Civil Engineering with over 13 years of experience in this field. He is registered as a Pr. Tech Eng (Professional Engineering Technician) with the Engineering Council of South (ECSA) and is a corporate member of the South African Institute of Civil Engineers (SAICE). A full Curriculum Vitae is included in 'Appendix A'

## **5 ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

The following assumptions and limitations are to be noted:

- Based on the information provided by the client for assessment purposes, a maximum number of 1 320 000 PV panels will be constructed on each of the Energy Facilities in a continuous sequence from the intended construction start date.
- PV panels will be either fixed tilt mounting or single access tracking mounting, while the panels will either be crystalline silicone or thin film technology. However, for this report it was assumed that 'fixed tilt axis' mounting systems would be used as it would have the greatest impact on the development.
- Individual PV panel dimension will be  $\pm 1\text{m} \times \pm 2\text{m}$ , whilst each PV column will be  $\pm 2\text{m}$  wide and 1 - 4m high, dependent on the type of mounting system.

- A preliminary program of between 18 – 24 months is envisaged for the construction to be completed. Therefore, for the purpose of this assessment we have assumed the following;
  - Site Establishment & construction of Roads, Laydown Areas: 5 Months
  - Erection of PV frames and PV panels: 24 Months
  - Construction Operation & Maintenance Buildings: 24 Months
  - Electrical Cabling and Switching Stations: 24 Months
- Access road width: 8m
- Internal roads width: 4 – 10m
- 6 Day work week: Monday – Saturday
- PV Energy Facility Lifespan: 20 years
- Adjacent to this proposed development is the proposed Umsobomvu Wind Energy Farm (WEF) for which a route assessment report was completed by Messrs. AECOM SA (Pty) Ltd in 2016. We anticipate the adjacent WEF will in all likelihood use the same access point from the N10 freeway as this development and therefore extracts of their assessment report was used in this report.  
 The WEF assessment report used the Port of Ngqura, ±20km north east of Port Elizabeth as the point of origin for the delivery of WEF components. The most suitable route identified was to travel north west on the N10 freeway towards Middelburg where it will continue north on the N9 freeway towards Noupoort and ultimately continue west again on the N10 towards Richmond where the access point is located at Km19.92. In addition, the report indicates Abnormal vehicles and WEF components of less than 4.8m in height will be able to use this route, they do however recommended that a formal route assessment report be completed by a reputable contractor prior to the works commencing.
- This assessment is limited to the impacts the development traffic will have on the network and not on the wider impacts known as background traffic. Such impacts can only be addressed in a detailed Traffic Impact Study which takes into account actual traffic counts undertaken during the peak periods.
- The information provided in this report is an informed estimate. Construction related traffic may however vary and be different to the information provided during construction phases as a result of supplier delivery schedule changes.

## 6 EXISTING TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

### 6.1 Roads affected by the Umsobomvu PV Energy Facility

Road Name	Road Number	Description	Distance (±km)
<b>Umsobomvu</b>			
Leeupoort Road	DR2433	N10 to Paarde Valley Access Rd	21
Paarde Valley Access Rd		Leeupoort Rd to Access	9

Noupoort Road	MR0617	N10 to R389 Jct.	14
Noupoort Road	MR0617	R389 Jct to Noupoort	6
N10 Freeway	N10	N1 (Hanover) Jct to N9 (Noupoort-Middelburg) Jct.	62
N9 Freeway	N10	Middelburg to Noupoort	40
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>152</b>

Table 6:1 Roads Affected by Umsobomvu PV Energy Facility

## 6.2 Traffic Counts (Pre-Development)

The South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) has vehicle counting stations in the area which can be used in this report.

<b>Traffic Counting Stations</b>			
<b>Counting Station</b>	<b>Road Name</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Permanent or Temporary</b>
Hanover East (1477)	N10	1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2018 – 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2018	Permanent
NR00907 / NR01005 (2733)	N9	1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2008 – 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2013	Temporary

Table 6:2 Traffic Counting Stations

In order to get a better understanding of when the peak periods exists in the area, the data obtained from counting station N° 1477 on the N10 in Table 6:2 was compared to manual counts complete on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at the Leeupoort / Noupoort intersection located at Km 19.92 on section N10-5.

The comparison is as follows;

Traffic Station Data / Counts								
	To N9 Middelburg				To N1 Hanover			
	Average Daily Traffic (ADT)	Average Hourly Traffic	Average Daily Truck Traffic (ADTT)	Average Hourly Truck Traffic	Average Daily Traffic (ADT)	Average Hourly Traffic	Average Daily Truck Traffic (ADTT)	Average Hourly Truck Traffic
<b>N10 @ HANOVER EAST (No 1477)</b>								
Average Daily	282	12	136	6	145	12	145	7
<b>N10 @ LEEUPOORT / NOUPOORT INT.</b>								
Morning 7:00-8:00		12		4		21		17
Afternoon 16:00-17:00		18		8		14		8

Table 6:3 Traffic Station Data / Counts

From the table above it is evidently clear that the average daily usage of the roads in the area is low. In addition, the morning and afternoon periods does have a slightly higher trip rate, compared to the average daily and therefore cognisance of this increase should be taken into account when additional traffic is generated and added to the existing road network.

## 7 ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC GENERATION

Please take note that each phase of the development indicated below is per Facility and in this development there are three separate Facilities. Each phase is therefore as follows:

### 7.1 Construction Phase

The construction phase will typically generate the highest number of trips for the proposed development. Construction will typically involve access roads, foundations, PV panels, electrical cables / transformers / switch gears / substations installations and the delivery of these materials / equipment on the public road network. A table has therefore been populated, under each phase, which indicates the estimated traffic generated for each of these phases.

It is assumed that no staff or labour will reside on the construction site, other than security, and therefore all will reside in nearby towns of Noupoot or Middelburg or alternatively be accommodated in nearby hostels.

Therefore, in order to calculate the number of trips the Facility will generate, a table has been populated in which the estimated number of construction staff and labour will commute to each Facility. This table is as follows;

<b>Labour Requirements per Facility</b>				
<b>Type of Construction</b>	<b>Technical Staff</b>	<b>Skilled Labour</b>	<b>Unskilled Labour</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Site Establishment	5	5	24	<b>34</b>
<b>Vehicle Trips / Day</b> (Only Site Establishment)	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>
Internal Access Roads	4	4	18	<b>26</b>
O & M Buildings	4	14	56	<b>74</b>
PV Panels & Frame	4	38	135	<b>177</b>
Electrical Installation	4	28	63	<b>95</b>
<b>Totals</b> (Excl. Site Establishment)	<b>16</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>372</b>
<b>Vehicle Trips / Day</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>43</b>

Table 7:1 Construction Phase per Facility – Labour

The following assumptions were made when the table above was populated:

- Assume that all 'Unskilled Labour' will fit into 6 buses and commute to site. (50 Seater)
- Assumed that all 'Skilled Labour' will fit 4 people into a vehicle to site.
- Assumed that all 'Technical Staff' will commute singularly in their own vehicle to site.

From the table above, during the construction phase ±43 vehicles trips will commute at the peak of the construction phase transporting staff and labour. Typically, these trips will be in the morning between 6:00 – 7:00 and in the afternoons between 16:00 – 17:00.

### 7.1.1 Construction Traffic

The table below summarizes the different types of construction elements this project will typically involve. The trips were based on labour commuting as per Table 7:1 and the remainder of the construction traffic refers to the table in 'Appendix C'.

Vehicle Trips							
Type of Construction	Month (Period)						Origin
	1	2-12	13-19	20-24	25	25-240	
Site Establishment	10				10		Noupoort / Middelburg
Transportation of Plant	1				1		Gauteng / Cape Town
Labour Transport		43	31	31			Noupoort / Middelburg
Internal Access Roads		13					Local
O & M Buildings		1	1				Gauteng / Cape Town
PV Panels & Frame		10	10				Ngqura Port
Electrical Systems		1					Gauteng / Ngqura / Cape Town
<b>Trips/Day for period</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>11</b>		

Table 7:2 Total Construction Traffic

Please take note that the vehicle trips above is excluding the trips generated from the delivery of abnormal loads and has therefore been included in Section 7.1.2.

From the table above it can be seen that an additional  $\pm 68$  vehicle trips / day will be added on the existing public road network in the study area during the peak of construction between months 2-12 of the construction program. Of the 68 vehicle trips / day, 43 vehicle trips are for the transportation of labour as mentioned in the previous section. The remainder of the 25 vehicle trips / day will typically occur during the 'weekday midday' and equates to  $\pm 4$  vehicle trips / hour.

### 7.1.2 Abnormal Loads

Abnormal loads are described as loads that for all practical purposes cannot be transported on a vehicle or vehicles without exceeding the limitations as described in the 'National Road Traffic Regulations' of 2000. These vehicles exceed the limitations as a result of one of the following;

- Dimension Abnormality
  - Length
  - Width
  - Height
  - Overhangs
  - Load Projections
  - Wheelbase
- Mass Abnormality

The transportation of abnormal loads from its origin to the proposed development has been assumed to be primarily from three areas; - Gauteng, Cape Town & the Port of Ngqura. Therefore, for the purpose of this assessment it has been assumed all electrical transformers and switch gear etc, will be from the ships berth at the Port of Ngqura. The other will be the transportation of site establishment equipment in the form of construction equipment and offices (**Error! Reference source not found.**) and construction equipment (**Error! Reference source not found.**) have been included below.

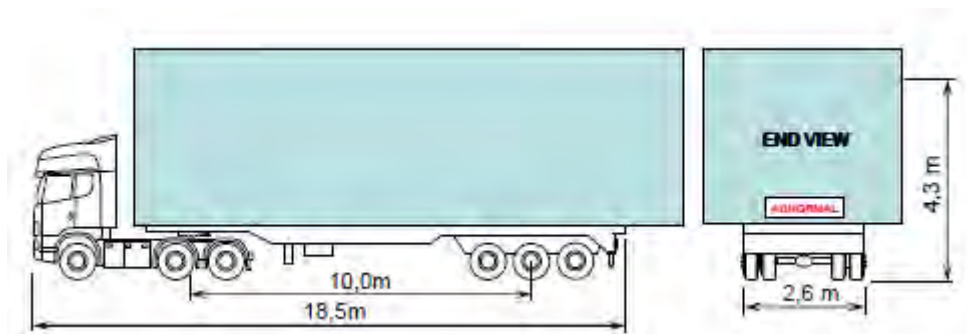


Figure 7:1 Abnormal Load on Legal Combination

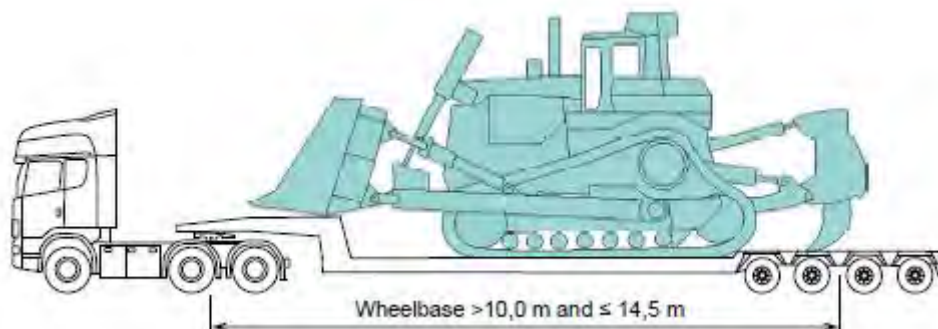


Figure 7:2 Abnormal Load on a Long Wheelbase Trailer

The Geometric clearance requirements, associated with these abnormal load transporting the equipment types are shown Table 7:3.

Indicative dimensions of the abnormal loads will be as follows;

<b>Abnormal Load Dimensions</b>			
<b>Load to be Transported</b>	<b>Typical Dimensions (Max)</b>		
	<b>Length (m)</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Height (m)</b>
Transformers & Switch Gear	27	4.5	4.5
Construction Equipment	13	4.0	4.5

Table 7:3 Abnormal Load Dimensions

Prior to any Abnormal Loads conveying equipment to the development, approval needs to be obtained in the form of a permit from the Department of Transport (DoT). The permit application will be completed by specialists in the transportation of Abnormal loads and will conform to 'The Road Traffic Act, 1996 (Act No 93 of 1996)'. The application includes route clearances from Telkom and Eskom after which the application is submitted to DoT who intern consults with the SANRAL, Provincial Authorities and Local Municipalities prior to issuing a permit.

## 7.2 Operation & Maintenance Phase (O & M)

The Umsobomvu PV Energy Facility has been designed for a 20 year lifespan and could possibly be increased if financially viable. The operation & maintenance during the 20 year period will typically be in the form of small general maintenance during the operational period. Any maintenance which will require inter alia new PV panels, cables, transformers or switch gear will classify as normal or abnormal loads dependant on the type of load, and the traffic generated by this will be negligible in the greater scheme of the development. The largest contributor of traffic in this phase will therefore only comprise of employees commuting to and from the site.

Based on the information provided, a maximum number of 42 employees will be employed during the 20 year life span of the project. It is therefore assumed that the employees will commute together and hence a total of an additional 11 trips / day will be generated during this period onto the existing road network. In addition to the staff commuting will be the collection of waste and sanitation. These are assumed to generate an additional 2 vehicles / week onto the existing road network.



### 7.3 Decommissioning Phase

Decommissioning of the Umsobomvu PV Energy Facility will generate considerably less trips than the construction phase. It is estimated that the decommissioning phase will generate an additional ± 10 vehicles / day over a period of 12 – 18 months. The material removed will be transported back to Gauteng or the Port of Ngqura for recycling.

## 8 ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC EVALUATION / ASSESSMENT

For the purposes of this assessment, we have assumed that the Umsobomvu PV Energy Facility will gain access from the existing intersection on the N10 freeway between Middelburg / Noupoort and Hanover. This intersection is located at Km19.92 on section N10-5 and consists of a priority controlled intersection. The roads at this intersection is as follows; north bound to Noupoort the P0617, east bound on the N10 towards Middleburg / Noupoort, south bound on the DR2433 towards Leeupoort and west bound the N10 towards Hanover.

The intersection consists of bitumen sealed surface with single lanes and surfaced shoulders in both directions. No turning lanes has been provided for each of the intersecting roads. Both the north and south bound roads of this intersection are gravel roads shortly after leaving the road reserve of the N10 freeway. A sketch of the existing intersection is indicated on Figure 8:1.

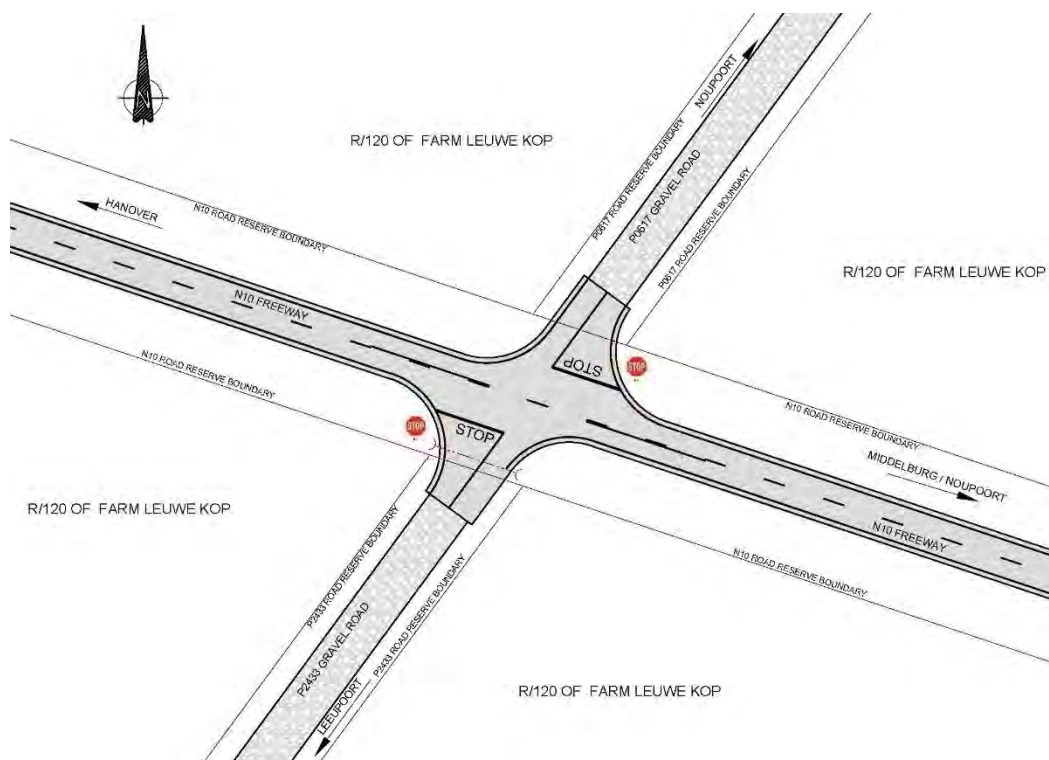


Figure 8:1 Current Access Configuration on the N10 Freeway

Please take note that each phase of the development indicated below is per Facility and in this development there are three separate Facilities. Each phase is therefore as follows:

## 8.1 Construction Phase

Based on the traffic generation calculated in Section 7 above, an additional  $\pm 68$  vehicle trips / day will be added onto the existing public road network during the peak of construction between months 2-12 of the construction program. Of the 68 vehicle trips / day, 43 vehicle trips are for the transportation of labour and will typically be in the morning between 6:00 – 7:00 and in the afternoons between 16:00 – 17:00. The remainder of the 25 vehicle trips / day will typically occur during the 'weekday midday' and equates to  $\pm 4$  vehicle trips / hour.

Therefore, in accordance with 'TMH 16 Volume 1' the warrant to complete a comprehensive 'Traffic Impact Assessment' will not be required due to the fact that the proposed development will generate less than 50 peak hour trips. We do however recommend that the intersection be discussed with SANRAL and the appropriate axillary lanes and speed reduction measures be implemented as per Figure 8:2 Proposed Upgrade of N10 Access Figure 8:2 when the construction program of this development and its facilities, in addition to the adjacent developments are known.

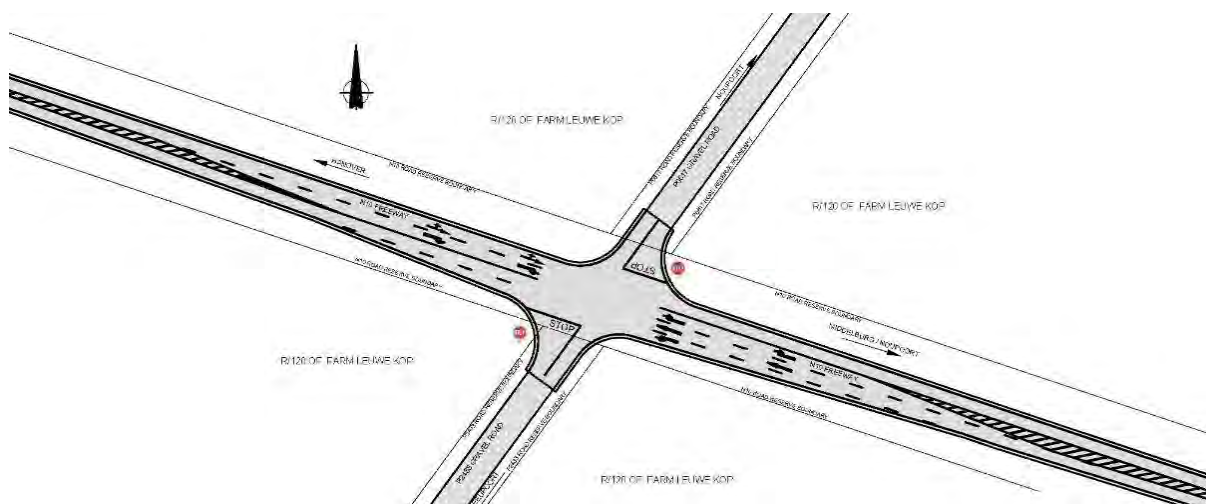


Figure 8:2 Proposed Upgrade of N10 Access

The specific traffic needs this phase of the development will have on the environment includes, inter alia; the following: -

- Upgrades of existing intersections
- Reduction in vehicle speed
- Adequate law enforcement
- Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives
- Regular maintenance of farm fence, access cattle grids.
- Adequate road signage as per the South African Road Traffic Sign Manual (SARTSM) latest edition.
- Continuous engagement with SANRAL, Northern Cape Department of Roads and Public Works and the Eastern Cape Department of Roads and Public Works.

Each PV facilities development access will be covered under their respective heading in Section 9 below.

## **8.2 Operation & Maintenance Phase (O & M)**

From the information above it is therefore assumed that the employees will commute together and hence a total of 11 trips / day additional will be generated during this period onto the existing road network. In addition to the staff commuting will be the collection of waste and sanitation. These are assumed to generate an additional 2 vehicles / week onto the existing road network and therefore the sum of this phase will have a low to negligible impact.

The specific traffic needs this phase of the development will have on the environment is inter alia;

- Reduction in vehicle speed
- Adequate law enforcement
- Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives
- Regular maintenance of farm fence, access cattle grids.
- Adequate road signage as per the South African Road Traffic Sign Manual (SARTSM) latest edition.
- Continuous engagement with SANRAL, Northern Cape Department of Roads and Public Works and the Eastern Cape Department of Roads and Public Works.

## **8.3 Decommissioning Phase**

An additional  $\pm 10$  vehicles / day over a period of 12 – 18 months will be generated. The material removed will be transported back to Gauteng or the Port of Ngqura for recycling. The impact of this phase will therefore be low.

The specific traffic needs this phase of the development will have on the environment is inter alia;

- Reduction in vehicle speed
- Adequate law enforcement
- Use of dust suppressant techniques.
- Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives
- Adequate road signage as per the South African Road Traffic Sign Manual (SARTSM) latest edition.
- Continuous engagement with SANRAL, Northern Cape Department of Roads and Public Works and the Eastern Cape Department of Roads and Public Works.

## 9 ACCESS ROADS & INTERNAL ROADS

The 'Umsobomvu Solar PV Energy Facility' development will gain access from the N10 freeway via the district road DR2433 which is currently a gravel road. It is the intention for each respective PV Facility to have separate, individual access points to their respective developments from the DR2433.

The district road DR2433 is a 'Proclaimed District Road' extending from the N10 freeway up to and including the DR2424 district road. Each Solar PV Facility and their respective access points is highlighted below;

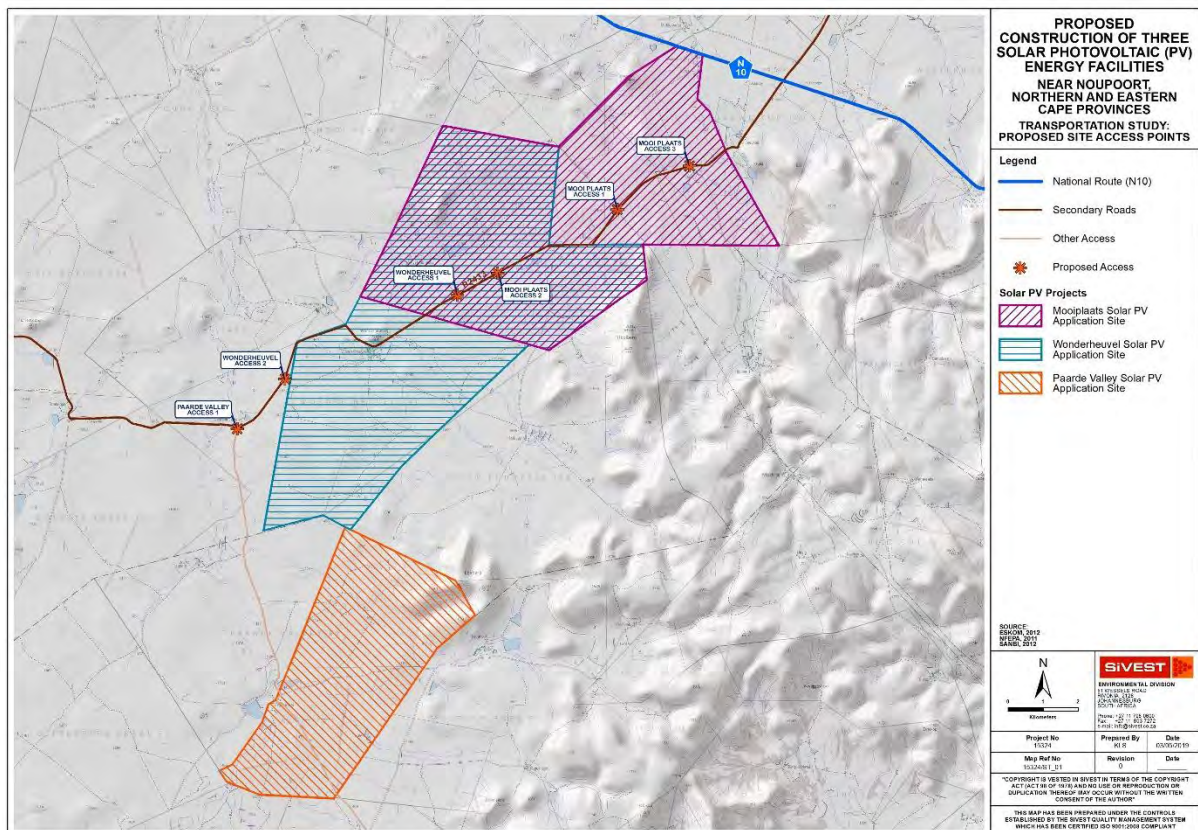


Figure 9:1 Proposed Development Access

### 9.1 Mooi Plaats Solar PV Facility - Development Access

Access to this facility will be via the existing gravel road (DR2433) which bisects the proposed PV Facility. The road bisects the development into two unequal quadrants, a north western and south eastern quadrant respectively. Three proposed access points have been identified for this facility, however, the final position selection will be dependent on the location of the PV fields in relation to the DR2433.

The proposed access points are as indicated on **Error! Reference source not found.** above and a summary of each proposed access point is as summarized in Table 9:1 below.

Mooi Plaats Solar PV Facility – Proposed Access Points	
Access Point	Description
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gravel Road access point</li> <li>Existing access point to the north of the farm where a PV field could be considered.</li> <li>The area to the south of the point does not allow sufficient space available to place a PV field adjacent to the ridge line.</li> <li>The prescribed sight distances of 300m can be achieved.</li> <li>Priority controlled intersection is recommended with the District Road being priority.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gravel Road access point</li> <li>Existing access point to both the north and south of the farm, where PV fields could be considered.</li> <li>The prescribed sight distances of 300m can be achieved.</li> <li>Floodlines could affect the position of the PV fields.</li> <li>Priority controlled intersection is recommended with the District Road being priority.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gravel Road access point</li> <li>Existing access point to both the north and south of the farm where PV fields could be considered.</li> <li>The prescribed sight distances of 300m can be achieved</li> <li>Priority controlled intersection is recommended with the District Road being priority.</li> <li>Floodlines and ridges could affect the position of the PV fields</li> <li>Solar Glare will need to be investigated adjacent to the N10 freeway. Refer Section 10 below.</li> </ul>

Table 9:1 Mooi Plaats Solar PV Facility

## 9.2 Wonder Heuvel Solar PV Facility - Development Access

Access to this facility will be via the existing gravel road (DR2433) which bisects the proposed PV facility. The road bisects the development into two unequal quadrants, a north eastern and south western quadrant. Two access points have been identified and the final position of these access points will be dependent on the location of the PV fields in relation to the DR2433.

The proposed access points are as indicated on **Error! Reference source not found.** above and a summary of each proposed access point is as summarized in Table 9:2 below.

Wonder Heuvel Solar PV Facility – Proposed Access Points	
Access Point	Description
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gravel Road access point</li> <li>Existing access point to the north of the farm where a PV field could be considered.</li> <li>The prescribed sight distances of 300m can be achieved</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority controlled intersection is recommended with the District Road being priority.</li> <li>• Floodlines could affect the position of the PV fields</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gravel Road access point</li> <li>• Existing access point to the south of the farm, where a PV field could be considered.</li> <li>• The prescribed sight distances of 300m can be achieved</li> <li>• Priority controlled intersection is recommended with the District Road being priority.</li> <li>• Floodlines and ridge lines could affect the position of the PV fields</li> </ul>

Table 9:2 Wonder Heuvel Solar PV Facility

### 9.3 Paarde Valley Solar PV Facility - Development Access

Access to this facility will be via the existing gravel road (DR2433) which is located ±4km north of the proposed PV Facility. Only one access point has been identified and the final position of this access point will be dependent on the location of the PV fields in relation to the DR2433. We note that this development is not located adjacent to the DR2433 and hence will require 'right of way' agreements with the following properties;

- REM of the farm WONDER HEUVEL No. 140
- REM of the farm COLLETS KRAAL No. 131
- REM of the farm PAARDE VALLEY No. 62

The proposed access points are as indicated on **Error! Reference source not found.** above and a summary of each proposed access point is as summarized in Table 9:3 below.

Paarde Valley Solar PV Facility – Proposed Access Points	
Access Point	Description
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gravel Road access point</li> <li>• Existing access point to the north of the farm where a PV field could be considered.</li> <li>• The prescribed sight distances of 300m can be achieved</li> <li>• Priority controlled intersection is recommended with the District Road being priority.</li> <li>• Floodlines could affect the position of the PV fields</li> </ul>

Table 9:3 Paarde Valley Solar PV Facility

### 9.4 Internal Roads Layout and Specifications

An internal network of roads has been assumed to be in a traditional grid pattern formation and will mainly consist of 4-10m wide gravel roads. These roads will have designed horizontal and vertical alignments to accommodate the normal and abnormal vehicles intended to be used for the delivery and maintenance of the PV equipment.

We would recommend that all internal access roads take into account where possible and applicable, the PV facility stormwater management plan so as to reduce the risks of possible erosion.

For the purpose of this assessment, we have assumed that the insitu material below the topsoil is of 'G7' quality and can be used as a suitable road subgrade material, followed by an imported 'G5' quality material as a gravel wearing course.

A suitable geotechnical study will however be required at pre design stage to better understand the design limitations on the development followed by a preliminary design to 'value' Engineer the project.

## **10 SOLAR GLINT & GLARE**

The proximity of 'Umsobomvu Solar Energy Facility' and more specifically the proximity of the 'Mooi Plaats Solar PV Facility' to the existing N10 freeway between Hanover and Noupoort / Middelburg, increases the possibility of solar glint and glare affecting road users. In addition, the N10 freeways orientation in an east – west direction increases the possibility of the proposed development affecting road users.

We therefore recommend that further studies be completed to understand the extent of the solar glint and glare and ultimately plan the layout of the Facility in such a way that it does not affect road users negatively.

## **11 IMPACT RATING ASSESSMENT**

The 'Impact Rating System' takes into account the nature, scale and duration of the effects on the environment whether such effects are positive (beneficial) or negative (detrimental). Each issue / impact is also assessed according to the project stages:

- Planning
- Construction
- Operation
- Decommissioning

A rating system, based points system is applied to the potential impacts on the environment and includes objective evaluations of the mitigation of the impact. These impacts can be found in 'Annexure F'.

In summary, all impacts were classified as 'Low' to 'Medium' impacts with the 'Medium' impacts changing to a 'Low' impact after the implementation of suitable mitigation measures. We should however note that the cumulative impact of all the surrounding developments could possibly trigger a 'High' impact and therefore effective pre mitigation measures must be implemented.

## 12 CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SiVEST undertook every effort to obtain the information (including specialist studies, BA / EIA / Scoping and EMP Reports) for the surrounding developments, however many of the documents are not currently publicly available. To this extent, the information that could be obtained for the surrounding planned renewable energy developments was taken into account as part of the cumulative impact assessment.

The information obtained for other planned renewable energy developments in the surrounds is indicated in Figure 12:1 Proposed Renewable Energy Developments in the Area. Figure 12:1 below.

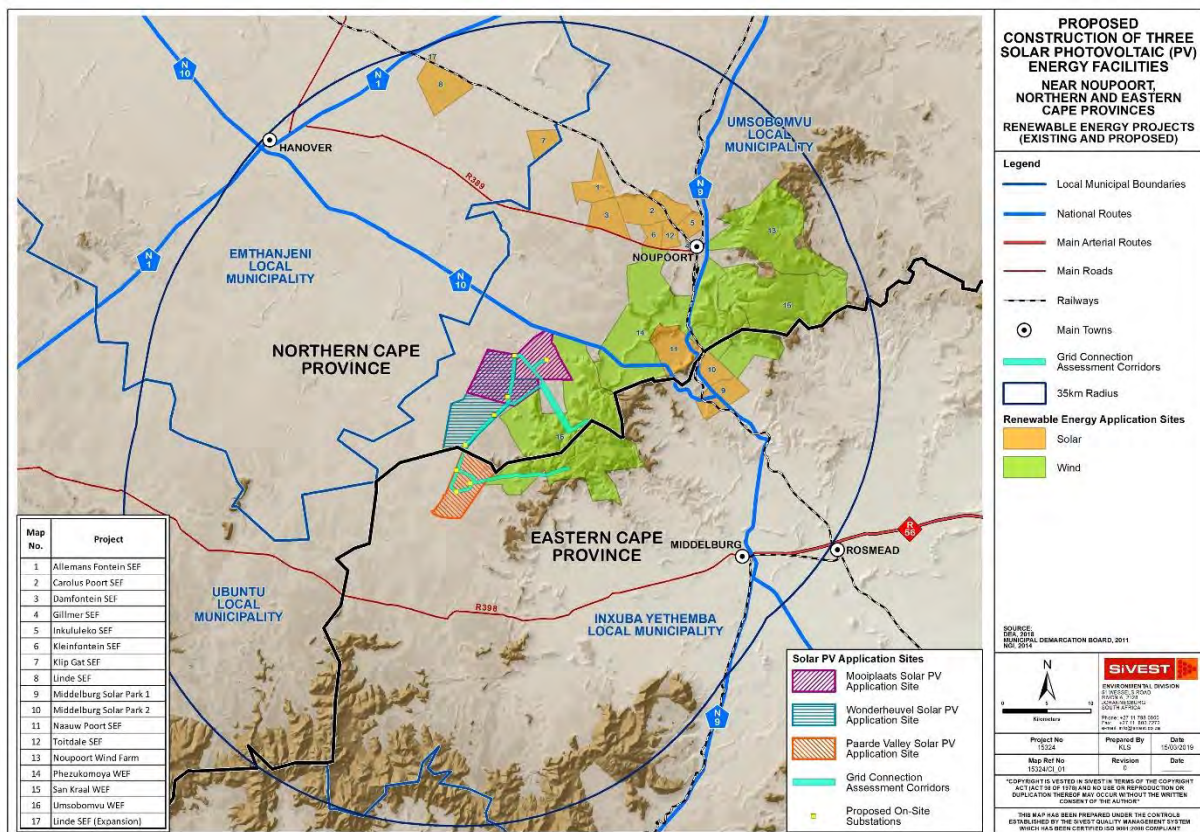


Figure 12:1 Proposed Renewable Energy Developments in the Area

You will note that a number of proposed renewable energy projects are located within a  $\pm 35$ km radius of the Umsobomvu PV Solar Energy development. However, for the purpose of this report, we have only assumed the two developments which are in close proximity to the Umsobomvu PV Solar Energy development as we believe they will have the greatest impact from a transportation perspective. The two developments are therefore as follows;

UMSOBOMVU - Wind Energy Facility	
Developer	Umsobomvu Wind Power (Pty) Ltd
Renewable Energy Type	Wind Turbine Generators



Total Development Area	18 263ha
Wind Turbine Generators	84 Turbines
Infrastructure Area	108.8ha

Table 12:1 Umsobomvu WEF

<b>PHEZUKOMOYA - Wind Energy Facility</b>	
Developer	Phezukomoya Wind Power (Pty) Ltd
Renewable Energy Type	Wind Turbine Generators
Total Development Area	15 271ha
Wind Turbine Generators	63 Turbines
Infrastructure Area	74.25ha

Table 12:2 Phezukomoya WEF

Based on the information available, both developments have indicated that they will NOT use the Leeupoort / Noupoort intersection located on the N10 freeway at Km 19.92 on section N10-5. Therefore the cumulative impact on the proposed access point on the N10 freeway will only be applicable to the Umsobomvu PV Solar Energy Facility.

There will however be a cumulative impact on the background traffic between the Umsobomvu PV Energy Facility and Noupoort / Middleburg. This impact will however be difficult to simulate as the intended start dates and construction programs for each development will need to be clarified. We therefore recommend that this study be completed prior to the construction process with all Renewable Energy parties involved in the immediate area.

### 13 COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

Two (2) power line route alternatives and two (2) substation site alternatives per Solar PV Facility has been identified for assessment during the EIA process. These alternatives are as follows:

- **Mooi Plaats Solar PV Grid Connection**
  - Option 1 is approximately 13km's in length, linking Substation 1 & 2 to Hydra D MTS.
  - Option 2 is approximately 27km's in length, linking Substation 1 & 2 to Hydra D MTS via the proposed Central Collector Substation located on the Wonderheuvell PV project application site.

▪ **Wonderheuvél Solar PV Grid Connection**

- Option 1 involves two separate grid connections to serve the northern and southern sectors of the application site. The northern connection is approximately 18km's in length linking the proposed on-site Substation 3 to Hydra D MTS via the northern Collector Substation. The southern connection is approximately 17km's in length linking Substation 4 to the proposed Coleskop WEF substation via the southern Collector Substation located on the Paarde Valley PV project application site.
- Option 2 is approximately 20km's in length, linking Substation 3 & 4 to Hydra D MTS via the proposed Central Collector Substation located on the Wonderheuvél PV project application site.

▪ **Paarde Valley Solar PV Grid Connection**

- Option 1 is approximately 14km's in length, linking substation Alternative 6 to the proposed Coleskop WEF Substation via the Southern Collector Substation.
- Option 2 is approximately 26km's in length, linking Substation 5 & 6 to Hydra D MTS via the proposed Central Collector Substation located on the Wonderheuvél PV project application site.

A comparative assessment was completed to determine which of the above alternatives would be preferred from a Transportation Impact perspective. However, for the purpose of this study only the alternatives outlined in Table 13:1 were assessed.

The degree of preference for each alternative has been assigned a key from 'preferred to 'least preferred' as follows;

<b>Comparative Table - Key</b>	
<b>PREFERRED</b>	The alternative will result in a low impact / reduce the impact
<b>FAVOURABLE</b>	The impact will be relatively insignificant
<b>LEAST PREFERRED</b>	The alternative will result in a high impact / increase the impact
<b>NO PREFERENCE</b>	The alternative will result in equal impacts

<b>Comparative Table of Assessments</b>		
<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Preference</b>	<b>Reason (incl. potential issues)</b>
<b>MOOI PLAATS SOLAR PV GRID CONNECTION</b>		
Corridor Option 1	NO PREFERENCE	Equal impacts are experienced from this Alternative, if compared with the other alternatives.
Corridor Option 2	NO PREFERENCE	Equal impacts are experienced from this Alternative, if compared with the other alternatives.
<b>WONDERHEUVEL SOLAR PV GRID CONNECTION</b>		
Corridor Option 1	NO PREFERENCE	Equal impacts are experienced from this Alternative, if compared with the other alternatives.
Corridor Option 2	NO PREFERENCE	Equal impacts are experienced from this Alternative, if compared with the other alternatives.
<b>PAARDE VALLEY SOLAR PV GRID CONNECTION</b>		
Corridor Option 1	NO PREFERENCE	Equal impacts are experienced from this Alternative, if compared with the other alternatives.
Corridor Option 2	NO PREFERENCE	Equal impacts are experienced from this Alternative, if compared with the other alternatives.

Table 13:1 Comparative Figure of Assessments

## 14 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- In conclusion;
  - During the construction phase an additional ±43 vehicles trips will commute at the peak of the construction phase, transporting staff and labour. Typically, these trips will be in the morning between 6:00 – 7:00 and in the afternoons between 16:00 – 17:00.
  - The heavy construction vehicles and deliveries will contribute an additional ±25 vehicle trips / day, typically occurring during the ‘weekday midday’ which will equate to ±4 vehicle trips / hour. These additional vehicles will only contribute a small percentage to the existing road network.
  - The abnormal loads on this development will be negligible and therefore will have no major impact.

- The cumulative impact of the area confirms that no significance rating change will be experienced during the construction period of the Umsobomvu PV development.
- The existing road network can accommodate the proposed development, however the recommendations below must be considered to mitigate any possible negative impacts.
- We recommend a Traffic Management Plan be completed prior to construction in order to form part of the Final Environmental Management Plan (EMP). The plan must include inter alia the following;
  - The review of all intersections and routes prior to the project commencing in order to accommodate construction vehicles and staff commuting.
  - Further discussions with the SANRAL and the respective transport department on access points and route requirements.
  - The upgrades of intersections and the installation of road traffic signage as per the SARTSM (South African Road Traffic Sign Manual).
  - The implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives
  - The implementation of a road maintenance plan under the auspices of the respective transport department.
- We recommend that further studies be completed on the Mooi Plaats Solar PV Facility to understand the extent of the solar glint and glare and ultimately plan the layout of the Facility in such a way that it does not affect N10 freeway road users negatively.
- We recommended that one access point from the N10 freeway be used for all the proposed Facilities to reduce the impact to the area. This access point is located at Km19.92 on section N10-5 and the appropriate axillary lanes and speed reduction measures are to be implemented subsequent to discussions with SANRAL. This study and a revised study, with the all the renewable parties involved in the area at the time, must be submitted to SANRAL and more specifically Ms. Colene Runkel 021 957 4613 for review and comments.
- Development access points to each PV Facility is as per the recommendations in Section 9.
- The appropriate load permits be obtained from the Department of Transport prior to construction (if required).
- This assessment is limited to the impacts the development traffic will have on the network and not on the wider impacts known as background traffic. Background traffic includes the cumulative impacts other developments will have on the environment if their programs overlap. Such impacts can only be addressed in a detailed Traffic Impact Study which takes into account actual traffic counts undertaken during the peak periods. We therefore recommend that this study be completed prior to the construction process with all Renewable Energy parties involved in the immediate area.

## 15 REFERENCES

- Northern Cape Department of Roads and Public Works – *Road Network Information System*
- South African National Roads Agency Ltd - *Drainage Manual* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition)
- South African National Roads Agency Ltd – *Traffic Highlights for Vehicle Counting Stations*
- Department Water & Sanitation
- Suntech-Power – *Polycrystalline Solar Module 320W* (2016)
- Ale-Heavylift – *Company Brochure*
- South African Development Community – *South African Road Traffic Signs Manual Volume 1-4* (May 2012 Edition)
- Committee of Transportation Officials – *TMH 16-South African Traffic Impact and Site Assessment Manual Volume 1 & 2* (August 2012)
- Department of Transport – *TRH 11 – Dimensional and Mass Limitations and other Requirements for Abnormal Load Vehicles* (August 2009 - 8<sup>th</sup> Edition)
- Environmental Impact Assessment Report – *The Proposed 315MW Phezukomoya Wind Energy Facility and Grid Connection, Northern and Eastern Cape Provinces* (March 2018, Ref N°: 14/12/16/3/3/3/2/1028)
- Environmental Impact Assessment Report – *Proposed Umsobomvu Wind Energy Facility, Northern and Eastern Cape Provinces* (April 2016, Ref N°: 14/12/16/3/3/2/730)



## **APPENDIX A: SPECIALIST CREDENTIALS**





## CURRICULUM VITAE

Merchandt Le Maitre

**Name** Merchandt Le Maitre

**Profession** Civil Engineer

**Name of Firm** SiVEST SA (Pty) Ltd  
Civil Engineering Division

**Present Appointment** Senior Civil Engineering Technician

**Years with Firm** 13 Years

**Date of Birth** 25 September 1982

**ID Number** 8209255037086

**Nationality** South African



### Education

- University of Johannesburg (2006)
- University of South Africa (2016)

### Professional Qualifications

- N Dip: Civil Engineering
- B Tech: Civil Engineering (Water)
- Pr.Tech.Eng. (Reg. No. 2018300094)

### Membership in Professional Societies

- Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) – Pr Tech Eng; (Reg N° 2018300094)
- South African Institute of Civil Engineers (SAICE)

### Employment Record

May 2004 – to date	SiVEST SA (PTY) LTD: Senior Civil Engineering Technician
Jan 2004 – April 2004	Con Roux Zambia - Junior Foreman
Dec 2002 – Dec 2003	Neda Engineering - Vacation Work

### Language Proficiency

LANGUAGE	SPEAK	READ	WRITE
English	Fluent	Fluent	Fluent
Afrikaans	Fluent	Fluent	Fluent

### Key Experience

Merchandt joined SiVEST as a student Civil Engineering Technician in 2004 to which he received a company bursary to complete his studies and join the company permanently thereafter. Since joining permanently he has been actively involved in numerous township projects and associated infrastructure projects.

Experience covers:-

- Bulk Services Studies,
- Feasibility Studies,
- Service Reports,

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Merchandt Le Maitre

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- Infrastructure Design,
- Contract Documentation & Procurement,
- Contract Administration,
- Procurement and Construction Monitoring.

A summary of the experience in each field is indicated below.

### Roads & Stormwater

- Design, Implement & Contract Administration of Provincial Road Intersections (Class 2 Roads)
- Design, Implement & Contract Administration of Municipal Roads (Class 3-5 Roads)
- Design, Implement & Contract Administration of Residential & Industrial Township services
- Design, Implement & Contract Administration of Bulk Stormwater Infrastructure
- Floodline determination & stormwater assessments

### Hydrology

- Draughting and compiling of Attenuation Reports
- Flood Inundation Assessments / Floodline Reports
- Stormwater Management Reports
- Stormwater Assessments / Investigations

### Water & Sanitation

- Design, Implement & Contract Administration of Water supply lines including Bulk Water
- Design, Implement & Contract Administration of Water pump stations
- Design, Implement & Contract Administration of Sanitation networks including Outfall Sewers
- Design, Implement & Contract Administration of Sewer pump stations

## **Projects Experience**

### May 2004 – to date

- Tijger Valley Extension 10, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 38-44, 72, 105-113, 19, 62, 103, 104, 34, 35, 36, 123 etc. - Design, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring.
- Derdepoort Extension 181- Design, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring.
- Project Springbok, Sasolburg - Design, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring.
- Arcadia Extension 11 - Design, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring.
- Lakeside Erf 181- Design, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring.
- Longmeadow Extension 10, 11 & 12 - Design, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring.
- Bushwillow Estate - Design, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring.
- Forum Homini – Draughting Monitoring of Dam Spillway construction & sewer reticulation.
- Longmeadow Extension 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 – Township services and design of earth retaining wall.
- Lakeside Erf 181 – Design and supervision of Township Services including Attenuation facilities.
- Mbabane Kingdom Hall – Bulk earthworks and road Design, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring.
- Irene Mall Township – Design of Township Services and Stormwater Management.
- Mitsubishi McCarthy Midrand – Design and compilation of Stormwater Management report.
- Longmeadow Extension 10 (Pick & Pay) – Design and compilation of Stormwater Management report.
- Erf 4173 Peter Place – Floodline Determination.
- Kungwini Bulk Water – Draughting and supervision of a Steel Bulk Water Supply Pipe.
- Mooikloof Booster Station – Design and supervision of a water booster pump facility..
- Chartwell Floodline – Floodline Determination.
- PTN 2 of 148 Athol – Compiling and analysis Stormwater Assessment.
- Hyde Close Floodline – Floodline Determination.
- Brikor – Design of New Intersection.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Merchandt Le Maitre

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- Mooibosch Development – Compiling of Services reports and Floodline Determination.
- Erf 4173 Peter Place – Floodline Determination.
- Hazeldean Extension 39 – Design and supervision of Township Services.
- PTN 35 Houtkoppen – Floodline Determination.
- Hazeldean Retirement – Design of Township Services.
- Erf 90 Douglasdale – Floodline Determination.
- Kungwini Collector Sewer – Design of Collector Sewer.
- Maroeladal Extension 9 – Design and compilation of Services Report.
- Hazeldean Oukraal – Design of Township Services.
- Lot 204 Edenburg – Floodline Determination.
- Hazeldean Business Park – Design and compilation of Services Reports.
- Erf 181 Derdepoort – Design and compilation of Services Reports and preliminary design of Provincial Intersection.
- Erf 92 Edenburg – Floodline Determination and design and compilation of the Services reports.
- New Zealand Embassy – Design of Intersection.
- Longmeadow Extension 12 Stormwater – Design of Stormwater Reticulation.
- Isago @ N12 – Floodline Determination.
- Innoland – Floodline Determination.
- Astral Foods - Design, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring of civil services.

### ROADS & INTERSECTION DESIGN

- D631 Intersection – Design, Wayleave Approval, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring.
- D36 Intersection & Road Widening - Design, Wayleave Approval, Procurement.
- K34 Intersection – Design, Wayleave Approval, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring.
- K101 Intersection – Design, Wayleave Approval.
- Justice Mahomed, University, Walton Jameson Rd Intersection – Design, Wayleave Approval.
- Cedar Road West – Design, Wayleave Approval, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring.
- Brikor – Design of New Intersection.

### Hydrology and Stormwater

- Hazeldean Floodline - Data collection, Flood determination and compilation.
- Gautrain Railway Stormwater Management – Design and compile stormwater management and attenuation facilities.
- Stormwater Modelling for Project Springbok – Attenuation of hazardous material in stormwater system.
- Sappi Ngodwana Floodline – Data collection, Flood determination and compilation. This floodline included cognisance of the Ngodwana dam.
- Irene Mall Stormwater Management - Accommodation of the Post Development stormwater flow through an existing township / suburb.
- Loftus Park Stormwater Management – Accommodation of the Post Development stormwater flow through an existing township / suburb.
- Pienaars River Floodline Modelling – Modelling of the river through two future Class 1 & 3 road bridge structures.
- Renewable Energy Stormwater Management – A number of Management Plans for the Renewable Energy sector has been completed.

### Water Transfer / Reticulation and Sanitation Collectors / Outfalls

- Bojanala Platinum District Municipality – Water & Sanitation Bulk Master Planning.
- Hazeldean Development – Bulk Water Supply & Collector Sewer Design, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring.
- Mamba Kingdom – Bulk Water Analysis.

- Lesedi Local Municipality Bulk Water - Design, Wayleave Approval, Procurement, Contract Administration and Monitoring.

#### Other

- Project Springbok – Design of Services and Railway Siding.
- Phalaborwa Mining Company – Preliminary Design of Bulk Water feed and Railway Line.
- Kansanshi Copper Mine, Zambia – Junior Site Foreman.
- Final QC for Sasol Secunda.
- NDT testing – MMC Nelspruit, Global Forest Products Sabie.
- Boiler inspections and preliminary design – MMC Nelspruit, Global Forest Products, TSB Malelane.

#### **Computer Skills**

- AutoCAD Civil 3D
- AutoCAD Storm and Sanitary Analysis
- Microsoft Office
- Microsoft Project
- TechnoCAD
  - Surfmate
  - Roadmate
  - Pipemate
  - Watermate
- AutoTURN (Vehicle Turning Simulation Software)
- RiverCAD
- HecRAS
  - 1D Flood Modelling
  - 2D Flood Modelling

## **APPENDIX B: SPECIALIST DECLARATION**



## **APPENDIX C: VEHICLE TRIP CALCULATIONS**









<b>Vehicle Trips - Transportation</b>						
<b>Type of Construction</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Month Applicable</b>	<b>Light Vehicles</b>	<b>Heavy Vehicles</b>	<b>Total Vehicles / Day</b>	<b>Origin</b>
Site Establishment	Clearing & Grubbing Delivery & Construction of Site offices Setting Out of Works Erection of Perimeter Fence	1 & 25	7	3	<b>10</b>	Noupoort / Middelburg
Transportation of Plant	Excavator Grader Tipper Trucks Water Cart Roller TLB Small Front End Loader Hi Up Crane / Truck Small Equipment	1 & 25		2 2 5 2 1 (2 on lowbed) 3 (2 on lowbed) 2 4 4 (16 / 4)	<b>1</b>	Gauteng / Cape Town
Internal Access Roads	127m <sup>3</sup> of Imported Sub Base per day on 10m <sup>3</sup> tippers. Bulking factor has been included.	2 - 5		13	<b>13</b>	Local
Operation & Maintenance Buildings (O&M)	Delivery of Cement, stone, sand, reinforcement, shutters, roof trusses, sheeting.	2 - 19		1	<b>1</b>	Gauteng / Cape Town
PV Panels & Frame	Delivery of PV Panels Delivery of PV Frames	2 - 19		10	<b>5</b>	Ngqura Port
Electrical Systems	Substation Equipment, overhead cables, underground cables	2 - 12		1	<b>1</b>	Gauteng / Ngqura / Cape Town



## **APPENDIX D: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ACCESS & INTERNAL ROADS**

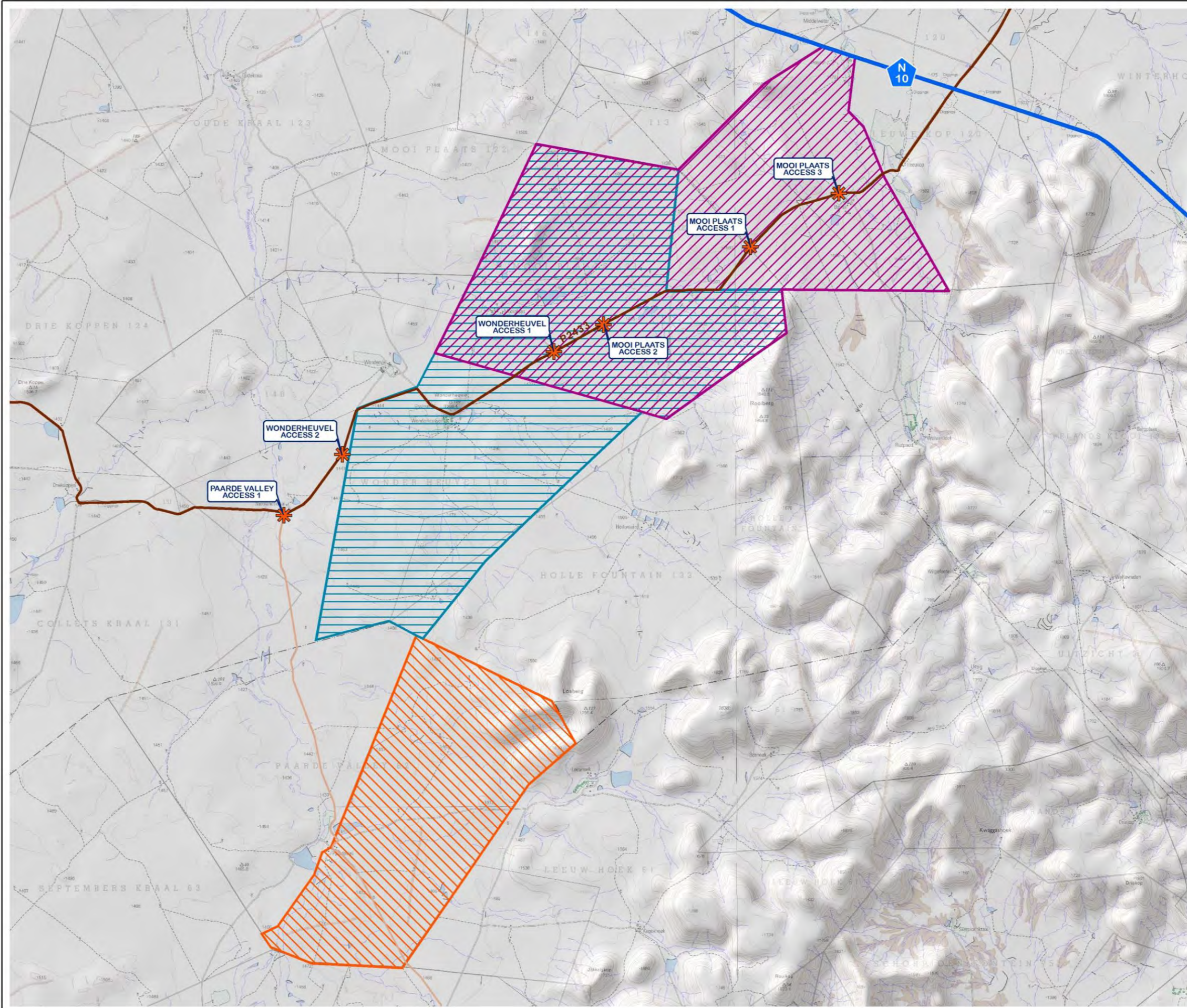
**PROPOSED  
CONSTRUCTION OF THREE  
SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV)  
ENERGY FACILITIES  
NEAR NOUPOORT,  
NORTHERN AND EASTERN  
CAPE PROVINCES  
TRANSPORTATION STUDY:  
PROPOSED SITE ACCESS POINTS**

**Legend**

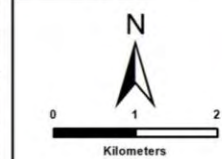
-  National Route (N10)
-  Secondary Roads
-  Other Access
-  Proposed Access

**Solar PV Projects**

-  Mooiplaats Solar PV Application Site
-  Wonderheuveld Solar PV Application Site
-  Paarde Valley Solar PV Application Site



SOURCE:  
ESKOM, 2012  
NFEPA, 2011  
SANBI, 2012



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<b>Project No</b> 15324	<b>Prepared By</b> KLS	<b>Date</b> 03/05/2019
<b>Map Ref No</b> 15324/ST_01	<b>Revision</b> 0	<b>Date</b>

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**APPENDIX E: IMPACT RATING SYSTEM**

MOOI PLAATS SOLAR PV FACILITY																				
ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION								RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION									
		E	P	R	L	D	I/M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)		E	P	R	L	D	I/M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)		
<b>Construction Phase</b>																				
Additional Traffic Generation	Increase in Traffic	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a large portion of vehicles traveling to and from the proposed development travels in the 'off peak' periods or by bus.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low
	Increase of Incidents with pedestrians and livestock	2	4	2	4	1	2	26	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of vehicles</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> <li>Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives</li> <li>Regular maintenance of farm fences, access cattle grids</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	4	1	1	12	-	Low
	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low
	Increase in Road Maintenance	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low
Abnormal Loads	Additional Abnormal Loads	3	2	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure abnormal vehicles travel to and from the proposed development in the 'off peak' periods.</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> </ul>	3	2	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low
Internal Access Roads	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	1	4	1	1	1	2	16	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce a maximum speed limit on the development</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Adequate watering by means of water bowser</li> </ul>	1	3	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low
	New / Larger Access points	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate road signage according to the SARTSM</li> <li>Approval from the respective roads department</li> </ul>	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low
<b>Operational Phase</b>																				
Additional Traffic Generation	Increase in Traffic	2	3	1	2	3	1	11	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a large portion of vehicles traveling to and from the proposed development travels in the 'off peak' periods or by bus.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	3	1	11	-	Low
	Increase of Incidents with pedestrians and livestock	2	4	2	4	3	1	15	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of vehicles</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> <li>Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives</li> <li>Regular maintenance of farm fences, access cattle grids</li> </ul>	2	3	2	4	3	1	14	-	Low
	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	2	3	2	2	3	1	12	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	3	1	12	-	Low
	Increase in Road Maintenance	2	3	2	2	3	1	12	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	3	1	12	-	Low
Abnormal Loads	Additional Abnormal Loads	2	1	1	1	3	1	8	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure abnormal vehicles travel to and from the proposed development in the 'off peak' periods.</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> </ul>	2	1	1	1	3	1	8	-	Low
Internal Access Roads	New / Larger Access points	2	3	1	2	3	1	11	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate road signage according to the SARTSM</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	3	1	11	-	Low
<b>Decommissioning Phase</b>																				
Additional Traffic Generation	Increase in Traffic	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a large portion of vehicles traveling to and from the proposed development travels in the 'off peak' periods or by bus.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low
	Increase of Incidents with pedestrians and livestock	2	4	2	4	1	2	26	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of vehicles</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> <li>Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives</li> <li>Regular maintenance of farm fences, access cattle grids</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	4	1	1	12	-	Low
	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low
	Increase in Road Maintenance	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	2	2	2	2	2	20	-	Low
Abnormal Loads	Additional Abnormal Loads	3	2	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure abnormal vehicles travel to and from the proposed development in the 'off peak' periods.</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> </ul>	3	2	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low

ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION								RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION									
		E	P	R	L	D	I/M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)		S	E	P	R	L	D	I/M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S
Internal Access Roads	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	1	3	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce a maximum speed limit on the development</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Adequate watering by means of water bowser</li> </ul>	1	3	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low
	New / Larger Access points	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate road signage according to the SARTSM</li> <li>Approval from the respective roads department</li> </ul>	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low
<b>Cumulative</b>																				
Additional Traffic Generation	Increase in Traffic	2	3	1	2	1	4	36	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a large portion of vehicles traveling to and from the proposed development travels in the 'off peak' periods or by bus.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> <li>Coordination between all developers in the area</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low
	Increase of Incidents with pedestrians and livestock	2	4	2	4	1	4	52	-	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of vehicles</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> <li>Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives</li> <li>Regular maintenance of farm fences, access cattle grids</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> <li>Coordination between all developers in the area</li> </ul>	2	3	2	4	1	2	24	-	Medium
	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	2	3	2	2	1	4	40	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> <li>Coordination between all developers in the area</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low
	Increase in Road Maintenance	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> <li>Coordination between all developers in the area</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low
Abnormal Loads	Additional Abnormal Loads	3	2	1	2	1	4	36	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure abnormal vehicles travel to and from the proposed development in the 'off peak' periods.</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> </ul>	3	2	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low
Internal Access Roads	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	1	4	1	1	1	3	24	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce a maximum speed limit on the development</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Adequate watering by means of water bowser</li> </ul>	1	3	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low
	New / Larger Access points	1	4	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate road signage according to the SARTSM</li> <li>Approval from the respective roads department</li> </ul>	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low

**WONDERHEUVEL SOLAR PV FACILITY**

ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION									RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION								
		E	P	R	L	D	I/M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S		E	P	R	L	D	I/M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S
<b>Construction Phase</b>																				
Additional Traffic Generation	Increase in Traffic	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a large portion of vehicles traveling to and from the proposed development travels in the 'off peak' periods or by bus.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low
	Increase of Incidents with pedestrians and livestock	2	4	2	4	1	2	26	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of vehicles</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> <li>Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives</li> <li>Regular maintenance of farm fences, access cattle grids</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	4	1	1	12	-	Low
	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low
	Increase in Road Maintenance	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low
Abnormal Loads	Additional Abnormal Loads	3	2	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure abnormal vehicles travel to and from the proposed development in the 'off peak' periods.</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> </ul>	3	2	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low
Internal Access Roads	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	1	4	1	1	1	2	16	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce a maximum speed limit on the development</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques.</li> <li>Adequate watering by means of water bowser</li> </ul>	1	3	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low
	New / Larger Access points	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate road signage according to the SARTSM</li> <li>Approval from the respective roads department.</li> </ul>	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low
<b>Operational Phase</b>																				
Additional Traffic Generation	Increase in Traffic	2	3	1	2	3	1	11	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a large portion of vehicles traveling to and from the proposed development travels in the 'off peak' periods or by bus.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	3	1	11	-	Low
	Increase of Incidents with pedestrians and livestock	2	4	2	4	3	1	15	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of vehicles</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> <li>Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives</li> <li>Regular maintenance of farm fences, access cattle grids</li> </ul>	2	3	2	4	3	1	14	-	Low
	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	2	3	2	2	3	1	12	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	3	1	12	-	Low
	Increase in Road Maintenance	2	3	2	2	3	1	12	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	3	1	12	-	Low
Abnormal Loads	Additional Abnormal Loads	2	1	1	1	3	1	8	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure abnormal vehicles travel to and from the proposed development in the 'off peak' periods.</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> </ul>	2	1	1	1	3	1	8	-	Low
Internal Access Roads	New / Larger Access points	2	3	1	2	3	1	11	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate road signage according to the SARTSM</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	3	1	11	-	Low
<b>Decommissioning Phase</b>																				
Additional Traffic Generation	Increase in Traffic	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a large portion of vehicles traveling to and from the proposed development travels in the 'off peak' periods or by bus.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low
	Increase of Incidents with pedestrians and livestock	2	4	2	4	1	2	26	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of vehicles</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> <li>Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives</li> <li>Regular maintenance of farm fences, access cattle grids</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	4	1	1	12	-	Low
	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low
	Increase in Road Maintenance	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	2	2	2	2	2	20	-	Low
Abnormal Loads	Additional Abnormal Loads	3	2	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure abnormal vehicles travel to and from the proposed development in the 'off peak' periods.</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> </ul>	3	2	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low



ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION									RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION								
		E	P	R	L	D	I/ M	TOTAL	(+ OR -)	S		E	P	R	L	D	I/ M	TOTAL	(+ OR -)	S
Internal Access Roads	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	1	3	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce a maximum speed limit on the development</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Adequate watering by means of water bowser</li> </ul>	1	3	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low
	New / Larger Access points	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate road signage according to the SARTSM</li> <li>Approval from the respective roads department</li> </ul>	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low
<b>Cumulative</b>																				
Additional Traffic Generation	Increase in Traffic	2	3	1	2	1	4	36	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a large portion of vehicles traveling to and from the proposed development travels in the 'off peak' periods or by bus.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> <li>Coordination between all developers in the area</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low
	Increase of Incidents with pedestrians and livestock	2	4	2	4	1	4	52	-	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of vehicles</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> <li>Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives</li> <li>Regular maintenance of farm fences, access cattle grids</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> <li>Coordination between all developers in the area</li> </ul>	2	3	2	4	1	2	24	-	Medium
	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	2	3	2	2	1	4	40	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> <li>Coordination between all developers in the area</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low
	Increase in Road Maintenance	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> <li>Coordination between all developers in the area</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low
Abnormal Loads	Additional Abnormal Loads	3	2	1	2	1	4	36	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure abnormal vehicles travel to and from the proposed development in the 'off peak' periods.</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> </ul>	3	2	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low
Internal Access Roads	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	1	4	1	1	1	3	24	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce a maximum speed limit on the development</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Adequate watering by means of water bowser</li> </ul>	1	3	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low
	New / Larger Access points	1	4	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate road signage according to the SARTSM</li> <li>Approval from the respective roads department</li> </ul>	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low

PAARDE VALLEY SOLAR PV FACILITY																				
ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION								RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION									
		E	P	R	L	D	I/M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)		S	E	P	R	L	D	I/M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S
<b>Construction Phase</b>																				
Additional Traffic Generation	Increase in Traffic	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a large portion of vehicles traveling to and from the proposed development travels in the 'off peak' periods or by bus.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low
	Increase of Incidents with pedestrians and livestock	2	4	2	4	1	2	26	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of vehicles</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> <li>Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives</li> <li>Regular maintenance of farm fences, access cattle grids</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	4	1	1	12	-	Low
	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low
	Increase in Road Maintenance	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low
Abnormal Loads	Additional Abnormal Loads	3	2	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure abnormal vehicles travel to and from the proposed development in the 'off peak' periods.</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> </ul>	3	2	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low
Internal Access Roads	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	1	4	1	1	1	2	16	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce a maximum speed limit on the development</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Adequate watering by means of water bowser</li> </ul>	1	3	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low
	New / Larger Access points	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate road signage according to the SARTSM</li> <li>Approval from the respective roads department.</li> </ul>	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low
<b>Operational Phase</b>																				
Additional Traffic Generation	Increase in Traffic	2	3	1	2	3	1	11	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a large portion of vehicles traveling to and from the proposed development travels in the 'off peak' periods or by bus.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	3	1	11	-	Low
	Increase of Incidents with pedestrians and livestock	2	4	2	4	3	1	15	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of vehicles</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> <li>Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives</li> <li>Regular maintenance of farm fences, access cattle grids</li> </ul>	2	3	2	4	3	1	14	-	Low
	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	2	3	2	2	3	1	12	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	3	1	12	-	Low
	Increase in Road Maintenance	2	3	2	2	3	1	12	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	3	1	12	-	Low
Abnormal Loads	Additional Abnormal Loads	2	1	1	1	3	1	8	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure abnormal vehicles travel to and from the proposed development in the 'off peak' periods.</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> </ul>	2	1	1	1	3	1	8	-	Low
Internal Access Roads	New / Larger Access points	2	3	1	2	3	1	11	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate road signage according to the SARTSM</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	3	1	11	-	Low
<b>Decommissioning Phase</b>																				
Additional Traffic Generation	Increase in Traffic	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a large portion of vehicles traveling to and from the proposed development travels in the 'off peak' periods or by bus.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low
	Increase of Incidents with pedestrians and livestock	2	4	2	4	1	2	26	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of vehicles</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> <li>Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives</li> <li>Regular maintenance of farm fences, access cattle grids</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	4	1	1	12	-	Low
	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site concrete batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low
	Increase in Road Maintenance	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> </ul>	2	2	2	2	2	2	20	-	Low
Abnormal Loads	Additional Abnormal Loads	3	2	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure abnormal vehicles travel to and from the proposed development in the 'off peak' periods.</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> </ul>	3	2	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low

ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION									RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION								
		E	P	R	L	D	I/M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S		E	P	R	L	D	I/M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S
Internal Access Roads	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	1	3	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce a maximum speed limit on the development</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Adequate watering by means of water bowser</li> </ul>	1	3	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low
	New / Larger Access points	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate road signage according to the SARTSM</li> <li>Approval from the respective roads department</li> </ul>	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low
<b>Cumulative</b>																				
Additional Traffic Generation	Increase in Traffic	2	3	1	2	1	4	36	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a large portion of vehicles traveling to and from the proposed development travels in the 'off peak' periods or by bus.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> <li>Coordination between all developers in the area</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low
	Increase of Incidents with pedestrians and livestock	2	4	2	4	1	4	52	-	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of vehicles</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> <li>Implementation of pedestrian safety initiatives</li> <li>Regular maintenance of farm fences, access cattle grids</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> <li>Coordination between all developers in the area</li> </ul>	2	3	2	4	1	2	24	-	Medium
	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	2	3	2	2	1	4	40	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in speed of the vehicles</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> <li>Coordination between all developers in the area</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	1	2	20	-	Low
	Increase in Road Maintenance	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a road maintenance program under the auspices of the respective transport department.</li> <li>Construction of an on-site batching plant to reduce trips.</li> <li>Coordination between all developers in the area</li> </ul>	2	3	2	2	2	2	22	-	Low
Abnormal Loads	Additional Abnormal Loads	3	2	1	2	1	4	36	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure abnormal vehicles travel to and from the proposed development in the 'off peak' periods.</li> <li>Adequate enforcement of the law</li> </ul>	3	2	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low
Internal Access Roads	Increase in Dust from gravel roads	1	4	1	1	1	3	24	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce a maximum speed limit on the development</li> <li>Use of dust suppressant techniques</li> <li>Adequate watering by means of water bowser</li> </ul>	1	3	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low
	New / Larger Access points	1	4	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate road signage according to the SARTSM</li> <li>Approval from the respective roads department</li> </ul>	1	4	1	2	1	1	9	-	Low



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**Appendix 6J**  
**Visual Impact Assessment**





**MOOI PLAATS SOLAR POWER (PTY) LTD /  
WONDERHEUVEL SOLAR POWER (PTY) LTD /  
PAARDE VALLEY SOLAR POWER (PTY) LTD**

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# **Proposed Construction of Three Solar Photovoltaic Energy Facilities near Noupoot and Middelburg, Northern and Eastern Cape Provinces**


## **Visual Impact Assessment Report – Scoping Phase**

**DEA Reference: (To be announced)**

**Issue Date: 24 July 2019**

**Version No.: 1**

**Project No.: 15324**

<b>Date:</b>	24 07 19
<b>Document Title:</b>	Proposed Construction of Three Solar Photovoltaic Energy Facilities near Noupoort and Middelburg, Northern and Eastern Cape Provinces
<b>Version Number:</b>	1
<b>Author:</b>	Kerry Schwartz
<b>Checked by:</b>	Andrea Gibb
<b>Approved by:</b>	Andrea Gibb
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Client:</b>	Mooi Plaats Solar Power (Pty) Ltd / Wonderheuvel Solar Power (Pty) Ltd / Paarde Valley Solar Power (Pty) Ltd

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## environmental affairs

Department:  
Environmental Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### DETAILS OF THE SPECIALIST, DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND UNDERTAKING UNDER OATH

	(For official use only)
File Reference Number:	
NEAS Reference Number:	DEA/EIA/
Date Received:	

Application for authorisation in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended (the Regulations)

#### PROJECT TITLE

Proposed Construction of three (3) Solar Photovoltaic Energy Facilities near Noupoort and Middelburg, Northern and Eastern Cape Provinces

Kindly note the following:

1. This form must always be used for applications that must be subjected to Basic Assessment or Scoping & Environmental Impact Reporting where this Department is the Competent Authority.
2. This form is current as of 01 September 2018. It is the responsibility of the Applicant / Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to ascertain whether subsequent versions of the form have been published or produced by the Competent Authority. The latest available Departmental templates are available at <https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms>.
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Private Bag X447  
Pretoria  
0001

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Department of Environmental Affairs  
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Environment House

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473 Steve Biko Road  
Arcadia

Queries must be directed to the Directorate: Coordination, Strategic Planning and Support at:  
Email: EIAAdmin@environment.gov.za

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B-BBEE	Contribution level (indicate 1 to 8 or non-compliant)	3	Percentage Procurement recognition	110
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#### DECLARATION BY THE SPECIALIST

I, Kerry Schwartz, declare that –

- I act as the independent specialist in this application;
- I will perform the work relating to the application in an objective manner, even if this results in views and findings that are not favourable to the applicant;
- I declare that there are no circumstances that may compromise my objectivity in performing such work;
- I have expertise in conducting the specialist report relevant to this application, including knowledge of the Act, Regulations and any guidelines that have relevance to the proposed activity;
- I will comply with the Act, Regulations and all other applicable legislation;
- I have no, and will not engage in, conflicting interests in the undertaking of the activity;
- I undertake to disclose to the applicant and the competent authority all material information in my possession that reasonably has or may have the potential of influencing - any decision to be taken with respect to the application by the competent authority; and - the objectivity of any report, plan or document to be prepared by myself for submission to the competent authority;
- all the particulars furnished by me in this form are true and correct; and
- I realise that a false declaration is an offence in terms of regulation 48 and is punishable in terms of section 24F of the Act.

K. Schwenk

---

Signature of the Specialist

**SiVEST**

---

Name of Company:

03 May 2019

---

Date

---

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VALLEY SOLAR POWER (PTY) LTD** prepared by: **SiVEST**  
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**National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and Environmental Impact Regulations, 2014 (as amended) Requirements for Specialist Reports (Appendix 6)**

<b>Regulation GNR 326 of 4 December 2014, as amended 7 April 2017, Appendix 6</b>	<b>Section of Report</b>
(a) details of the specialist who prepared the report; and the expertise of that specialist to compile a specialist report including a <i>curriculum vitae</i> ;	<b>Section 1.4.</b> Specialist CV's are included in <b>Appendix A</b>
(b) a declaration that the specialist is independent in a form as may be specified by the competent authority;	<b>Page 3 - 5</b>
(c) an indication of the scope of, and the purpose for which, the report was prepared;	<b>Section 1.</b>
(cA) an indication of the quality and age of base data used for the specialist report;	<b>Section 1.5.</b> <b>Section 3.</b>
(cB) a description of existing impacts on the site, cumulative impacts of the proposed development and levels of acceptable change;	<b>Section 3.</b> <b>Section 4.</b> <b>Section 5.</b>
(d) the duration, date and season of the site investigation and the relevance of the season to the outcome of the assessment;	<b>Section 1.3.</b> <b>Section 1.5.3.</b>
(e) a description of the methodology adopted in preparing the report or carrying out the specialised process inclusive of equipment and modelling used;	<b>Section 1.5.</b>
(f) details of an assessment of the specific identified sensitivity of the site related to the proposed activity or activities and its associated structures and infrastructure, inclusive of a site plan identifying site alternatives;	<b>Section 3.</b> <b>Section 5.</b>
(g) an identification of any areas to be avoided, including buffers;	<b>Section 3.3.</b> <b>Section 3.5.</b> <b>Section 5.</b>
(h) a map superimposing the activity including the associated structures and infrastructure on the environmental sensitivities of the site including areas to be avoided, including buffers;	<b>Section 5.</b>
(i) a description of any assumptions made and any uncertainties or gaps in knowledge;	<b>Section 1.3.</b>
(j) a description of the findings and potential implications of such findings on the impact of the proposed activity, including identified alternatives on the environment, or activities;	<b>Section 5.5</b>
(k) any mitigation measures for inclusion in the EMPr;	<b>Section 5.5.</b>
(l) any conditions for inclusion in the environmental authorisation;	N/A
(m) any monitoring requirements for inclusion in the EMPr or environmental authorisation;	<b>Section 5.5.</b> .
(n) a reasoned opinion—	<b>Section 7.1.</b>

<p>i. as to whether the proposed activity, activities or portions thereof should be authorised;</p> <p>iA. Regarding the acceptability of the proposed activity or activities; and</p> <p>ii. if the opinion is that the proposed activity, activities or portions thereof should be authorised, any avoidance, management and mitigation measures that should be included in the EMPr or Environmental Authorization, and where applicable, the closure plan;</p>	
<p>(o) a summary and copies of any comments received during any consultation process and where applicable all responses thereto; and</p>	<p><b>No feedback has yet been received from the public participation process regarding the visual environment.</b></p>
<p>(p) any other information requested by the competent authority</p>	<p><b>No information regarding the visual study has been requested from the competent authority.</b></p>
<p>(2) Where a government notice gazetted by the Minister provides for any protocol or minimum information requirement to be applied to a specialist report, the requirements as indicated in such notice will apply.</p>	<p><b>N/A</b></p>

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SOLAR POWER (PTY) LTD / PAARDE VALLEY SOLAR POWER  
(PTY) LTD**

**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF THREE SOLAR  
PHOTOVOLTAIC ENERGY FACILITIES NEAR NOUPOORT AND  
MIDDELBURG, EASTERN AND NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCES**

**VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT –  
SCOPING PHASE**

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- Appendix A: Specialist CV's
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# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## ABBREVIATIONS

DEIAR	Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report
DM	District Municipality
DoE	Department of Energy
DSR	Draft Scoping Report
DTM	Digital Terrain Model
EA	Environmental Authorisation
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
FEIAR	Final Environmental Impact Assessment Report
FSR	Final Scoping Report
GIS	Geographic Information System
I&AP	Interested and/or Affected Party
IPP	Independent Power Producer
LM	Local Municipality
kV	Kilovolt
MW	Megawatt
NGI	National Geo-Spatial Information
REIPPP	Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Programme
SACAA	South African Civil Aviation Authority
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
SEF	Solar Energy Facility
VIA	Visual Impact Assessment
VR	Visual Receptor
WEF	Wind Energy Facility

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Anthropogenic feature:** An unnatural feature resulting from human activity.

**Cultural landscape:** A representation of the combined worlds of nature and of man illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal (World Heritage Committee, 1992).

**Sense of place:** The unique quality or character of a place, whether natural, rural or urban. It relates to uniqueness, distinctiveness or strong identity.

**Scenic route:** A linear movement route, usually in the form of a scenic drive, but which could also be a railway, hiking trail, horse-riding trail or 4x4 trail.

**Sensitive visual receptors:** An individual, group or community that is subject to the visual influence of the proposed development and is adversely impacted by it. They will typically include locations of human habitation and tourism activities.

**Sky Space:** The area in which the rotors would rotate.

**Slope Aspect:** Direction in which a hill or mountain slope faces.

**Study area:** The study area or visual assessment zone is assumed to encompass a zone of 10km from the outer boundary of the proposed WEF application site, and 5km from the proposed grid connection corridor alternatives.

**Visual assessment zone:** The visual assessment zone or study area or visual assessment zone is assumed encompass a zone of 10km from the outer boundary of the proposed WEF application site, and 5km from the proposed grid connection corridor alternatives.

**Viewpoint:** A point in the landscape from where a particular project or feature can be viewed.

**Viewshed / Visual Envelope:** The geographical area which is visible from a particular location.

**Visual character:** The pattern of physical elements, landforms and land use characteristics that occur consistently in the landscape to form a distinctive visual quality or character.

**Visual contrast:** The degree to which the development would be congruent with the surrounding environment. It is based on whether or not the development would conform with the land use, settlement density, forms and patterns of elements that define the structure of the surrounding landscape.

**Visual exposure:** The relative visibility of a project or feature in the landscape.

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**Visual impact:** The effect of an aspect of the proposed development on a specified component of the visual, aesthetic or scenic environment within a defined time and space.

**Visual receptors:** An individual, group or community that is subject to the visual influence of the proposed development but is not necessarily adversely impacted by it. They will typically include commercial activities, residents and motorists travelling along routes that are not regarded as scenic.

**Visual sensitivity:** The inherent sensitivity of an area to potential visual impacts associated with a proposed development. It is based on the physical characteristics of the area (visual character), spatial distribution of potential receptors, and the likely value judgements of these receptors towards the new development, which are usually based on the perceived aesthetic appeal of the area.

# **MOOI PLAATS SOLAR POWER (PTY) LTD / WONDERHEUVEL SOLAR POWER (PTY) LTD / PAARDE VALLEY SOLAR POWER (PTY) LTD**

## **PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF THREE SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC ENERGY FACILITIES NEAR NOUPOORT AND MIDDELBURG, EASTERN AND NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCES**

### **VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT – SCOPING PHASE**

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Mooi Plaats Solar Power (Pty) Ltd, Wonderheuvel Solar Power (Pty) Ltd and Paarde Valley Solar Power (Pty) Ltd are proposing to construct three (3) Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Energy Facilities on adjoining sites near Noupoort and Middelburg in the Northern Cape and Eastern Cape Provinces. Each of the proposed PV Facilities will require a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. Additionally the associated grid infrastructure will require a Basic Assessment (BA) to be undertaken. As such, three (3) EIAs will be undertaken, one for each proposed PV Facility, and three (3) BAs will be undertaken, one for each associated grid infrastructure. Accordingly, SiVEST has been appointed to undertake the required EIAs and BAs.

This Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) is being undertaken as part of the EIA and BA processes. The aim of the VIA is to identify potential visual issues associated with the development of the proposed solar energy facilities (SEFs), as well as to determine the potential extent of visual impacts. This will be achieved by determining the character of the visual environment and identifying areas of potential visual sensitivity that may be subject to visual impacts. The visual assessment focuses on the potential sensitive visual receptor locations, and provides an assessment of the magnitude and significance of the visual impacts associated with each of the proposed SEF developments.

#### **1.1 Project Description**

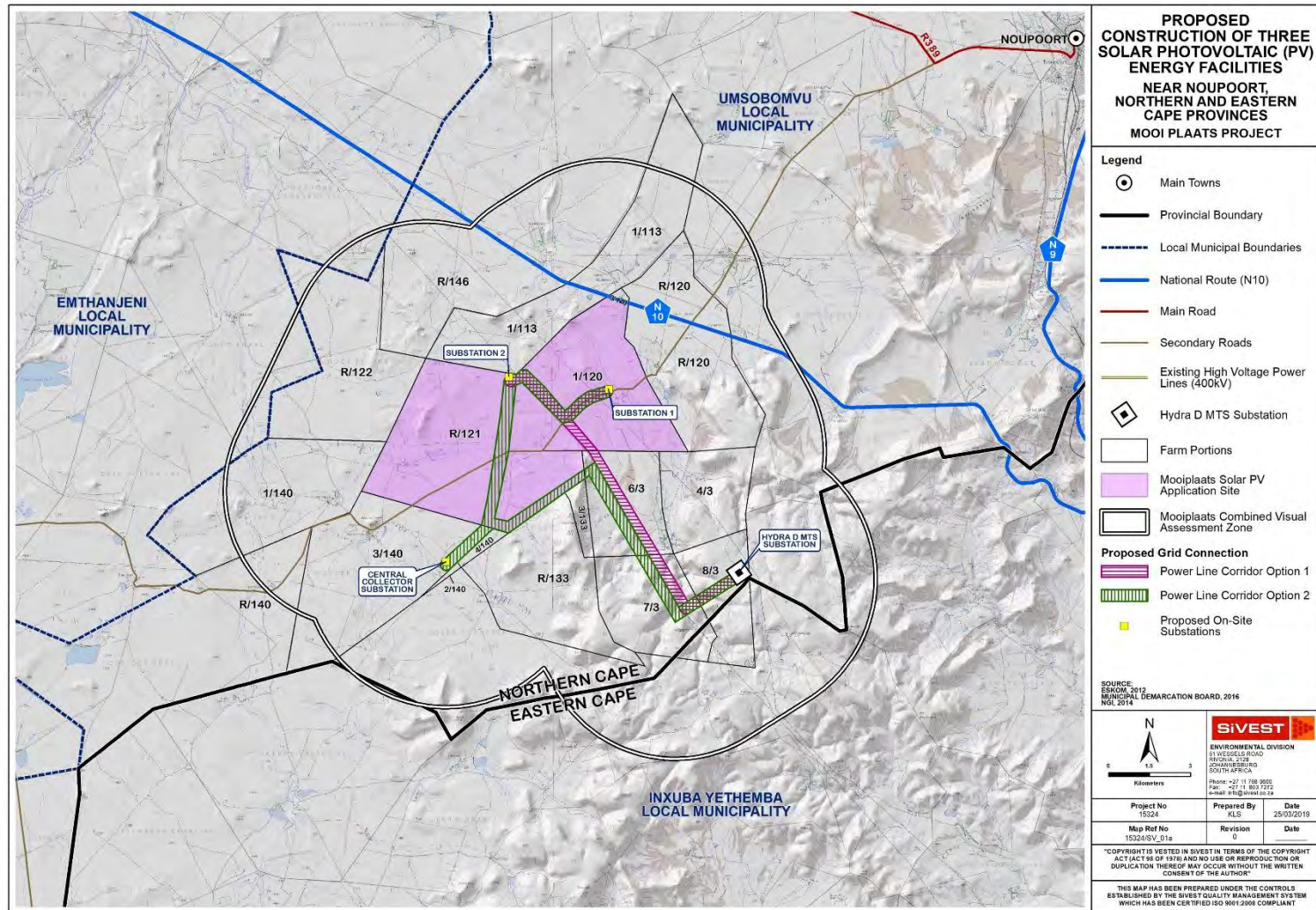
At this stage it is proposed that three (3) Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Energy Facilities will be developed, these being:

- Mooi Plaats Solar PV (hereafter referred to as “Mooi Plaats”), on an application site of approximately 5303ha.
- Wonderheuvel Solar PV (hereafter referred to as “Wonderheuvel”), on an application site of approximately 5652ha.

- Paarde Valley Solar PV (hereafter referred to as “Paarde Valley”), on an application site of approximately 2631ha.

The generated electricity will be fed into the national grid at either the Hydra D MTS Substation or the proposed Coleskop WEF Substation via a 132kV power line.

The key components of the project are detailed below and the three application sites and associated grid connection proposals are shown in **Figure 1**, **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**.



**Figure 1: Proposed Mooi Plaats Solar PV Project**

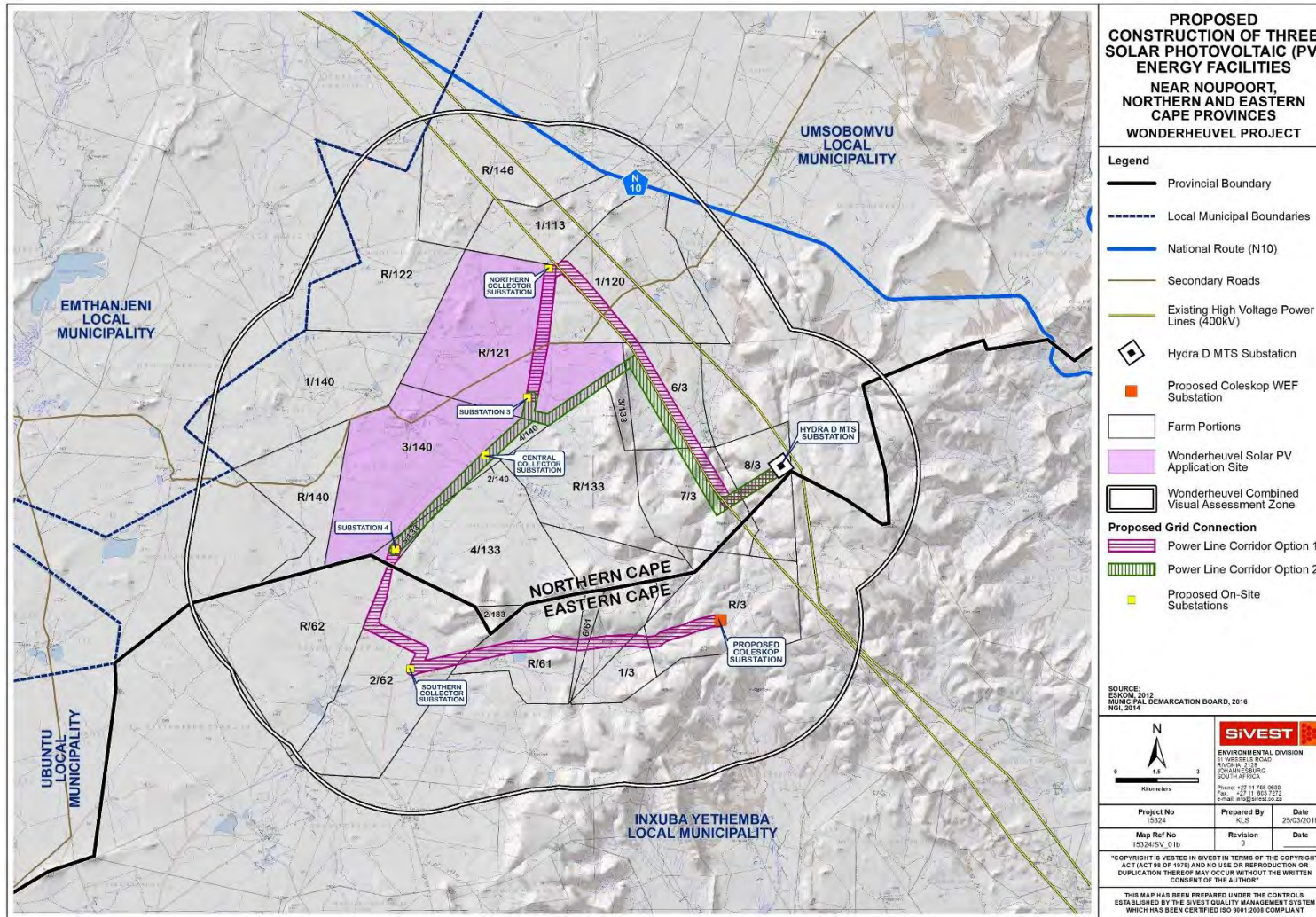
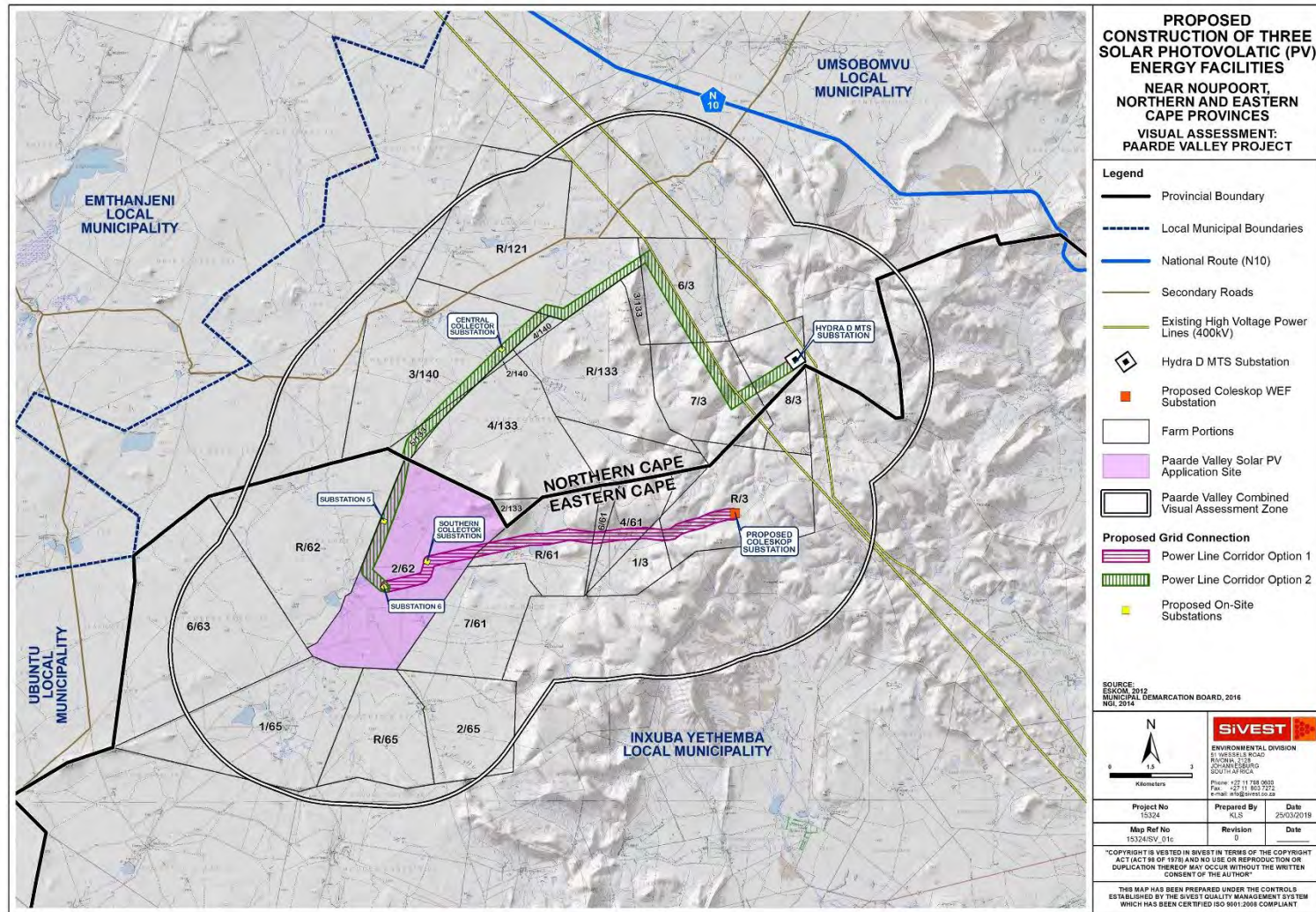


Figure 2: Proposed Wonderheuveld Solar PV Project



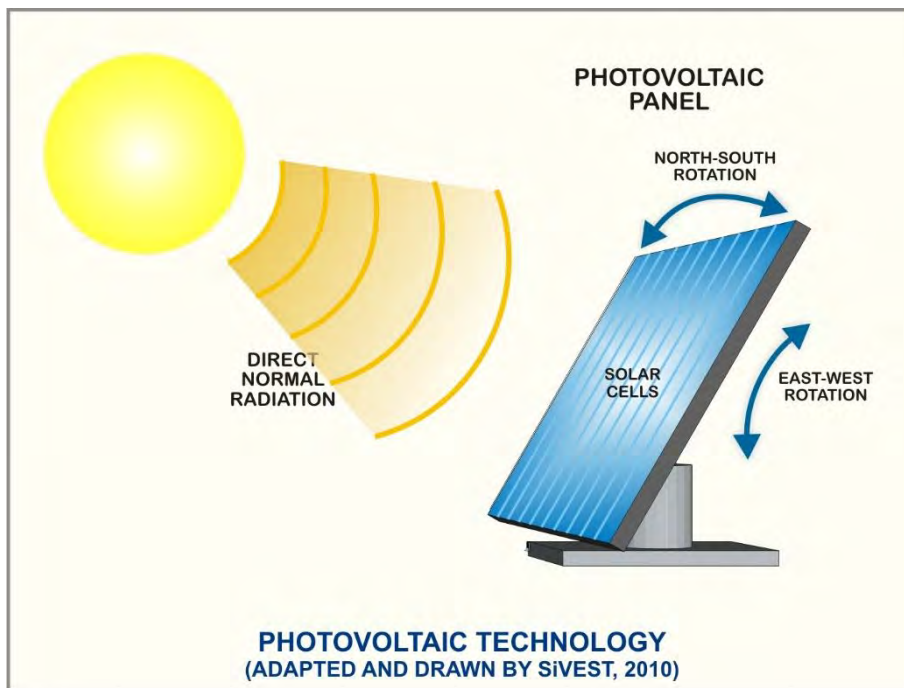
**Figure 3: Proposed Paarde Valley Solar PV Project**



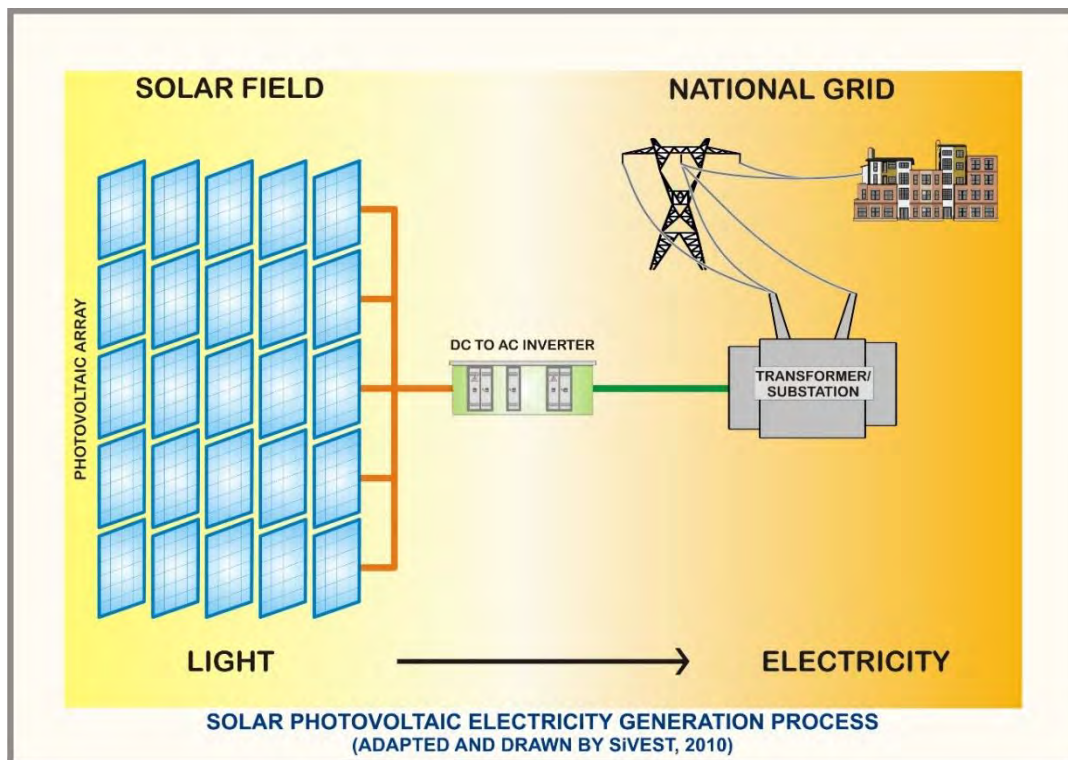
### 1.1.1 Solar PV Facilities

Each of the three Solar PV facilities will include the following components:

- PV fields (arrays) comprising multiple PV panels. The number of panels, the generation capacity of each facility and the layout of the arrays will be dependent on the outcome of the specialist studies conducted during the EIA process.
- PV panels will be either fixed tilt mounting or single axis tracking mounting (**Figure 4**), and the modules will be either crystalline silicon or thin film technology. Each panel will be approximately 2m wide and between 1m and 4m in height, depending on the mounting type.
- Internal roads, between 4m and 10m wide, will provide access to the PV arrays. Existing site roads will be used wherever possible, although new site roads will be constructed where necessary.
- Each PV facility will include up to two (2) temporary construction laydown/staging areas of approximately 10ha each.
- Operation and maintenance (O&M) buildings will be provided for each PV field, occupying a site of approximately 2 500m<sup>2</sup> (50m x 50m).
- Medium voltage cabling will link the PV plant to the grid connection infrastructure (**Figure 5**). These cables will be laid underground wherever technically feasible.



**Figure 4:** Typical components of a solar PV Panel



**Figure 5:** Conceptual PV electricity generation process showing electrical connections

### 1.1.2 Grid Connection Infrastructure

The proposed grid connection infrastructure for each PV facility is being assessed as part of a separate BA application. The grid connections will include the following components:

- New on-site substations and collector substations to serve each PV facility, each occupying an area of up to 4ha.
- A new 132kV overhead power line connecting the on-site substations or collector substations to either Hydra D Main Transmission Substation (MTS) or the proposed Coleskop Wind Energy Facility (WEF) substation from where the electricity will be fed into the national grid. The type of power line towers being considered at this stage will include both lattice and monopole towers which will be up to 25m in height and it is assumed that these towers will be located approximately 200m to 250m apart. The exact location of the towers will be determined during the final design stages of the power line.

Two grid connection infrastructure alternatives have been provided for each PV project. These alternatives essentially provide for two different route alignments with associated substations contained within an assessment corridor of approximately 400m wide. These alternatives are as follows:

- **Mooi Plaats Solar PV Grid Connection**
  - Corridor Option 1 is approximately 13kms in length, linking Substations 1 and 2 to Hydra D MTS.
  - Corridor Option 2 is approximately 27kms in length, linking Substations 1 and 2 to Hydra D MTS via the proposed Central Collector substation located on the Wonderheuveld PV project application site.
  
- **Wonderheuveld Solar PV Grid Connection**
  - Corridor Option 1 involves two separate grid connections to serve the northern and southern sectors of the application site. The northern connection is approximately 18kms in length, linking the proposed on-site Substation 3 to Hydra D MTS via the Northern Collector substation. The southern connection is approximately 17kms in length, linking Substation 4 to the proposed Coleskop WEF substation via the Southern Collector substation located on the Paarde Valley PV project application site.
  - Corridor Option 2 is approximately 20kms in length, linking Substations 3 and 4 to Hydra D MTS via the proposed Central Collector substation located on the Wonderheuveld PV project application site.
  
- **Paarde Valley Solar PV Grid Connection**
  - Corridor Option 1 is approximately 14kms in length, linking Substation 6 to the proposed Coleskop WEF substation via the Southern Collector substation.
  - Corridor Option 2 is approximately 26kms in length, linking Substations 5 and 6 to Hydra D MTS via the proposed Central Collector substation located on the Wonderheuveld PV project application site.

## 1.2 Project Location

The proposed SEFs are located on adjoining farms lying south-west of Noupoort in the Northern Cape Province (**Figure 6**).

**Mooi Plaats Solar PV project** is located in the Umsobomvu Local Municipality, within the Pixley ka Seme District of the Northern Cape Province. The application site lies immediately south of the N10 national route, some 23kms from Noupoort, and comprises the following farm portions:

- Portion 1 of Leuwe Kop No 120
- Remainder of Mooi Plaats No 121

**Wonderheuveld Solar PV project** is also located in the Umsobomvu Local Municipality, within the Pixley ka Seme District of the Northern Cape Province. The application site lies between the Mooi Plaats Solar PV application site and the Paarde Valley Solar PV application site, some 30kms from Noupoort, and comprises the following farm portions:

- Remainder of Mooi Plaats No 121
- Portion 3 of Wonder Heuvel No 140
- Portion 5 of Holle Fountain No 133

***Paarde Valley Solar PV project*** is located in the Inxuba Yethemba Local Municipality, within the Chris Hani District District of the Eastern Cape Province. The application site is located on the southern boundary of the Wonderheuvel Solar PV application site, some 38kms from Noupoot, and 32kms from Middelburg. The application site comprises the following farm portion:

- Portion 2 of Paarde Valley No 62

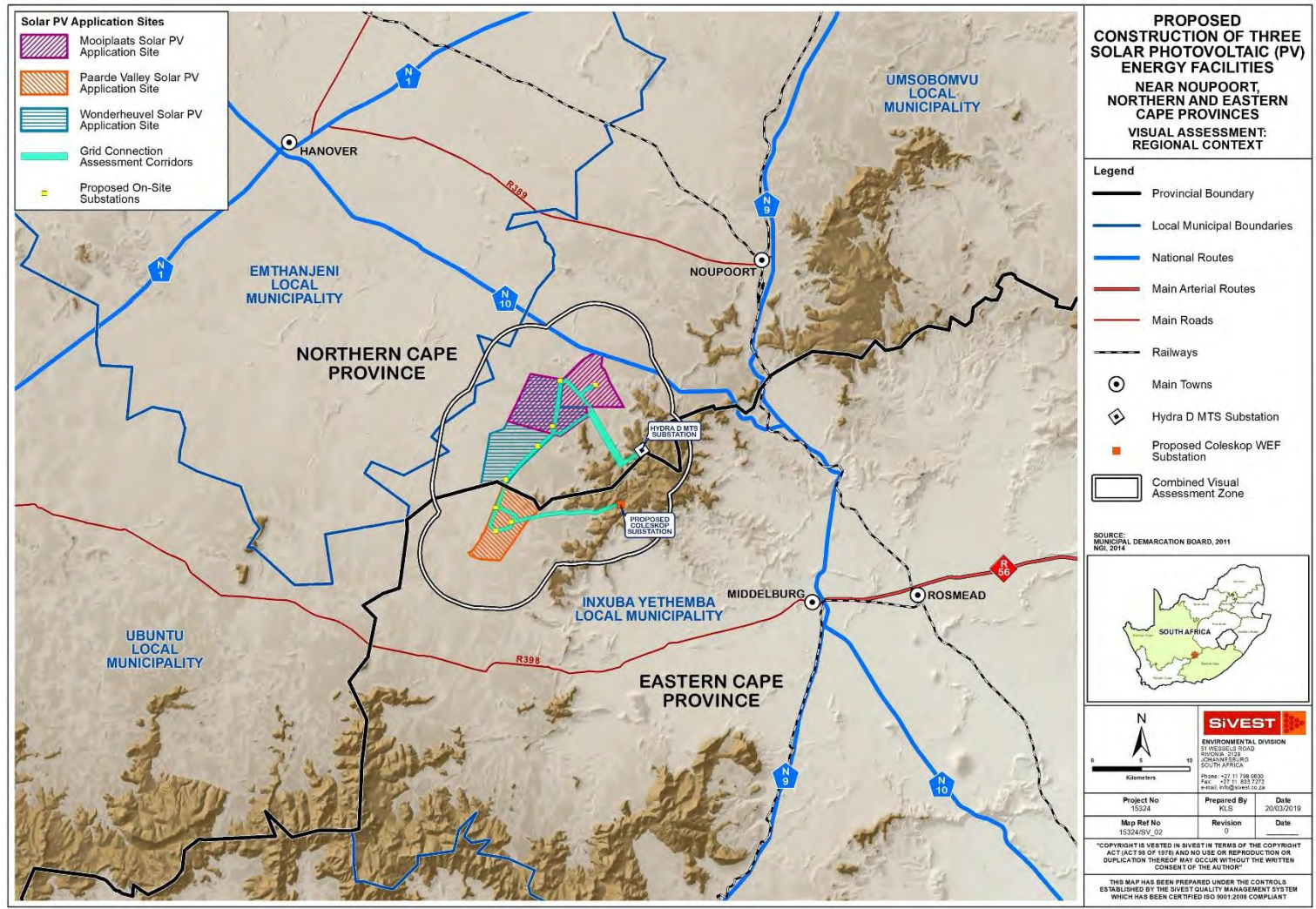


Figure 6: Regional Context Map

### 1.3 Assumptions and Limitations

- The identification of visual receptors involved a combination of desktop assessment as well as field-based observation. Initially Google Earth imagery was used to identify potential receptors within the study area. Where possible, these receptor locations were verified and assessed during a site visit which was undertaken between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2019. Due to the extent of the study area however, and the fact that many of the identified receptors are farm houses on private property, it was not possible to visit or verify every potentially sensitive visual receptor location. As such, a number of broad assumptions have been made in terms of the likely sensitivity of the receptors to the proposed development. It should be noted that not all receptor locations would necessarily perceive the proposed development in a negative way. This is usually dependent on the use of the facility, the economic dependency of the occupants on the scenic quality of views from the facility and on people's perceptions of the value of "Green Energy". Sensitive receptor locations typically include sites such as tourism facilities and scenic locations within natural settings which are likely to be adversely affected by the visual intrusion of the proposed development. Thus the presence of a receptor in an area potentially affected by the proposed development does not necessarily mean that any visual impact will be experienced.
- Given the nature of the receiving environment and the height of the proposed PV panels and power line towers, the study area or visual assessment zone is assumed to encompass an area of 5km from the boundary of the application sites. This limit on the visual assessment zone relates to the fact that visual impacts decrease exponentially over distance. Thus although the proposed development may still be visible beyond 5km, the degree of visual impact would diminish considerably. As such, the need to assess the impact on potential receptors beyond this distance would not be warranted.
- Due to the varying scales and sources of information; maps may have minor inaccuracies. Terrain data for this area derived from the National Geo-Spatial Information (NGI)'s 25m DEM is fairly coarse and somewhat inconsistent and as such, localised topographic variations in the landscape may not be reflected on the Digital Elevation Model (DEM) used to generate the viewsheds.
- In addition the viewshed analysis does not take into account any existing vegetation cover or built infrastructure which may screen views of the proposed development. This analysis should therefore be seen as a conceptual representation or a worst case scenario.
- The potential visual impact at each visual receptor location was assessed using a matrix developed for this purpose. The matrix is based on three main parameters relating to visual impact and, although relatively simplistic, it provides a reasonably accurate indicative assessment of the degree of visual impact likely to be experienced

at each receptor location as a result of the proposed development. It is however important to note the limitations of quantitatively assessing a largely subjective or qualitative type of impact and as such the matrix should be seen merely as a representation of the likely visual impact at a receptor location.

- No feedback regarding the visual environment has been received from the public participation process to date, however any feedback from the public during the review period of the Draft Scoping Report (DSR) will be incorporated into further drafts of this report.
- At the time of undertaking the visual study no information was available regarding the type and intensity of lighting that will be required for the proposed SEFs and therefore the potential impact of lighting at night has not been assessed at a detailed level. However, lighting requirements are relatively similar for all Solar PV Energy Facilities and as such, general measures to mitigate the impact of additional light sources on the ambiance of the nightscape have been provided.
- This study includes an assessment of the potential cumulative impacts of other renewable energy developments on the existing landscape character and on the identified sensitive receptors. This assessment is based on the information available at the time of writing the report and where information has not been available, broad assumptions have been made as to the likely impacts of these developments.
- At the time of writing this report, the proposed site layouts were still in the preliminary design phase and as such, no visualisation modelling was undertaken for these solar PV projects.
- SiVEST made every effort to obtain information for the surrounding planned renewable energy developments (including specialist studies, assessment reports and Environmental Management Programmes), however some of the documents are not currently publically available for download. The available information was factored into the cumulative impact assessment (Section 5.4).
- It should be noted that the site visit was undertaken in the first week of February 2019, during mid to late summer, when most rainfall occurs. Typically, the visual impact of a PV project would be less significant during the rainy periods of the year than it would during the drier periods when the surrounding vegetation is expected to provide less potential screening. The study area is however typically characterised by low levels of rainfall and the vegetation cover is largely dominated by low shrubs. Thus the season is not expected to have a significant effect on the visual impact of the proposed development.
- The weather conditions in the study area also affect the visual impact of the proposed development to some degree. The site visit was undertaken in clear weather conditions which tend to prevail for most of the year due to the low levels of rainfall in the area. In these clear conditions, PV panels would present a greater contrast with the surrounding

landscape than they would during overcast conditions. The weather conditions during the time of the study were therefore taken into consideration when undertaking this VIA.

## 1.4 Specialist Credentials

This VIA has been undertaken by Kerry Schwartz and reviewed by Andrea Gibb from SiVEST. Andrea Gibb has 11 years' work experience and specialises in undertaking visual impact and landscape assessments, by making use of ArcGIS technology and field surveys. Andrea's relevant VIA project experience is listed in the table below.

<b>Environmental Practitioner</b>	SiVEST (Pty) Ltd – Andrea Gibb
<b>Contact Details</b>	<a href="mailto:andreag@sivest.co.za">andreag@sivest.co.za</a>
<b>Qualifications</b>	BSc Landscape Architecture and BSc (Hons) Environmental Management
<b>Expertise to carry out the Visual Impact Assessment.</b>	<p><b><u>Visual Impact Assessments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Sendawo 1, 2 and 3 solar PV energy facilities near Vryburg, North West Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Tlisitseng 1 and 2 solar PV energy facilities near Lichtenburg, North West Province.</li> <li>▪ VIA for the proposed Nokukhanya 75MW Solar PV Power Plant near Dennilton, Limpopo Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Helena 1, 2 and 3 75MW Solar PV Energy Facilities near Copperton, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIA (EIA) for the proposed Paulputs WEF near Pofadder in the Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIA (EIA) for the proposed development of the Rondekop WEF near Sutherland in the Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIA (BA) for the proposed development of the Tooverberg WEF near Touws Rivier in the Western Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Graskoppies Wind Farm near Loeriesfontein, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Hartebeest Leegte Wind Farm near Loeriesfontein, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Ithemba Wind Farm near Loeriesfontein, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Xha! Boom Wind Farm near Loeriesfontein, Northern Cape Province</li> <li>▪ VIA (Scoping Phase) for the proposed 3000MW Wind Farm and associated infrastructure near Richmond, Northern Cape Province.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ VIA for the proposed construction of a power line and associated infrastructure for the proposed Kalkaar Solar Thermal Power Plant near Kimberley, Free State and Northern Cape Provinces.</li> <li>▪ VIA for the proposed construction of a power line and associated infrastructure for the proposed Rooipunt Solar Thermal Power Plant near Upington, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed construction of the Sendawo substation and associated 400kV power line near Vryburg, North West Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed development of the Dwarsrug Wind Farm near Loeriesfontein, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIA for the proposed construction of two 132kV power lines and associated infrastructure from the Redstone Solar Thermal Power Project site to the Olien MTS near Lime Acres, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIA for the proposed construction of two 132kV power lines and associated infrastructure from Silverstreams DS to the Olien MTS near Lime Acres, Northern Cape Province.</li> </ul>
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Kerry Schwartz is a GIS specialist with more than 20 years' experience in the application of GIS technology in various environmental, regional planning and infrastructural projects undertaken by SiVEST. Kerry's GIS skills have been extensively utilised in projects throughout South Africa and in other Southern African countries. Kerry has also been involved in the compilation of VIA reports. Kerry's relevant VIA project experience is listed in the table below.

<b>Environmental Practitioner</b>	SiVEST (Pty) Ltd – Kerry Schwartz
<b>Contact Details</b>	<a href="mailto:kerrys@sivest.co.za">kerrys@sivest.co.za</a>
<b>Qualifications</b>	BA (Geography), University of Leeds 1982
<b>Expertise to carry out the Visual Impact Assessment.</b>	<p><b><u>Visual Impact Assessments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Sendawo 1, 2 and 3 solar PV energy facilities near Vryburg, North West Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Tlisitseng 1 and 2 solar PV energy facilities near Lichtenburg, North West Province.</li> <li>▪ VIA for the proposed Nokukhanya 75MW Solar PV Power Plant near Dennilton, Limpopo Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Helena 1, 2 and 3 75MW Solar PV Energy Facilities near Copperton, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIA (EIA) for the proposed Paulputs WEF near Pofadder in the Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIA (EIA) for the proposed development of the Rondekop WEF near Sutherland in the Northern Cape Province.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ VIA (BA) for the proposed development of the Tooverberg WEF near Touws Rivier in the Western Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIA (BA) for the proposed development of the Kudusberg WEF near Sutherland, Northern and Western Cape Provinces.</li> <li>▪ VIA (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed development of the Kuruman Wind Energy Facility near Kuruman, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIA (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed development of the Phezukomoya Wind Energy Facility near Noupoot, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIA (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed development of the San Kraal Wind Energy Facility near Noupoot, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Graskoppies Wind Farm near Loeriesfontein, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Hartebeest Leegte Wind Farm near Loeriesfontein, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Ithemba Wind Farm near Loeriesfontein, Northern Cape Province.</li> <li>▪ VIAs (Scoping and Impact Phase) for the proposed Xha! Boom Wind Farm near Loeriesfontein, Northern Cape Province</li> <li>▪ Visual Impact Assessments for 5 Solar Power Plants in the Northern Cape</li> <li>▪ Visual Impact Assessments for 2 Wind Farms in the Northern Cape</li> <li>▪ Visual Impact Assessment for Mookodi Integration Project (132kV distribution lines)</li> <li>▪ Landscape Character Assessment for Mogale City Environmental Management Framework</li> </ul>
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Full CVs are attached as **Appendix B**.

## 1.5 Assessment Methodology

As mentioned above, this VIA has been based on a desktop-level assessment supported by field-based observation.

### 1.5.1 Physical landscape characteristics

Physical landscape characteristics such as topography, vegetation and land use are important factors influencing the visual character and visual sensitivity of the study area. Baseline information about the physical characteristics of the study area was initially sourced from spatial databases provided by NGI, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and the

South African National Land Cover Dataset (Geoterraimage – 2014). The characteristics identified via desktop means were later verified during the site visit.

### 1.5.2 Identification of sensitive receptors

Visual receptor locations and routes that are sensitive and/or potentially sensitive to the visual intrusion of the proposed development were assessed in order to determine the impact of the proposed development on each of the identified receptor locations.

### 1.5.3 Fieldwork and photographic review

A four (4) day site visit was undertaken between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2019 (mid to late summer). The purpose of the site visit was to:

- verify the landscape characteristics identified via desktop means;
- conduct a photographic survey of the study area;
- verify, where possible, the sensitivity of visual receptor locations identified via desktop means;
- eliminate receptor locations that are unlikely to be influenced by the proposed development;
- identify any additional visually sensitive receptor locations within the study area; and
- inform the impact rating assessment of visually sensitive receptor locations (where possible).

### 1.5.4 Impact Assessment

A rating matrix was used to objectively evaluate the significance of the visual impacts associated with the proposed development, both before and after implementing mitigation measures. Mitigation measures were identified (where possible) in an attempt to minimise the visual impact of the proposed development. The rating matrix made use of a number of different factors including geographical extent, probability, reversibility, irreplaceable loss of resources, duration and intensity, in order to assign a level of significance to the visual impact of the project.

A separate rating matrix was used to assess the visual impact of the proposed development on each visual receptor location (both sensitive and potentially sensitive), as identified. This matrix is based on three (3) parameters, namely the distance of an identified visual receptor from the proposed development, the presence of screening factors and the degree to which the proposed development would contrast with the surrounding environment.

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### 1.5.5 Consultation with I&APs

Continuous consultation with Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) undertaken during the public participation process will be used (where available) to help establish how the proposed development will be perceived by the various receptor locations and the degree to which the impact will be regarded as negative. Although I&APs have not yet provided any feedback in this regard, the EIA phase report will be updated to include relevant information as and when it becomes available.

## 2 FACTORS INFLUENCING VISUAL IMPACT

### 2.1 Subjective experience of the viewer

The perception of the viewer/receptor toward an impact is highly subjective and involves 'value judgements' on behalf of the receptor. It is largely based on the viewer's perception and is usually dependent on the age, gender, activity preferences, time spent within the landscape and traditions of the viewer (Barthwal, 2002). Thus certain receptors may not consider a SEF to be a negative visual impact as it is often associated with employment creation, social upliftment and the general growth and progression of an area, and could even have positive connotations.

### 2.2 Visual environment

SEFs are not features of the natural environment, but are rather a representation of human (anthropogenic) alteration. As such, these developments are likely to be perceived as visually intrusive when placed in largely undeveloped landscapes that have a natural scenic quality and where tourism activities, based upon the enjoyment of (or exposure to) the scenic or aesthetic character of the area, are practiced. Residents and visitors to these areas could perceive the PV panels and associated infrastructure to be highly incongruous in this context and may regard these features as an unwelcome intrusion which degrades the natural character and scenic beauty of the area, and which could potentially even compromise the practising of tourism activities in the area. The experience of the viewer is however highly subjective and there are those who may not perceive features such as PV panels as a visual intrusion.

The presence of other anthropogenic features associated with the built environment may not only obstruct views but also influence the perception of whether a development is a visual impact. In industrial areas for example, where other infrastructure and built form already exists, the visual environment could be considered to be 'degraded' and thus the introduction of a SEF into this setting may be considered to be less visually intrusive than if there was no existing built infrastructure visible.

## 2.3 Type of visual receptor

Visual impacts can be experienced by different types of receptors, including people living, working or driving along roads within the viewshed of the proposed development. The receptor type in turn affects the nature of the typical 'view', with views being permanent in the case of a residence or other place of human habitation, or transient in the case of vehicles moving along a road. The nature of the view experienced affects the intensity of the visual impact experienced.

It is important to note that visual impacts are only experienced when there are receptors present to experience this impact. Thus where there are no human receptors or viewers present there are not likely to be any visual impacts experienced.

## 2.4 Viewing distance

Viewing distance is a critical factor in the experiencing of visual impacts, as beyond a certain distance, even large developments tend to be much less visible, and difficult to differentiate from the surrounding landscape. The visibility of an object is likely to decrease exponentially as one moves away from the source of impact, with the impact at 1 000m being considerably less than the impact at a distance of 500m (**Figure 7**).

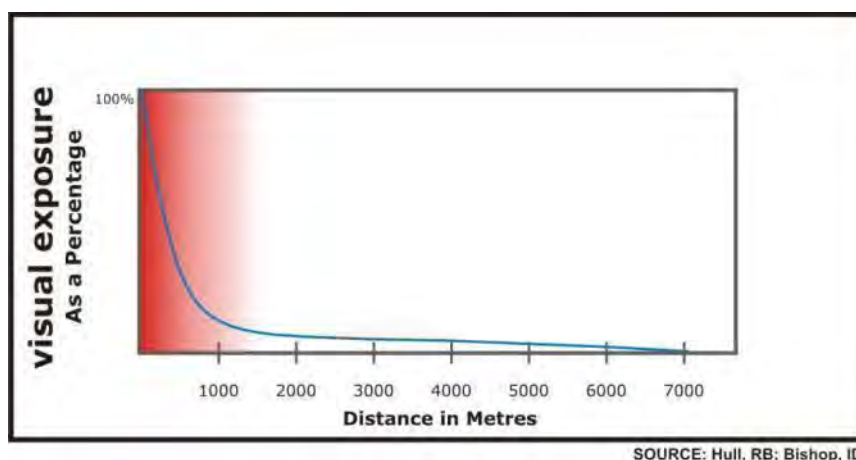


Figure 7: Conceptual representation of diminishing visual exposure over distance

## 3 VISUAL CHARACTER AND SENSITIVITY OF THE STUDY AREA

Defining the visual character of an area is an important part of assessing visual impacts as it establishes the visual baseline or existing visual environment in which the development would be constructed. The visual impact of a development is measured by establishing the degree to which the development would contrast with, or conform to, the visual character of the surrounding area. The inherent sensitivity of the area to visual impacts or visual sensitivity is

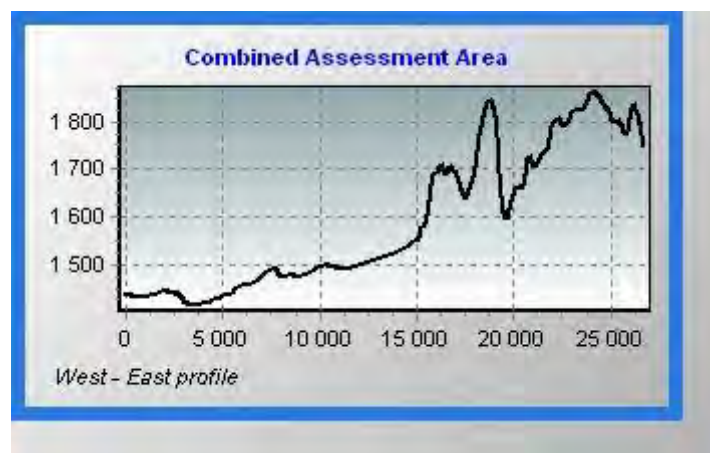
thereafter determined, based on the visual character, the economic importance of the scenic quality of the area, inherent cultural value of the area and the presence of visual receptors.

Physical and land use related characteristics, as outlined below, are important factors contributing to the visual character of an area.

### 3.1 Physical and Land Use Characteristics

#### 3.1.1 Topography

As can be seen from the profile graph below (**Figure 8**), the combined assessment area slopes significantly downwards from a height of approximately 1 900msl in the east to approximately 1 400msl in the west. Hence the western sector of the study area is characterised by relatively flat grasslands with undulating hills, typical of much of the Karoo (**Figure 9**). The eastern sector of the study area is however dominated by areas of greater relief where hilly terrain is characterised by incised valleys, steep slopes and flatter, higher lying plateaus with steep slopes (**Figure 10**).



**Figure 8:** Topographic profile of the combined assessment area.

Maps showing the topography and slopes within and in the immediate vicinity of the combined assessment area are provided in **Figure 11** and **Figure 12**.



**Figure 9:** Flat to undulating terrain in the western sector of the study area



**Figure 10:** Hilly terrain in the eastern sector of the study area



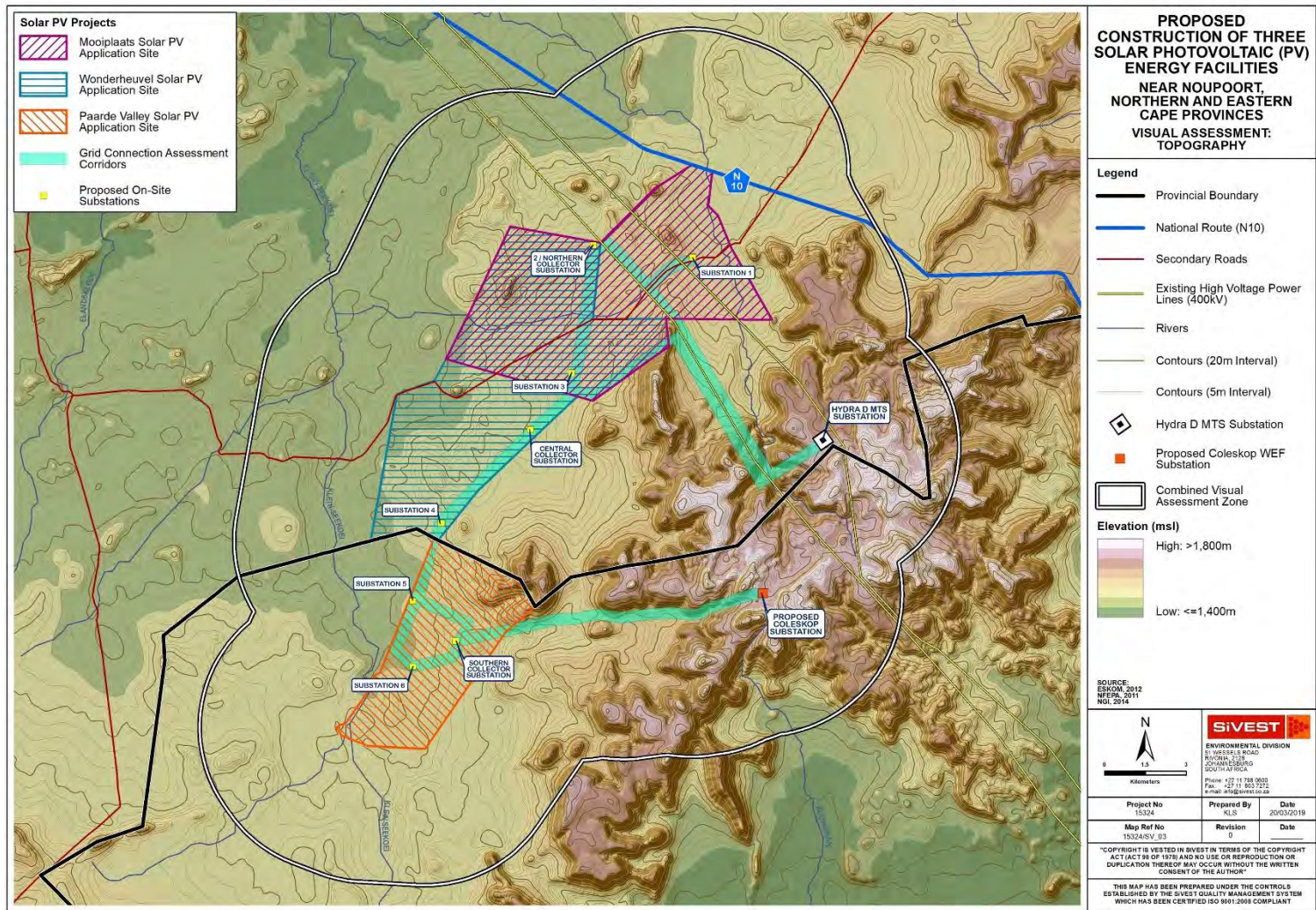


Figure 11: Topography of the study area

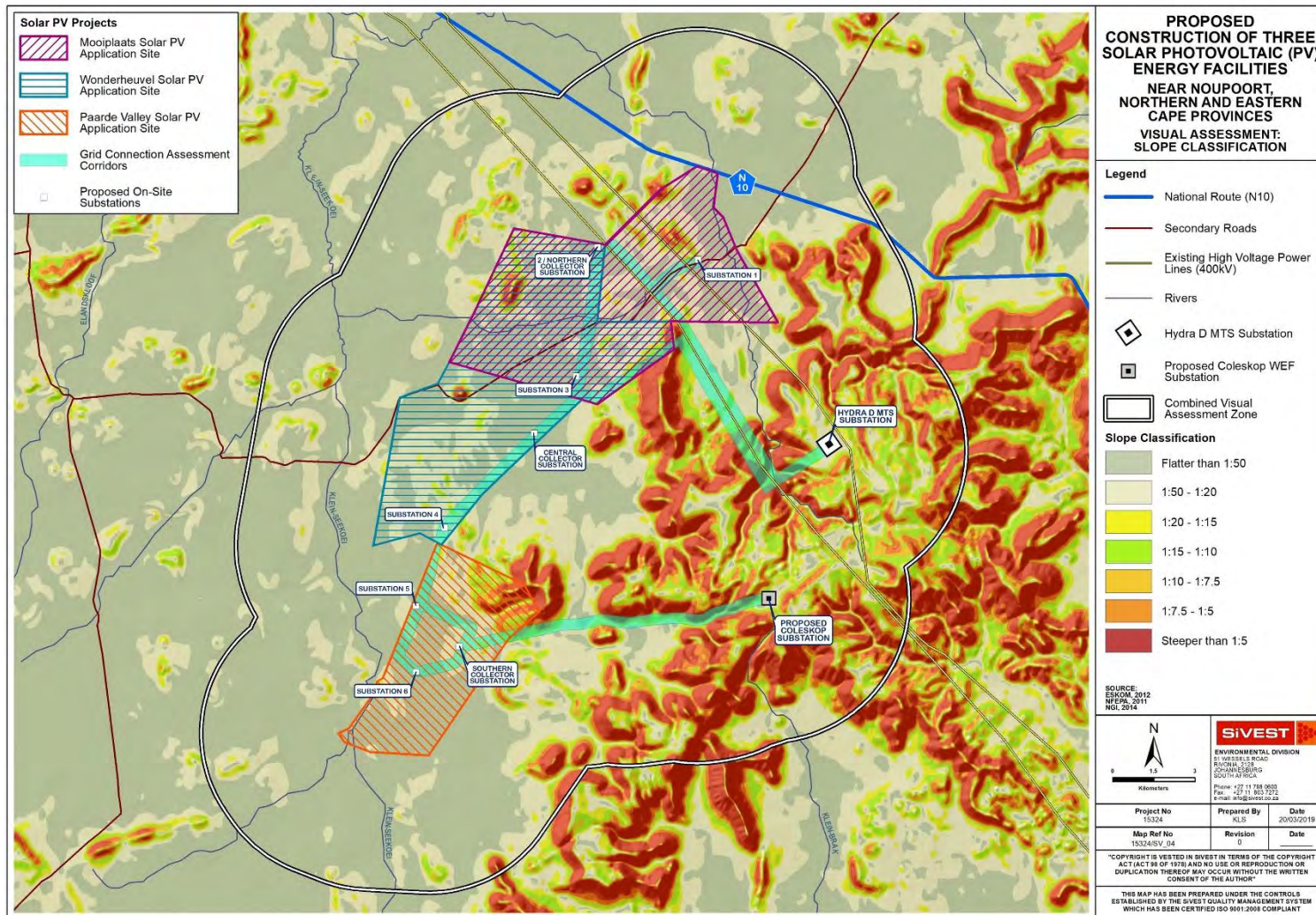


Figure 12: Slope classification

## Visual Implications

Areas of flat relief, including the flat plains and the higher-lying plateaus, are characterised by wide ranging vistas (**Figure 13**), although views eastwards will be somewhat constrained by the hilly terrain in the western sector of the study area (**Figure 14**). In the hillier and higher-lying terrain, the vistas will depend on the position of the viewer. Viewers located within some of the more incised valleys for example, would have limited vistas, whereas a much wider vista would be experienced by viewers on higher-lying ridge tops or slopes. Importantly in the context of this study, the same is true of objects placed at different elevations and within different landscape settings. Objects placed on high-elevation slopes or ridge tops would be highly visible, while those placed in valleys or enclosed plateaus would be far less visible.

The PV arrays will not however be located on high elevation slopes or on ridgelines and as such there will be minimal impact on the skyline. Sections of the grid connection assessment corridor may however impact on the skyline, particularly where they traverse ridges. In addition, with little to no topographic shielding, the pylons and the steel structures of the proposed substations at a maximum height of 25m are likely to be visible from many of the locally-occurring receptor locations.



**Figure 13:** View northwards across the study showing area wide ranging vistas



**Figure 14:** Hilly terrain constraining views east and southeast

### 3.1.2 *Vegetation*

According to Mucina and Rutherford (2012), the areas of the visual assessment zone which are characterised by flatter Karoo plains are largely covered by the Eastern Upper Karoo vegetation type, while the hillier areas in the east of the study area are characterised by Besem Karee Koppies shrubland (**Figure 15**). The aridity of the area has restricted the vegetation to low shrubs distributed uniformly across the landscape (**Figure 16**), except in areas of hillier terrain which tend to be more densely vegetated with more tree species in evidence (**Figure 17**).

Additional tree species are also present in the study area, particularly where exotic tree species and other typical garden vegetation has been established around farmsteads. (**Figure 18**).

Much of the study area however is still characterised by natural low shrubland with transformation limited to patches of cultivation and a few isolated areas where pastoral activities such as livestock rearing are taking place.

#### Visual Implications

Vegetation cover across the study area is predominantly short and sparse and thus will not provide any visual screening. In some instances however, tall exotic trees planted around farmhouses will restrict views from receptor locations (**Figure 19**).

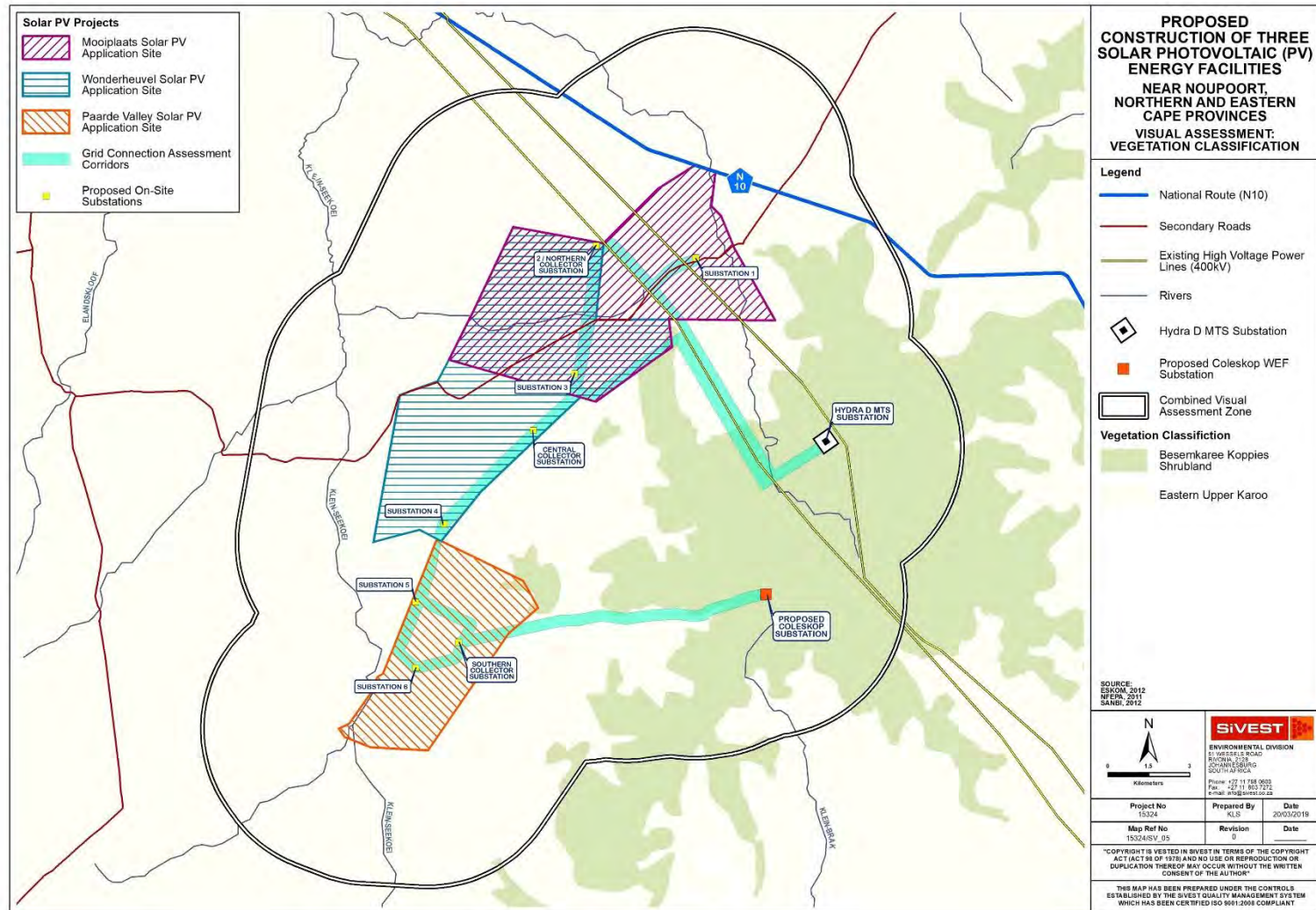


Figure 15: Vegetation Classification in the Study Area



**Figure 16:** Low shrubland prevalent on the flatter plains of the study area



**Figure 17:** Denser vegetation and tree species on hilly terrain



**Figure 18:** Typical trees and garden vegetation around farmhouses



**Figure 19:** Screening vegetation around farmhouses

### 3.1.3 Land Use

According to the South African National Land Cover dataset (Geoterraimage 2014), large sections of the visual assessment area are characterised by low shrubland with large areas of grassland and smaller patches of woodland / open bush and thicket / dense bush occurring in the hilly areas in the eastern sector of the study area. Significant tracts of land in the study area are classified as 'bare (none vegetated)', and while some of these 'bare' areas are representative of transformation due to human activity, in many cases these patches of land are merely undisturbed areas with very sparse vegetation cover (**Figure 20**).

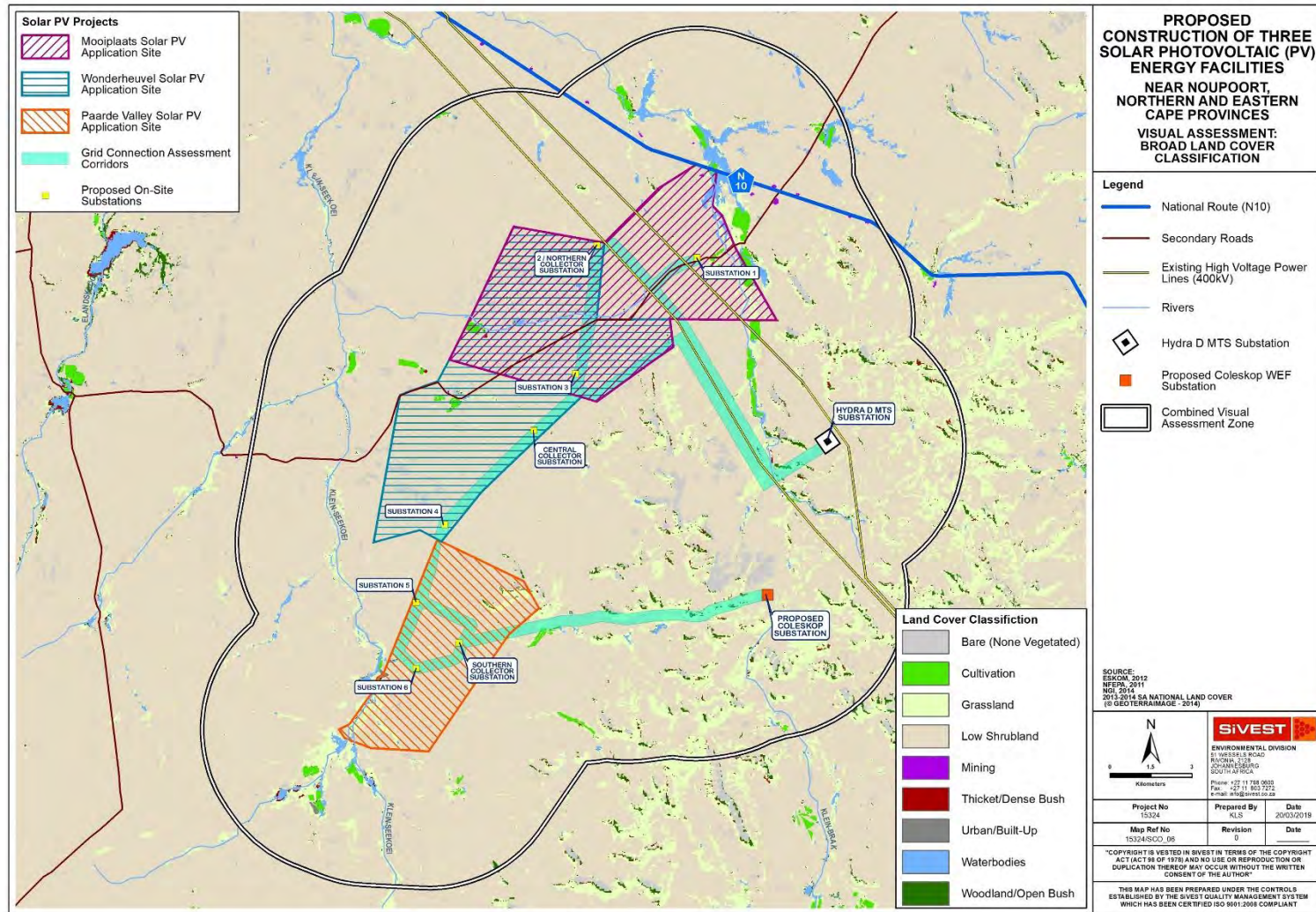
Agricultural activity in the area is restricted by the arid nature of the local climate and areas of cultivation are largely confined to relatively limited areas distributed along drainage lines (**Figure 21**). As such, the natural vegetation has been retained across much of the study area. Livestock farming (mostly sheep) is the dominant activity (**Figure 22**), although the climatic and soil conditions have resulted in low densities of livestock and relatively large farm properties across the area. Thus the area has a very low density of rural settlement, with relatively few scattered farmsteads in evidence. Built form in much of the study area is limited to isolated farmsteads, including farm worker's dwellings and ancillary farm buildings, gravel access roads, telephone lines, fences and windmills (**Figure 23**).

Further human influence is visible in the area in the form of the N10 national route which traverses the study area in a north-west to south-east direction (**Figure 24**). In addition, there are several small patches of land scattered across the study area which are classified as 'Mines / Quarries'. These areas appear to be small quarries or 'diggings' and are mostly located adjacent to the public roads, especially along the N10.

The closest built-up area is the town of Noupoort which is situated approximately 23km north-east of the Mooi Plaats application site while Middelburg is some 30km to the south-east of the Paarde Valley application site. These small towns are well outside the combined study area for these SEFs and are thus not expected to have an impact on the visual character of the study area.

Existing power lines in this area are also significant man-made features in an otherwise undeveloped landscape. Two sets of high voltage (400kV) power lines traverse the northern section of the study area, bisecting the Mooi Plaats solar PV application site in a north-west to south-east alignment (**Figure 25**).





**Figure 20: Land Cover Classification**



**Figure 21:** View of cultivated land on Wonderheuveld solar PV application site



**Figure 22:** Evidence of sheep rearing in the assessment zone



**Figure 23:** Farm buildings and associated infrastructure on Mooi Plaats Solar PV application site.



**Figure 24:** View of the N10 National Route on the northern boundary of Mooi Plaats Solar PV application site.



**Figure 25:** 400kV power lines traversing the Mooi Plaats solar PV application site.

#### Visual Implications

As stated above, sparse human habitation and the predominance of natural vegetation cover across much of the study area would give the viewer the general impression of a largely natural setting with some pastoral elements. In addition, there are no towns or settlements in the study area and thus, there are very low levels of human transformation and visual degradation across much of the study area.

The short, scrubby or grassy vegetation that occurs over the entire study area offers no visual screening in itself, and thus terrain / topography is the most important factor in limiting vistas. Exceptions to this situation occur at some local farmsteads where trees and shrubs have been established around the farmstead, providing effective screening from the surrounding areas.

The influence of the level of human transformation on the visual character of the area is described in more detail below.

### 3.2 Visual Character and Cultural Value

The above physical and land use-related characteristics of the study area contribute to its overall visual character. Visual character largely depends on the level of change or transformation from a natural baseline in which there is little evidence of human transformation of the landscape. Varying degrees of human transformation of a landscape would engender differing visual characteristics to that landscape, with a highly modified urban or industrial landscape being at the opposite end of the scale to a largely natural undisturbed landscape. Visual character is also influenced by the presence of built infrastructure such as buildings, roads and other objects such as telephone or electrical infrastructure.

As mentioned above, much of the study area is characterised by natural landscapes with some pastoral elements and low densities of human settlement. Livestock grazing is the dominant land use. These activities have not transformed the natural landscape to any significant degree and as such a large portion of the study area has retained its natural character and is dominated by largely natural views.

There are no towns or built-up areas in the study area influencing the overall visual character and thus there are very low levels of human transformation and visual degradation across much of the study area. Built form is largely dominated by isolated farmsteads, gravel access roads, telephone lines, low voltage power lines, fences and windmills, although the N10 national route and existing high voltage power lines form significant anthropogenic elements in the study area. The presence of this infrastructure is an important factor in this context, as the introduction of a development such as a SEF would result in less visual contrast where other anthropogenic elements are already present, especially where the scale of those elements is similar to that of the proposed development.

The greater area surrounding the development site is an important component when assessing visual character. The area can be considered to be typical of a Karoo or “platteland” landscape that would characteristically be encountered across the high-lying dry western and central interior of South Africa. Much of South Africa’s dry Karoo interior consists of wide open, uninhabited spaces sparsely punctuated by scattered farmsteads and small towns. Over the last couple of decades an increasing number of tourism routes have been established in the Karoo and in a context of increasing urbanisation in South Africa’s major centres, the Karoo is being marketed as an undisturbed getaway. Examples of this may be found in the “Getaway Guide to Karoo, Namaqualand and Kalahari” (Moseley and Naude-Moseley, 2008).

The typical Karoo landscape can be considered a valuable ‘cultural landscape’ in the South African context. Although the cultural landscape concept is relatively new, it is becoming an increasingly important concept in terms of the preservation and management of rural and urban settings across the world (Breedlove, 2002).

Cultural Landscapes can fall into three categories (according to the Committee's Operational Guidelines):

- "a landscape designed and created intentionally by man";
- an "organically evolved landscape" which may be a "relict (or fossil) landscape" or a "continuing landscape"; and
- an "associative cultural landscape" which may be valued because of the "religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element".

The typical Karoo landscape consisting of wide open plains, and isolated relief, interspersed with isolated farmsteads, windmills and stock holding pens, is an important part of the cultural matrix of the South African environment. The Karoo farmstead is also a representation of how the harsh arid nature of the environment in this part of the country has shaped the predominant land use and economic activity practiced in the area, as well as the patterns of human habitation and interaction. The presence of small towns, such as Noupoot and Middelburg, engulfed by an otherwise rural, almost barren environment, form an integral part of the wider Karoo landscape. As such, the Karoo landscape as it exists today has value as a cultural landscape in the South African context. In terms of the types of cultural landscape listed above, the Karoo cultural landscape would fall into the second category, that of an organically evolved, "continuing" landscape.

In light of this, it is important to assess whether the introduction of a solar PV facility with associated infrastructure into the study area would be a degrading factor in the context of the natural Karoo character of the landscape. However, considering the fact that a number of SEFs and WEFs have been developed or are likely to be developed across the Karoo, it is possible that renewable energy facilities and wind turbines may in the future become an integral part of the typical Karoo cultural landscape.

In this instance visual impacts on the cultural landscape would be reduced by the fact that the area is relatively remote and there are relatively few tourism or nature-based leisure facilities in the study area. In addition, although the northern portion of the proposed Mooi Plaats application is visible from the N10 national route, the section of this route that traverses the study area does not form part of a designated tourism route and is not expected to experience heavy volumes of tourist traffic.

### 3.3 Visual Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity can be defined as the inherent sensitivity of an area to potential visual impacts associated with a proposed development. It is based on the physical characteristics of the area (i.e. topography, landform and land cover), the spatial distribution of potential receptors, and the likely value judgements of these receptors towards a new development (Oberholzer: 2005). A viewer's perception is usually based on the perceived aesthetic appeal of an area and on the presence of economic activities (such as recreational tourism) which may be based on this aesthetic appeal.

In order to assess the visual sensitivity of the area, SiVEST has developed a matrix based on the characteristics of the receiving environment which, according to the Guidelines for Involving Visual and Aesthetic Specialists in the EIA Processes, indicate that visibility and aesthetics are likely to be 'key issues' (Oberholzer: 2005).

Based on the criteria in the matrix (**Table 1**), the visual sensitivity of the area is broken up into a number of categories, as described below:

- i) **High** - The introduction of a new development such as a solar PV facility would be likely to be perceived negatively by receptors in this area; it would be considered to be a visual intrusion and may elicit opposition from these receptors.
- ii) **Moderate** – Receptors are present, but due to the nature of the existing visual character of the area and likely value judgements of receptors, there would be limited negative perception towards the new development as a source of visual impact.
- iii) **Low** - The introduction of a new development would not be perceived to be negative, there would be little opposition or negative perception towards it.

The table below outlines the factors used to rate the visual sensitivity of the study area. The ratings are specific to the visual context of the receiving environment within the study area.

**Table 1:** Environmental factors used to define visual sensitivity of the study area

FACTORS	DESCRIPTION	RATING												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
Pristine / natural / scenic character of the environment	Study area is largely natural with areas of scenic value and some pastoral elements.													
Presence of sensitive visual receptors	Relatively few sensitive receptors have been identified in the study area.													
Aesthetic sense of place / visual character	Visual character is typical of Karoo Cultural landscape.													
Irreplaceability / uniqueness / scarcity value	Although there are areas of scenic value within the study area, these are not rated as highly unique.													
Cultural or symbolic meaning	Much of the area is typical of a Karoo Cultural landscape.													
Protected / conservation areas in the study area	No protected or conservation areas were identified in the study area.													
Sites of special interest present in the study area	No sites of special interest were identified in the study area.													
Economic dependency on scenic quality	Few tourism/leisure based facilities in the area													
International / regional / local status of the environment	Study area is typical of Karoo landscapes													
**Scenic quality under threat / at risk of change	Introduction of an SPF will alter the visual character and sense of place. In addition, the development of other renewable energy facilities in the broader area as planned will introduce an increasingly industrial character, giving rise to significant cumulative impacts													

\*\*Any rating above '5' for this specific aspect will trigger the need to undertake an assessment of cumulative visual impacts.

Low			Moderate				High			
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	



Based on the above factors, the study area is rated as having a low to moderate visual sensitivity. It should be stressed however that the concept of visual sensitivity has been utilised indicatively to provide a broad-scale indication of whether the landscape is likely to be sensitive to visual impacts, and is based on the physical characteristics of the study area, economic activities and land use that predominates. An important factor contributing to the visual sensitivity of an area is the presence, or absence of visual receptors that may value the aesthetic quality of the landscape and depend on it to produce revenue and create jobs.

No formal protected areas were identified in the study area, and only one tourism facility was identified. In addition, relatively few sensitive or potentially sensitive receptors were found to be present.

### **3.4 Visual Absorption Capacity**

Visual absorption capacity is the ability of the landscape to absorb a new development without any significant change in the visual character and quality of the landscape. The level of absorption capacity is largely based on the physical characteristics of the landscape (topography and vegetation cover) and the level of transformation present in the landscape.

The relatively flat topography in the study area and the relative lack of vegetation to provide screening would reduce the visual absorption capacity across much of the area. This would be offset to some degree where the landscape has already undergone significant transformation as a result of the N10 National route and the 400kV power lines, thus increasing the overall visual absorption capacity of the landscape.

Visual absorption capacity in the study area is therefore rated as low to moderate.

### 3.5 Visually Sensitive Areas on the Site

During the scoping phase, all project specialists were requested to indicate environmentally sensitive areas within the application site. The aim of this exercise was to demarcate those areas of the application site which should be precluded from the solar PV development footprint. From a visual perspective, these would be areas where the establishment of PV panels or other associated infrastructure would result in the greatest probability of visual impacts on potentially sensitive visual receptors.

Using GIS-based visibility analysis, it was possible to determine which sectors of all three application sites would be visible to the highest numbers of receptors in the study area (**Figure 26**). This analysis took into account all the sensitive and potentially sensitive receptor locations identified as well as points along the N10 receptor roads at 500m intervals. The areas visible to the highest number of receptors were rated as areas of 'high sensitivity' and PV panels should preferably be precluded from these areas in order to reduce the potential visual impact on the identified sensitive and potentially sensitive receptor locations. However, as the study area as a whole is rated as having a low to moderate visual sensitivity (refer to **Section Error!** Reference source not found.), these zones are not considered to be areas of high visual sensitivity or no go areas, but rather should be viewed as zones where development should be limited, as the PV panels will still be highly visible.

It should be noted that this sensitivity rating applies to PV fields only. The visual impacts resulting from the associated infrastructure are considered to have far less significance when viewed in the context of multiple PV panels and as such the infrastructure has been excluded from the sensitivity analysis.

It should be noted that the visibility analysis is based purely on topographic data available for the broader study area and does not take into account any localised topographic variations or any existing infrastructure and / or vegetation which may constrain views. In addition, the analysis does not take into account differing perceptions of the viewer which largely determine the degree of visual impact being experienced.

The visual sensitivity analysis should therefore be seen as a conceptual representation or a worst-case scenario which rates the visibility of the site in relation to potentially sensitive receptors.

In addition to the sensitivity ratings, a 500 m exclusion zone has been delineated around the existing residences on the application sites and along the N10 receptor road. It is recommended that PV fields should not be developed within these buffer zones so as to prevent significantly adverse impacts of glint and glare on the local residents and on motorists using the N10.

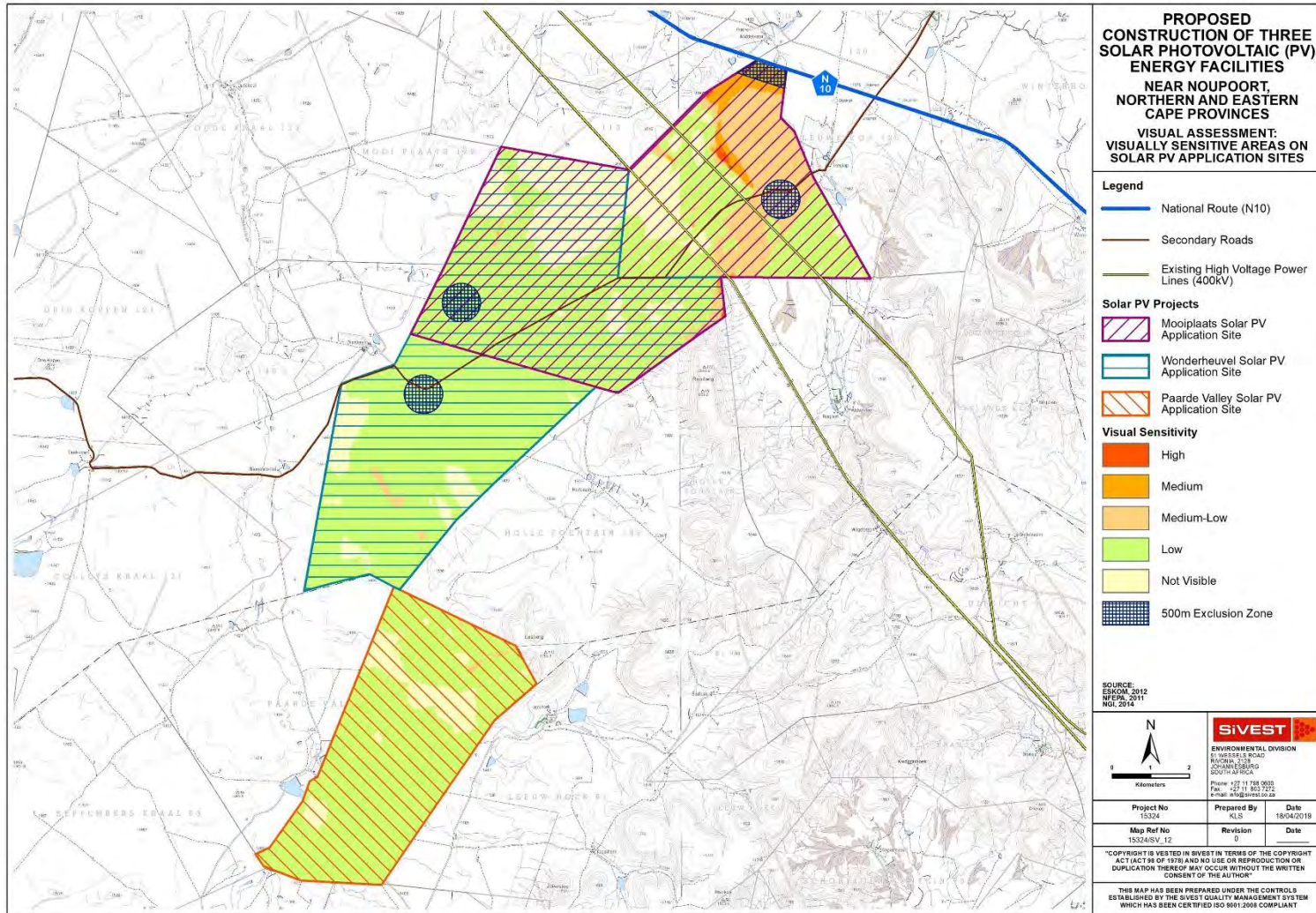


Figure 26: Preliminary visual sensitivity analysis.

## 4 GENERIC VISUAL IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SOLAR PV ENERGY FACILITIES

In this section, the typical visual issues related to the establishment of solar PV facilities and grid connection infrastructure proposed are discussed. It is important to note that the renewable energy industry is still relatively new in South Africa and as such this report draws on international literature and web material (of which there is significant material available) to describe the generic impacts associated with solar energy facilities.

### 4.1 Solar Energy Facilities

#### 4.1.1 Solar PV Fields

The solar power component of the proposed energy generation facility consists of photovoltaic (PV) panels, which grouped together form a 'solar field'. As mentioned above, each PV panel is a large structure that is typically up to 4m high (equivalent in height to a one-storey building). The height of these objects will make them visible, especially in the context of a relatively flat landscape.

More importantly, the concentration of these panels will make them highly visible, depending on the number of panels in each solar field. Solar fields with a large spatial extent (footprint) will become distinctly visible features that contrast with the landscape, especially where the landscape is natural in character or undeveloped. In this context the solar field could be considered to be a visual intrusion, potentially altering the visual environment towards a more industrial character.

The establishment of PV facilities generally requires the clearance of taller vegetation such as trees and shrubs. This will intensify the visual prominence of the solar energy facility, particularly in natural locations where little transformation has taken place (**Figure 27**).



**Figure 27:** Kathu Solar Power Plant (photo courtesy of “visits to the park”), near Kathu, Northern Cape Province.

#### 4.1.2 Associated On-Site Infrastructure

The infrastructure typically associated with a solar PV energy facility will include the following:

- Internal access roads between 4m and 10m wide.
- Temporary construction laydown/staging areas.
- Operation and maintenance buildings, and
- Medium voltage, underground cabling (where feasible) connecting the PV plant to the grid connection infrastructure.

Surface clearance for cable trenches, access roads and laydown areas may result in the increased visual prominence of these features, thus increasing the level of contrast with the surrounding landscape. Buildings placed in prominent positions such as on ridge tops may break the natural skyline, drawing the attention of the viewer. In addition, security lighting on the site may impact on the nightscape (**Section 5.3**).

## 4.2 Grid Connection

Grid connection infrastructure for all three PV facilities will include:

- Collector and on-site substations to supply electricity to the Eskom grid;
- Overhead 132kV power lines to connect the substation to the Eskom grid;

Power line towers and substations are by their nature very large objects and thus highly visible. It is understood that the maximum tower height envisaged for the proposed power line is 25m

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prepared by: **SIVEST**

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(equivalent in height to an eight storey building). Although a pylon/tower structure would be less visible than a building, the height of the structure means that the pylon would still typically be visible from a considerable distance. Visibility would be increased by the fact that the power line comprises a series of towers typically spaced approximately 200m to 400m apart in a linear alignment.

As described above, power lines and substations are not features of the natural environment, but are representative of human (anthropogenic) alteration of the natural environment. Thus, elements of grid connection infrastructure could be perceived to be highly incongruous in the context of a largely natural landscape. The height and linear nature of the power line will exacerbate this incongruity, as the towers may impinge on views within the landscape. In addition, the practice of clearing taller vegetation from areas within the power line servitude can increase the visibility and incongruity of the power line. In a largely natural, bushy setting, vegetation clearance will cause fragmentation of the natural vegetation cover, thus making the power line more visible and drawing the viewer's attention to the servitude.

In this instance, the proposed grid connection infrastructure is intended to serve the three proposed solar PV projects and as such, will only be built if these projects go ahead. The power lines and substations are therefore likely to be perceived as part of the greater PV facility and the visual impact will be relatively minor when compared to the visual impact associated with the development as a whole.

## **5 SENSITIVE VISUAL RECEPTORS**

A sensitive visual receptor location is defined as a location from where receptors would potentially be impacted by a proposed development. Adverse impacts often arise where a new development is seen as an intrusion which alters the visual character of the area and affects the 'sense of place'. The degree of visual impact experienced will however vary from one receptor to another, as it is largely based on the viewer's perception.

A distinction must be made between a receptor location and a sensitive receptor location. A receptor location is a site from where the proposed development may be visible, but the receptor may not necessarily be adversely affected by any visual intrusion associated with the development. Less sensitive receptor locations include locations of commercial activities and certain movement corridors, such as roads that are not tourism routes. More sensitive receptor locations typically include sites that are likely to be adversely affected by the visual intrusion of the proposed development. They include tourism facilities, scenic sites and residential dwellings in natural settings.

The identification of sensitive receptors is typically based on a number of factors which include:

- the visual character of the area, especially taking into account visually scenic areas and areas of visual sensitivity;
- the presence of leisure-based (especially nature-based) tourism in an area;
- the presence of sites or routes that are valued for their scenic quality and sense of place;
- the presence of homesteads / farmsteads in a largely natural setting where the development may influence the typical character of their views; and
- feedback from interested and affected parties, as raised during the public participation process conducted as part of the EIA study.

As the visibility of the development would diminish exponentially over distance (refer to **section 2.4** above), receptor locations which are closer to the Solar PV facility or power line corridor would experience greater adverse visual impacts than those located further away. Zones of visual impact for each of the solar PV facilities and the grid connection infrastructure were therefore delineated based on distance bands measured from the outer boundary of each application site and each power line corridor.

The degree of visual impact experienced will however vary from one inhabitant to another, as it is largely based on the viewer's perception. Factors influencing the degree of visual impact experienced by the viewer include the following:

- Value placed by the viewer on the natural scenic characteristics of the area.
- The viewer's sentiments toward the proposed structures. These may be positive (a symbol of progression toward a less polluted future) or negative (foreign objects degrading the natural landscape).
- Degree to which the viewer will accept a change in the typical Karoo character of the surrounding area.

## 5.1 Receptor Identification

Preliminary desktop assessment of the study area identified 34 potentially sensitive visual receptor locations, most of which appear to be existing farmsteads or farm houses. These dwellings are regarded as potentially sensitive visual receptors as they are located within a mostly rural setting and the proposed development will likely alter natural vistas experienced from these locations, although sentiments toward the proposed development are unknown.

This assessment was refined according to the findings of the field visit conducted in February 2019 and eight (8) of the identified locations were removed from the list of potentially sensitive receptors. Some of these eight locations were found to be abandoned dwellings while others were identified as structures not considered to be visual receptors. As previously mentioned, due to access limitations during the time of the field investigation, it was not possible to fully investigate all of the identified potentially sensitive visual receptor locations from a visual perspective. Notwithstanding this limitation, these receptor locations were still regarded as being

potentially sensitive to the visual impacts associated with the proposed development and were assessed as part of the VIA, via desktop means where required.

Three (3) of the identified receptor locations were confirmed to be sensitive receptors, as they are linked to leisure or nature-based activities within the study area. These three (3) receptors are all component facilities of Transkaroo Adventures, a nature based tourism undertaking providing secluded accommodation facilities, hiking trails and 4 x 4 routes in the scenic eastern sector of the assessment area.

In many cases, roads along which people travel, are regarded as sensitive receptors. The primary thoroughfare in the study area is the N10 national route which links Port Elizabeth on the Eastern Cape coast with Upington and the Namibian border to the west. In the local context, the N10 is the primary access route to Hanover and the N1 to the north-west and also to the N9 in the east which links Noupoot and Middelburg.

Thus although the section of the N10 traversing the study area does not form part of a designated tourism route, it is possible that the road is utilised, to some extent, for its tourism potential and as a result it is considered to be a potentially sensitive receptor road – i.e. a road being used by motorists who may object to the potential visual intrusion of the proposed solar PV facilities.

Other thoroughfares in the study area are primarily used as local access roads and do not form part of any scenic tourist routes. These roads are not specifically valued or utilised for their scenic or tourism potential and are therefore not regarded as visually sensitive.

## 5.2 Receptor Impact Rating

In order to assess the impact of the proposed facilities on the identified potentially sensitive receptor locations, a matrix that takes into account a number of factors has been developed and is applied to each receptor location. It should be noted that, given the spatial distribution of the three proposed solar PV facilities, not all of the receptors identified in the assessment area will be affected by all three facilities and as such, separate receptor impact ratings have been provided for each facility and its associated grid connection infrastructure.

The matrix is based on a number of factors as listed below:

- Distance of a receptor location away from the proposed development (zones of visual impact)
- Presence of screening elements (topography, vegetation etc.)
- Visual contrast of the development with the landscape pattern and form



These factors are considered to be the most important factors when assessing the visual impact of a proposed development on a potentially sensitive receptor location in this context. It should be noted that this rating matrix is a relatively simplified way of assigning a likely representative visual impact, which allows a number of factors to be considered. Experiencing visual impacts is however a complex and qualitative phenomenon, and is thus difficult to quantify accurately. The matrix should therefore be seen as a representation of the likely visual impact at a receptor location. Part of its limitation lies in the quantitative assessment of what is largely a qualitative or subjective impact.

As described above, distance of the viewer / receptor location from the development is an important factor in the context of experiencing visual impacts which will have a strong bearing on mitigating the potential visual impact. A high impact rating has been assigned to receptor locations that are located within 500m of the proposed solar PV facility and also within 500m of the nearest grid connection assessment corridor. Beyond 5km, the visual impact of a solar PV facility or power line diminishes considerably, as the development would appear to merge with the elements on the horizon.

Based on the height and scale of the solar PV projects, and the likely height of the associated power line towers, the distance intervals chosen for the zones of visual impact are as follows:

- 0 - 500m (high impact zone)
- 500m – 2km (moderate impact zone)
- 2km - 5km (low impact zone)

The presence of screening elements is an equally important factor in this context. Screening elements can be vegetation, buildings and topographic features. For example, a grove of trees or a series of low hills located between a receptor location and an object could completely shield the object from the receptor. As such, where views of the proposed development are completely screened, the receptor has been assigned an overriding negligible impact rating, as the development would not impose any impact on the receptor.

The visual contrast of a development refers to the degree to which the development would be congruent with the surrounding environment. This is based on whether or not the development would conform to the land use, settlement density, structural scale, form and pattern of natural elements that define the structure of the surrounding landscape. The visual compatibility is an important factor to be considered when assessing the impact of the development on receptors within a specific context. A development that is incongruent with the surrounding area could have a significant visual impact on sensitive receptors as it may change the visual character of the landscape.

In order to determine the likely visual compatibility of the proposed development, the study area was classified into the following zones of visual contrast:

- **High** – undeveloped / natural / rural areas.

- **Moderate –**
  - areas within 500m of any existing power line; in undeveloped / natural / rural area;
  - areas within 150m of cultivated land / plantations / farm buildings.

**Low –**

- areas within 500m of N10 National Route;
- areas within 250m of P2433 secondary road;
- areas within 250m of small quarries / diggings.

These zones are depicted in **Figure 28** below.

The matrix returns a score which in turn determines the visual impact rating assigned to each receptor location (**Table 2**) below.

**Table 2:** Rating scores

Rating	Overall Score
High Visual Impact	8-9
Moderate Visual Impact	5-7
Low Visual Impact	3-4
Negligible Visual Impact	(overriding factor)

An explanation of the matrix is provided in **Table 3** below.

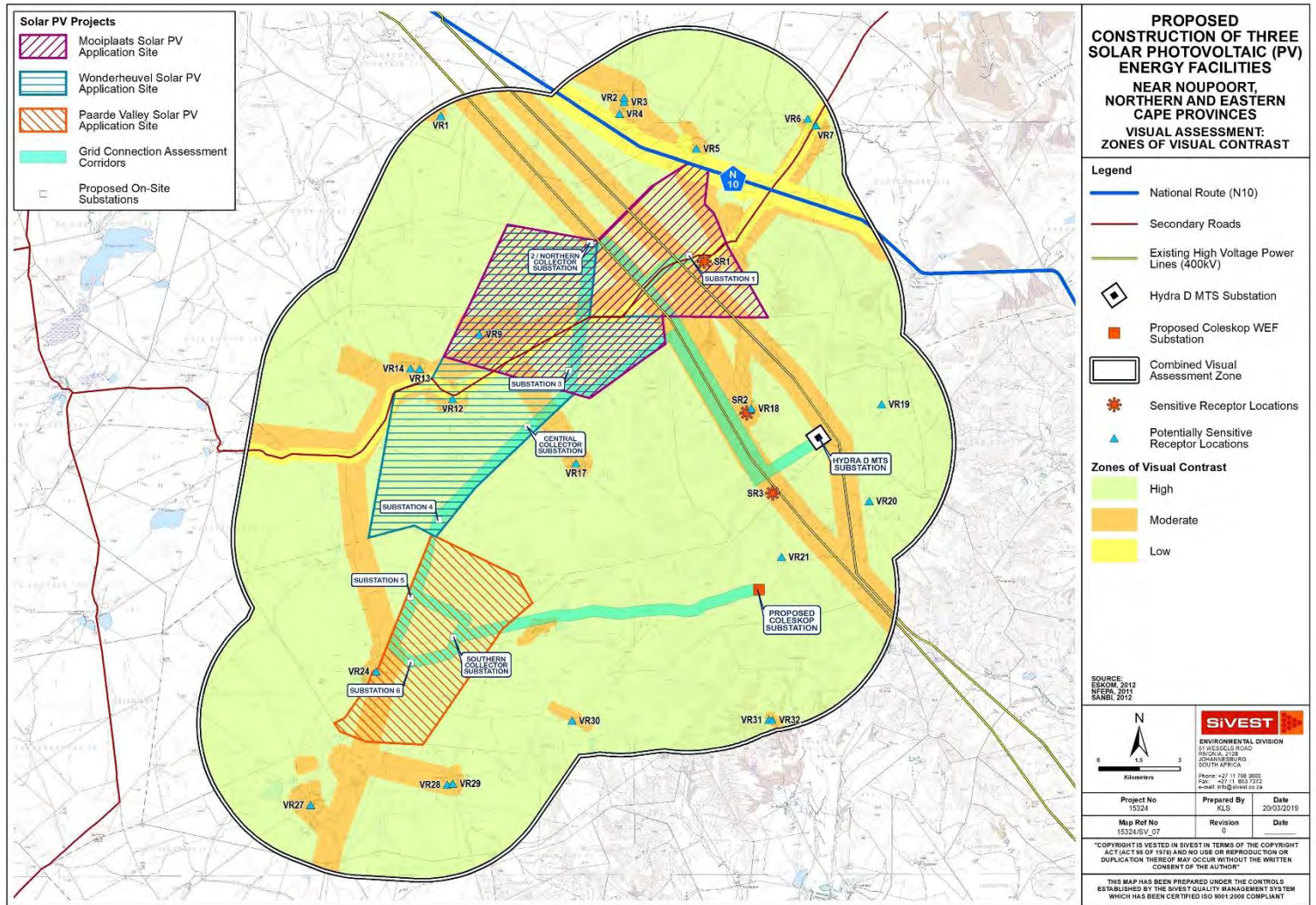


Figure 28: Zones of Visual Contrast

**Table 3:** Visual assessment matrix used to rate the impact of the proposed development on potentially sensitive receptors

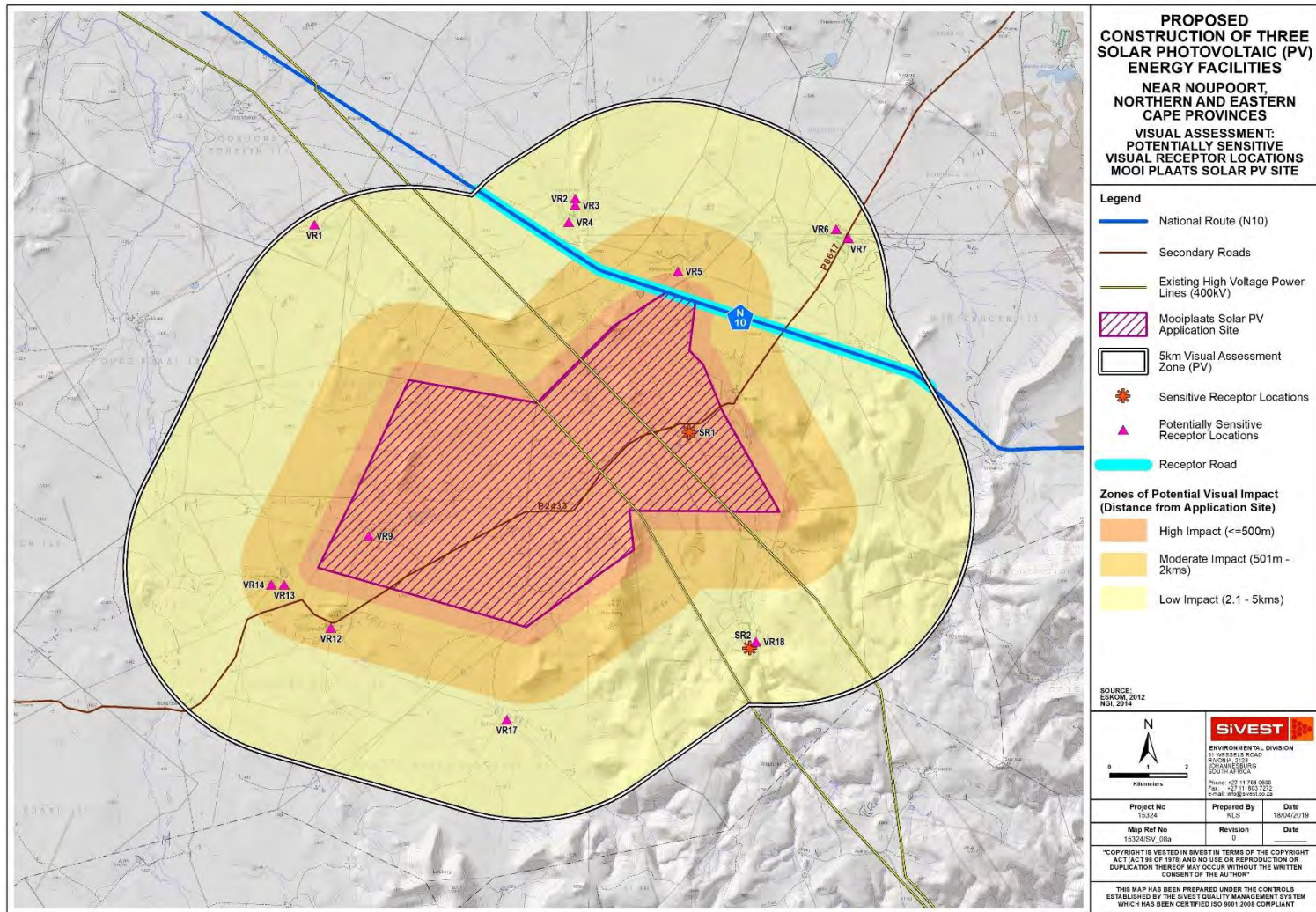
VISUAL FACTOR	VISUAL IMPACT RATING			
	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW	<u>OVERRIDING FACTOR:</u> NEGLECTIBLE
Distance of receptor away from proposed development	<= 500m <b>Score 3</b>	500m < 2km <b>Score 2</b>	2km < 5km <b>Score 1</b>	>5km
Presence of screening factors	No / almost no screening factors – development highly visible <b>Score 3</b>	Screening factors partially obscure the development <b>Score 2</b>	Screening factors obscure most of the development <b>Score 1</b>	Screening factors completely block any views towards the development, i.e. the development is not within the viewshed
Visual Contrast	<b>High contrast</b> with the pattern and form of the natural landscape elements (vegetation and land form), typical land use and/or human elements (infrastructural form) <b>Score 3</b>	<b>Moderate contrast</b> with the pattern and form of the natural landscape elements (vegetation and land form), typical land use and/or human elements (infrastructural form) <b>Score 2</b>	<b>Corresponds</b> with the pattern and form of the natural landscape elements (vegetation and land form), typical land use and/or human elements (infrastructural form) <b>Score 1</b>	

### 5.2.1 Mooi Plaats Solar PV Project

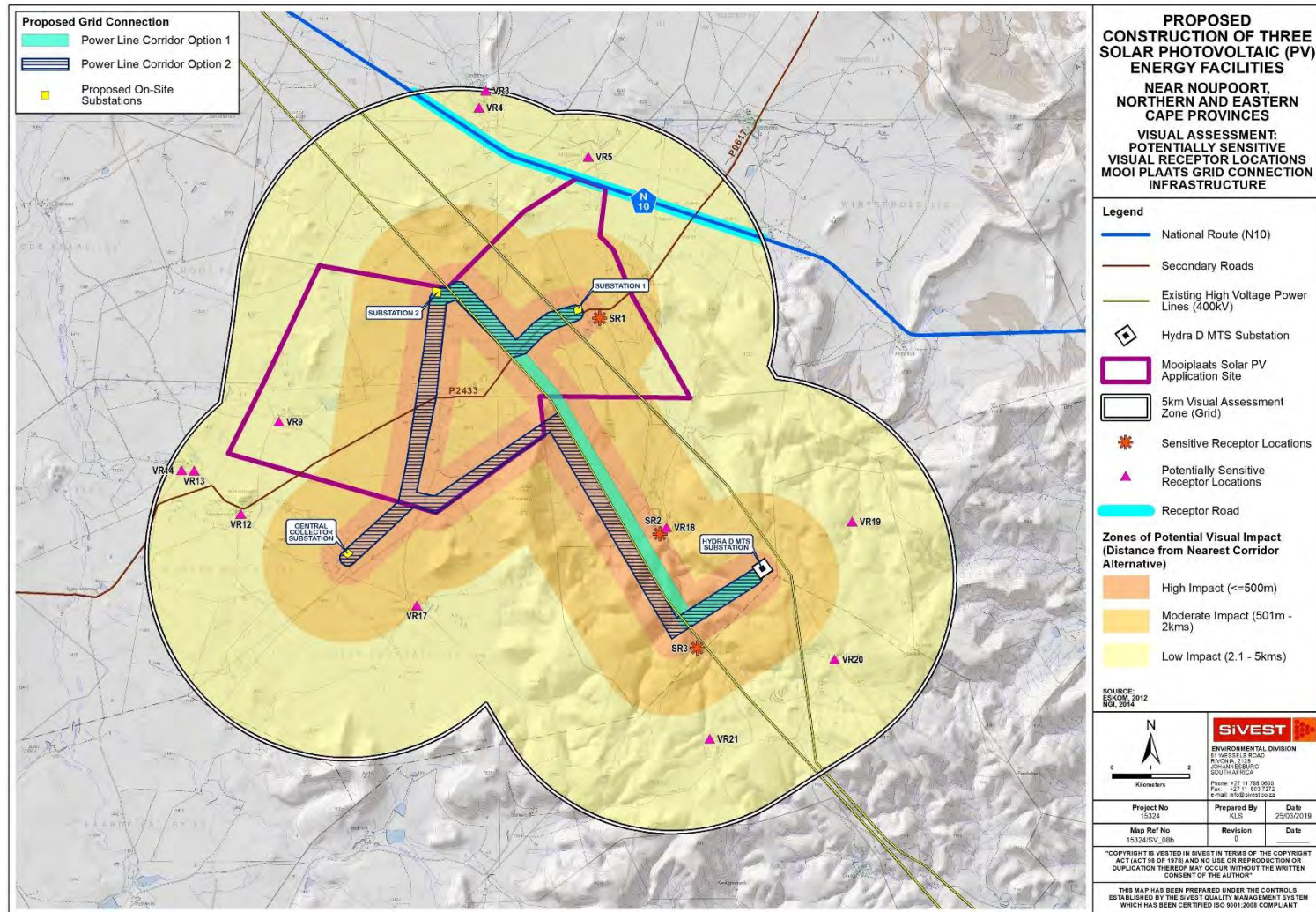
A total of fifteen (15) of the potentially sensitive receptors identified in the study area were found to be within 5kms of the Mooi Plaats PV application site. Two of the identified receptor locations, namely SR1 and SR2, are considered to be sensitive receptors as they are linked to leisure or nature-based activities within the study area. The remaining 13 receptors are existing farmsteads or farm houses which are regarded as potentially sensitive visual receptors. These receptor locations are indicated in **Figure 29**.

Fifteen (15) potentially sensitive receptors were also found to be within 5kms of the proposed Mooi Plaats grid connection infrastructure. In this instance, three of the receptor locations, namely SR1, SR2 and SR3, are considered to be sensitive receptors as they are linked to leisure or nature-based activities while the remaining twelve (12) receptors are regarded as potentially sensitive visual receptors. These receptor locations are indicated in Figure 30.

Sections of the N10 receptor road are within 5kms of both the solar PV application site and the proposed grid connection infrastructure.



**Figure 29:** Potentially sensitive receptor locations within 5kms of the Mooi Plaats PV application site.



**Figure 30:** Potentially sensitive receptor locations within 5kms of the Mooi Plaats grid connection infrastructure.

**Table 4** below presents a summary of the overall visual impact of the proposed Mooi Plaats solar PV facility and grid connection infrastructure on each of the potentially sensitive visual receptor locations which were identified within 5kms of the proposed development.

**Table 4: Receptor impact rating for Mooi Plaats Solar PV Project**

<b>MOOI PLAATS SOLAR PV FACILITY</b>					
<b>Receptor Number</b>	<b>Distance to application site boundary</b>		<b>Screening</b>	<b>Contrast</b>	<b>OVERALL IMPACT RATING</b>
SR1 – Transkaroo Adventures*	High (3)	-	Mod (2)	Low (1)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
SR2 – Transkaroo Adventures	Low (1)	3.2km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>LOW (4)</b>
VR 1 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.7km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 2 - Farmstead	Low (1)	3.3km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 3 - Farmstead	Low (1)	3.2km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 4 - Farmstead	Low (1)	2.9km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 5 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	0.6km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 6- Farmstead	Low (1)	4.1km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 7 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.3km	Mod (2)	Low (1)	<b>LOW (4)</b>
VR 9 – Farmstead*	High (3)	-	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (7)</b>
VR 12 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	1.4km	Low (1)	Low (1)	<b>LOW (4)</b>
VR 13 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	0.9km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 14 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	1.3km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 17 - Farmstead	Low (1)	2.5km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 18 - Farmstead	Low (1)	3.4km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
<b>MOOI PLAATS GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE</b>					
<b>Receptor Number</b>	<b>Distance to nearest corridor alternative</b>		<b>Screening</b>	<b>Contrast</b>	<b>OVERALL IMPACT RATING</b>
SR1 – Transkaroo Adventures*	High (3)	0.4km	Mod (2)	Low (1)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
SR2 – Transkaroo Adventures	High (3)	0.3km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
SR3 – Wilgerfontein Guest House	Mod (2)	0.6km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 3 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.9km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 4 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.5km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 5 - Farmstead	Low (1)	3.8km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 9 – Farmstead*	Low (1)	3.4km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 12 - Farmstead	Low (1)	2.8km	Low (1)	Low (1)	<b>LOW (3)</b>
VR 13 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.3km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>LOW (4)</b>
VR 14 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.6km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 17 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	1.9km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>



VR 18 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	0.5km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 19 - Farmstead	Low (1)	2.7km	Mod (2)	High (3)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 20 - Farmstead	Low (1)	2.8km	Mod (2)	High (3)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 21 - Farmstead	Low (1)	2.7km	Mod (2)	High (3)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>

*\*Farmstead / homestead is located within the proposed Mooi Plaats solar PV application site. It is assumed that the occupants would have a vested interest in the development and would therefore not perceive the proposed development in a negative light.*

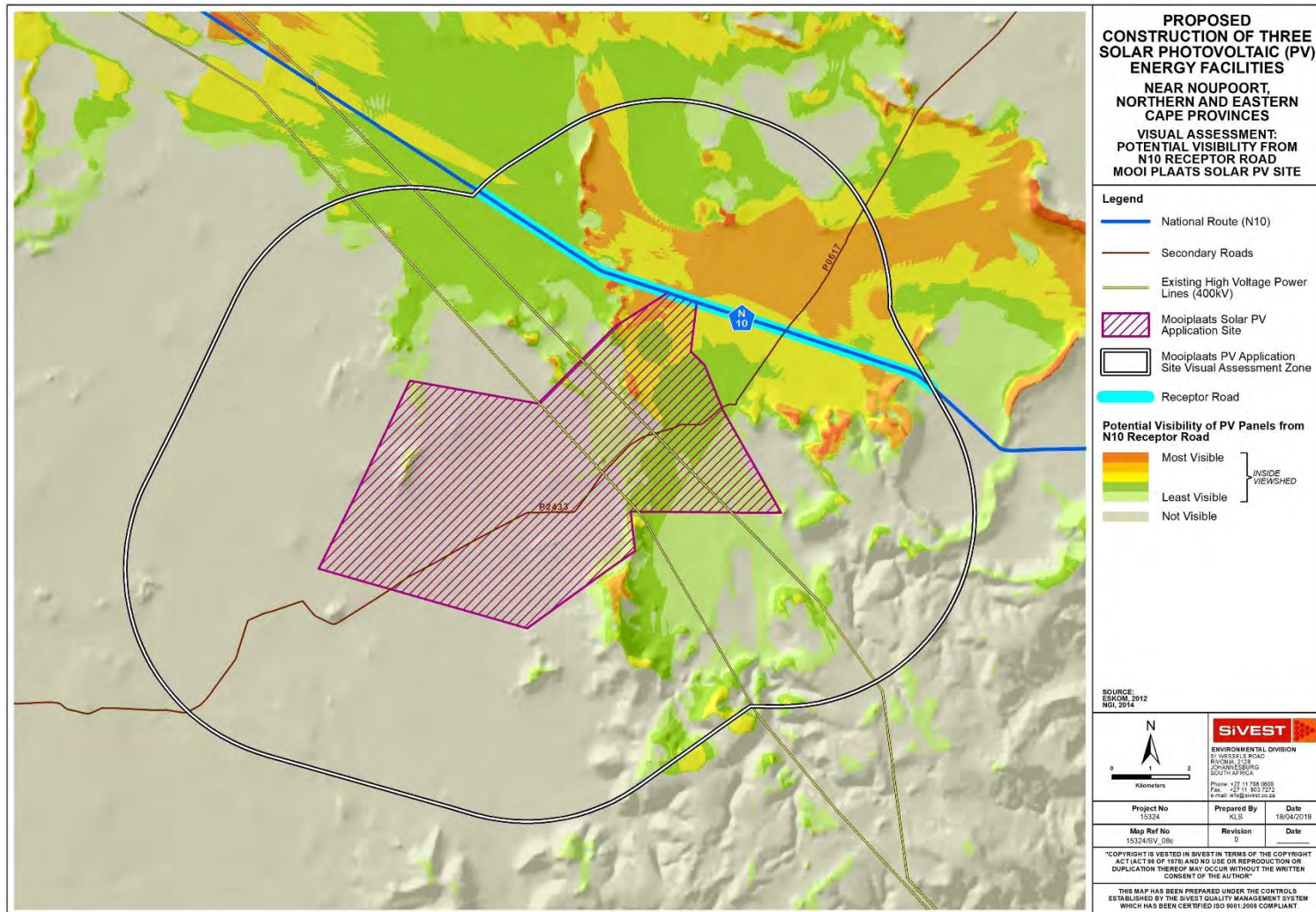
The table above shows that none of the potentially sensitive receptors would experience high levels of visual impact as a result of either the proposed Mooi Plaats solar PV development or the grid connection infrastructure. This is largely indicative of the presence of screening vegetation around many of the existing farmsteads in the area as well as the presence of existing power lines and other infrastructure which reduces the level of contrast.

Twelve (12) receptor locations would be subjected to moderate levels of visual impact as a result of the proposed Mooi Plaats solar PV development, while the remaining three (3) receptor locations will be subjected to low levels of visual impact.

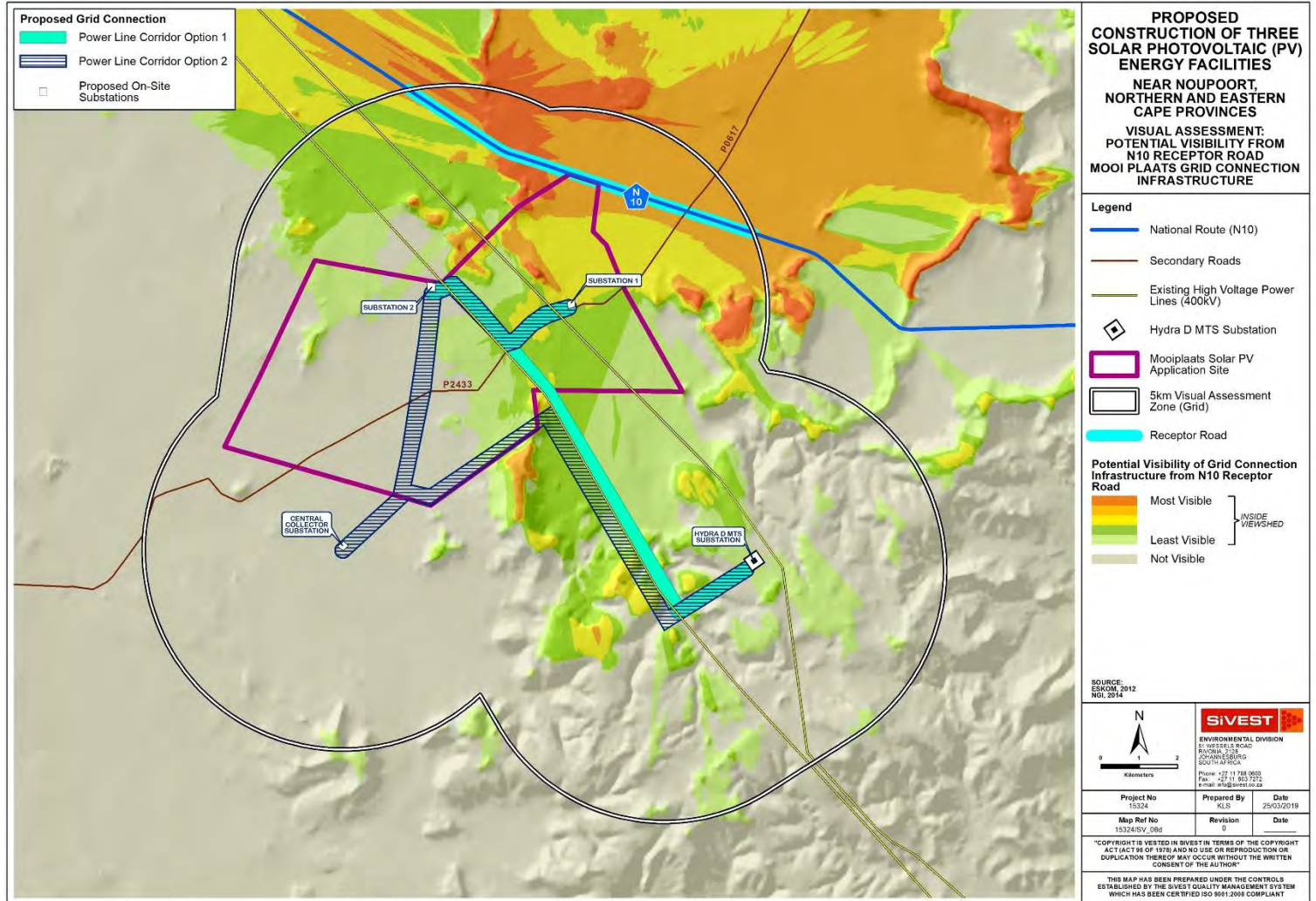
Thirteen (13) receptor locations would experience moderate levels of visual impact from the grid connection infrastructure, while the remaining two (2) receptor locations will be subjected to low levels of visual impact.

As stated above, the N10 national route could be considered as a potentially sensitive receptor road and any development in the northern-most section of the Mooi Plaats application site is likely to be visible to motorists travelling along this route (**Figure 31**). The degree of visibility is restricted to some extent by the topography and the likely visual impacts of the solar PV development would depend on the position of the different elements on the site. Elements of the grid connection infrastructure are between 3km and 11km from the N10 and will not result in any significant visual impacts on motorists travelling along this route (**Figure 32**).

In light of this and the fact that this section of the N10 is does not form part of a recognised tourism route, visual impacts affecting the N10 are rated as moderate.



**Figure 31:** Potential visibility of PV Panels from N10 (Mooi Plaats project).



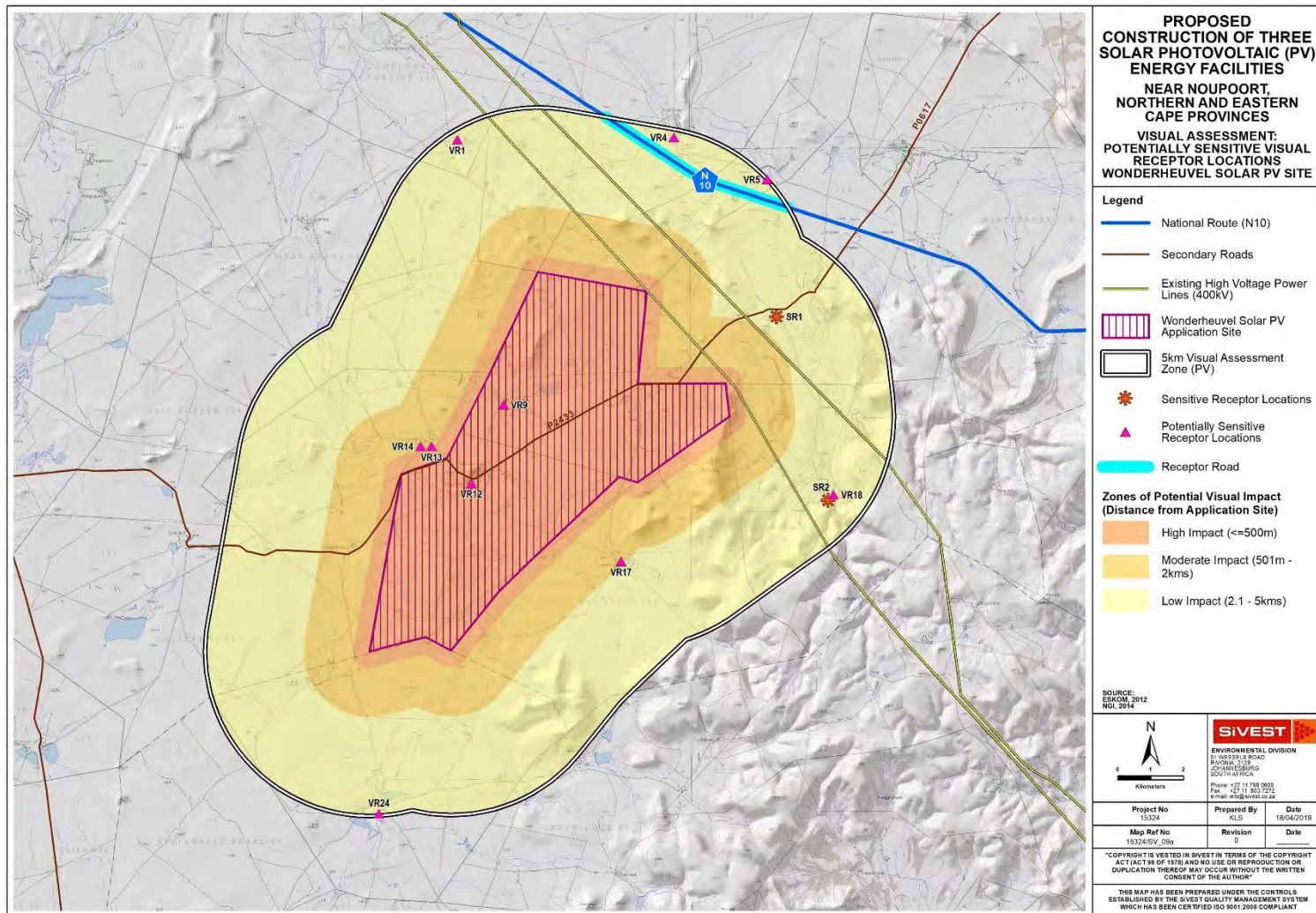
**Figure 32:** Potential visibility of Grid Connection Infrastructure from N10 (Mooi Plaats project).

### 5.2.2 Wonderheuvél Solar PV Project

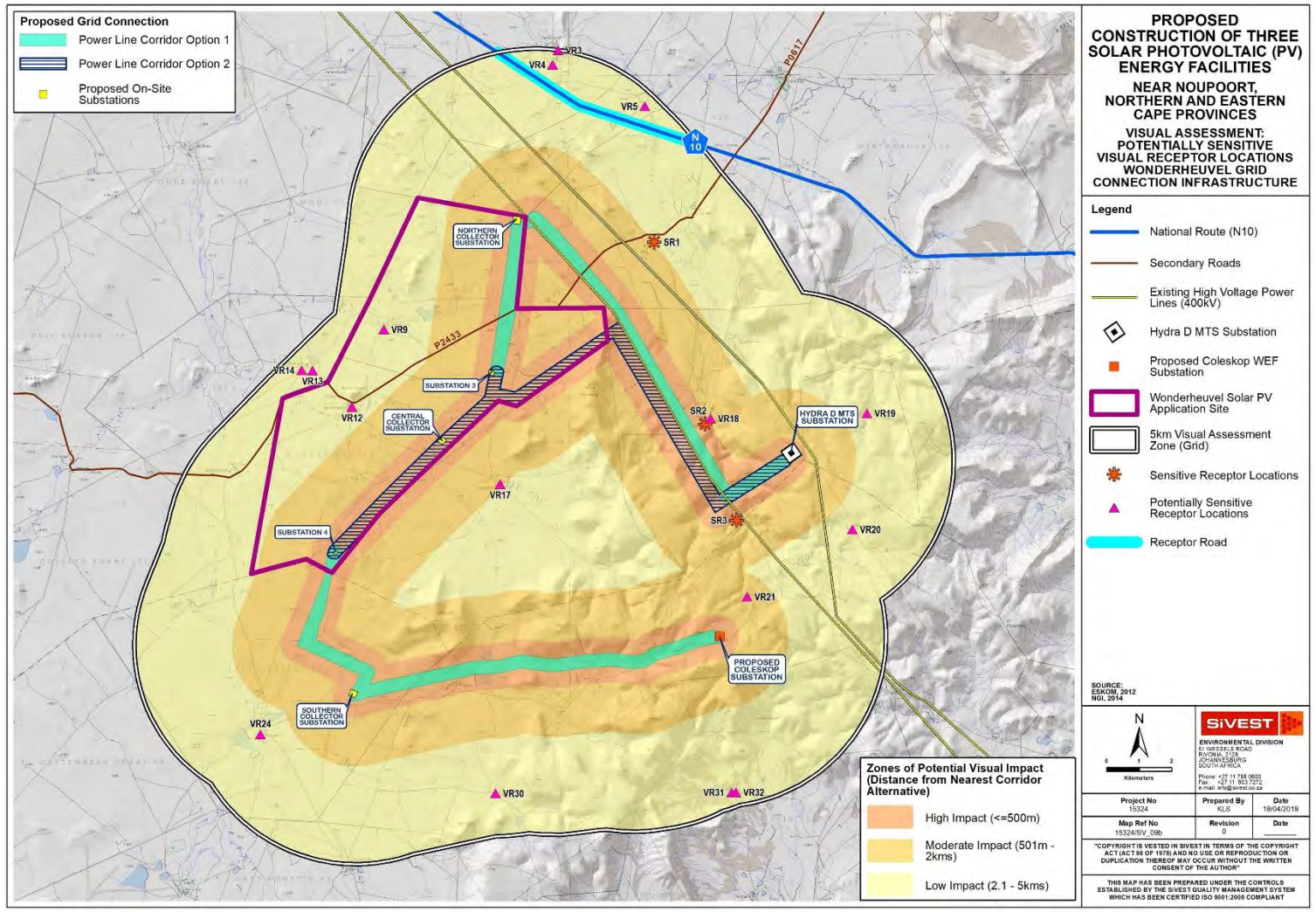
A total of twelve (12) of the potentially sensitive receptors identified in the study area were found to be within 5kms of the Wonderheuvél PV application site. Two of the identified receptor locations, namely SR1 and SR2, are considered to be sensitive receptors as they are linked to leisure or nature-based activities within the study area. The remaining ten (10) receptors are existing farmsteads or farm houses which are regarded as potentially sensitive visual receptors. These receptor locations are indicated in **Figure 33**.

Nineteen (19) potentially sensitive receptors were also found to be within 5kms of the proposed Wonderheuvél grid connection infrastructure. Three (3) of these receptor locations, namely SR1, SR2 and SR3, are considered to be sensitive receptors as they are linked to leisure or nature-based activities while the remaining sixteen (16) receptors are regarded as potentially sensitive visual receptors. These receptor locations are indicated in **Figure 34**.

Sections of the N10 receptor road are within 5kms of both the solar PV application site and the proposed grid connection infrastructure.



**Figure 33:** Potentially sensitive receptor locations within 5kms of the Wonderheuveld PV application site.



**Figure 34:** Potentially sensitive receptor locations within 5kms of the Wonderheuveld grid connection infrastructure.

**Table 5** below presents a summary of the overall visual impact of the proposed Wonderheuvvel solar PV facility and grid connection infrastructure on each of the potentially sensitive visual receptor locations which were identified within 5kms of the proposed development.

**Table 5: Receptor impact rating for Wonderheuvvel Solar PV Project**

<b>WONDERHEUVEL SOLAR PV FACILITY</b>					
<b>Receptor Number</b>	<b>Distance to application site boundary</b>		<b>Screening</b>	<b>Contrast</b>	<b>OVERALL IMPACT RATING</b>
SR1 – Transkaroo Adventures	Low (1)	2.5KM	Mod (2)	Low (1)	<b>LOW (4)</b>
SR2 – Transkaroo Adventures	Low (1)	3.9km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>LOW (4)</b>
VR 1 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.7km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 4 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.7km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 5 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.9km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 9 – Farmstead*	High (3)	-	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (7)</b>
VR 12 – Farmstead*	High (3)	-	Low (1)	Low (1)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 13 - Farmstead	High (3)	0.4km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 14 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	0.6km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 17 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	2.5km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 18 - Farmstead	Low (1)	3.9km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 24 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.9km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>LOW (4)</b>
<b>WONDERHEUVEL GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE</b>					
<b>Receptor Number</b>	<b>Distance to nearest corridor alternative</b>		<b>Screening</b>	<b>Contrast</b>	<b>OVERALL IMPACT RATING</b>
SR1 – Transkaroo Adventures	Low (1)	2.0km	Mod (2)	Low (1)	<b>LOW (4)</b>
SR2 – Transkaroo Adventures	High (3)	0.3km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
SR3 – Wilgerfontein Guest House	Mod (2)	0.5km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 3 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.9km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 4 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.5km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 5 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.6km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 9 – Farmstead*	Low (1)	3.4km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 12 – Farmstead*	Low (1)	2.5km	Low (1)	Low (1)	<b>LOW (3)</b>
VR 13 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.2km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>LOW (4)</b>
VR 14 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.4km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 17 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	1.9km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 18 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	0.6km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 19 - Farmstead	Low (1)	2.7km	Mod (2)	High (3)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 20 - Farmstead	Low (1)	2.8km	Mod (2)	High (3)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 21 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	1.4km	Mod (2)	High (3)	<b>MODERATE (7)</b>

VR 24 - Farmstead	Low (1)	2.9km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>LOW (4)</b>
VR 30 - Farmstead	Low (1)	3.7km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 31 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.5km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 32 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.6km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>

*\*Farmstead / homestead is located within the proposed Wonderheuvel solar PV application site. It is assumed that the occupants would have a vested interest in the development and would therefore not perceive the proposed development in a negative light.*

As shown in the table above, none of the potentially sensitive receptors would experience high levels of visual impact as a result of either the proposed Wonderheuvel solar PV development or the grid connection infrastructure. This is largely indicative of the presence of screening vegetation around many of the existing farmsteads in the area as well as the presence of existing power lines and other infrastructure which reduces the level of contrast.

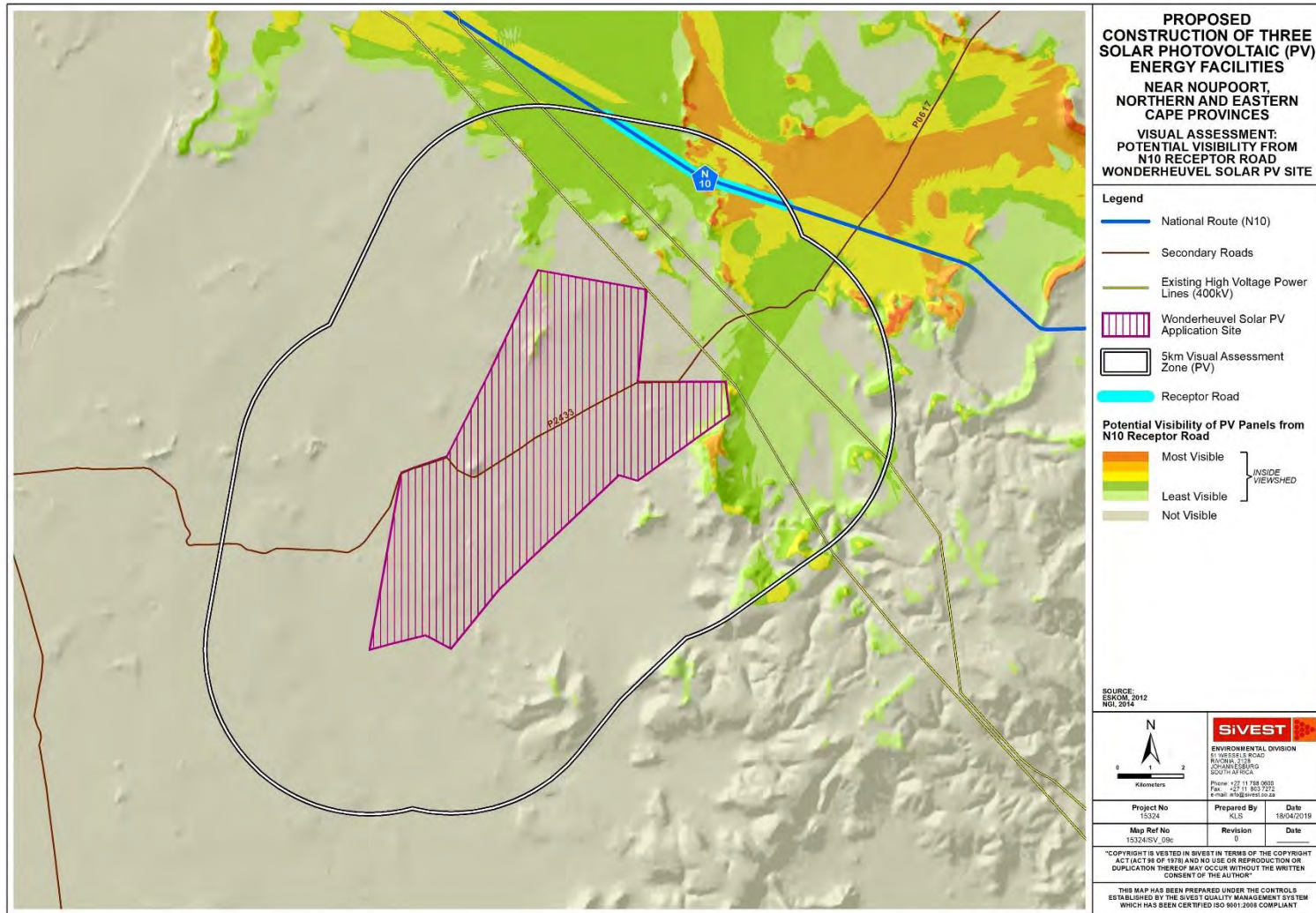
Nine (9) receptor locations would be subjected to moderate levels of visual impact as a result of the proposed Wonderheuvel solar PV development, while the remaining three (3) receptor locations will be subjected to low levels of visual impact.

Fifteen (15) receptor locations would experience moderate levels of visual impact from the grid connection infrastructure, while the remaining four (4) receptor locations will be subjected to low levels of visual impact.

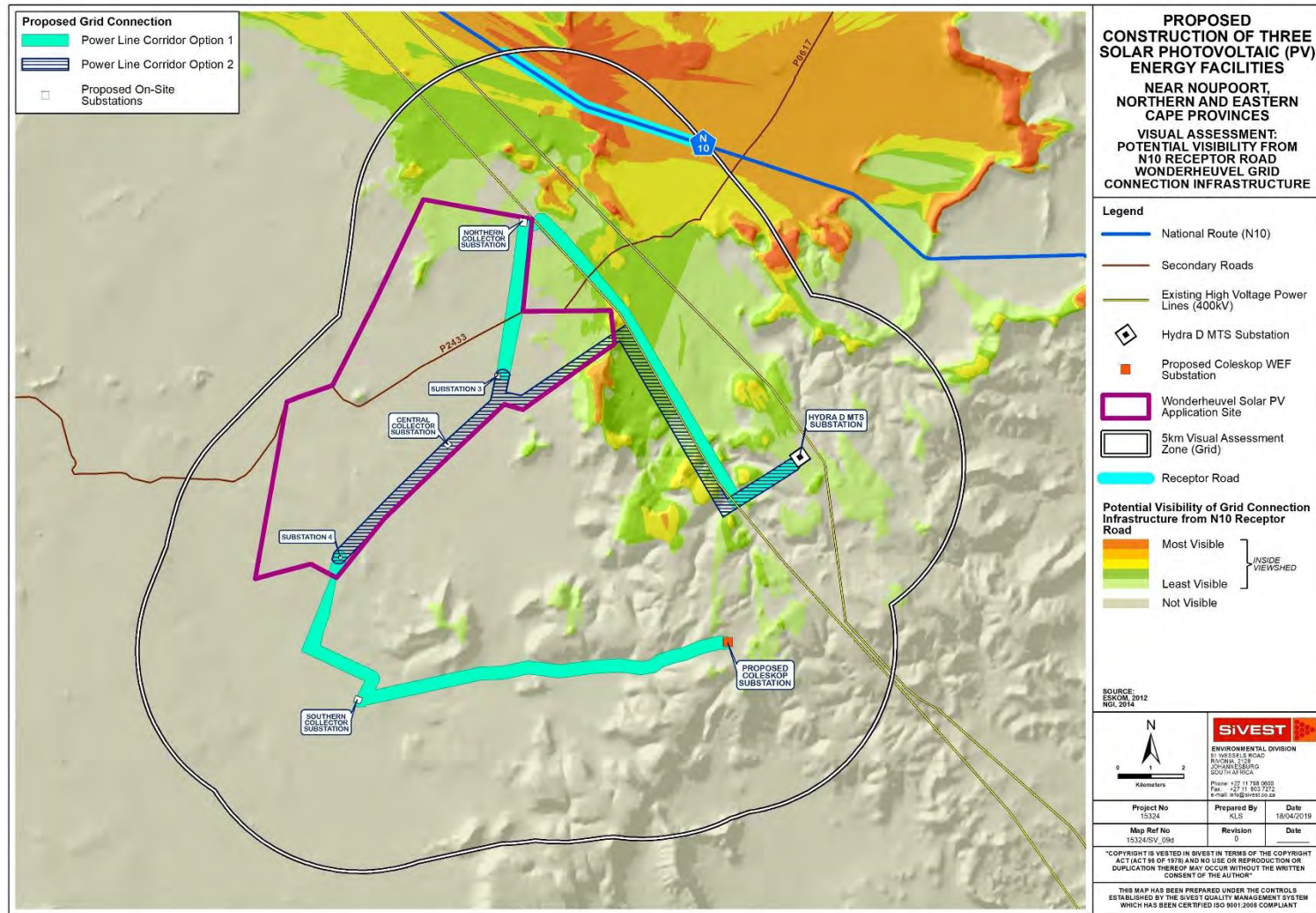
Although a section of the N10 receptor road is within 5kms of the Wonderheuvel PV application, views of the site will be largely obstructed by the terrain (**Figure 35**). In addition, the N10 is almost 4kms from the site boundary and any visual impacts would be significantly reduced at this distance. Elements of the grid connection infrastructure closest to the N10 are approximately 3.5km away and will not result in any significant visual impacts on motorists travelling along this route (**Figure 36**).

In light of this and the fact that this section of the N10 does not form part of a recognised tourism route, visual impacts arising from the Wonderheuvel solar PV project affecting the N10 are rated as low to moderate.





**Figure 35:** Potential visibility of PV Panels from N10 (Wonderheuveld project).



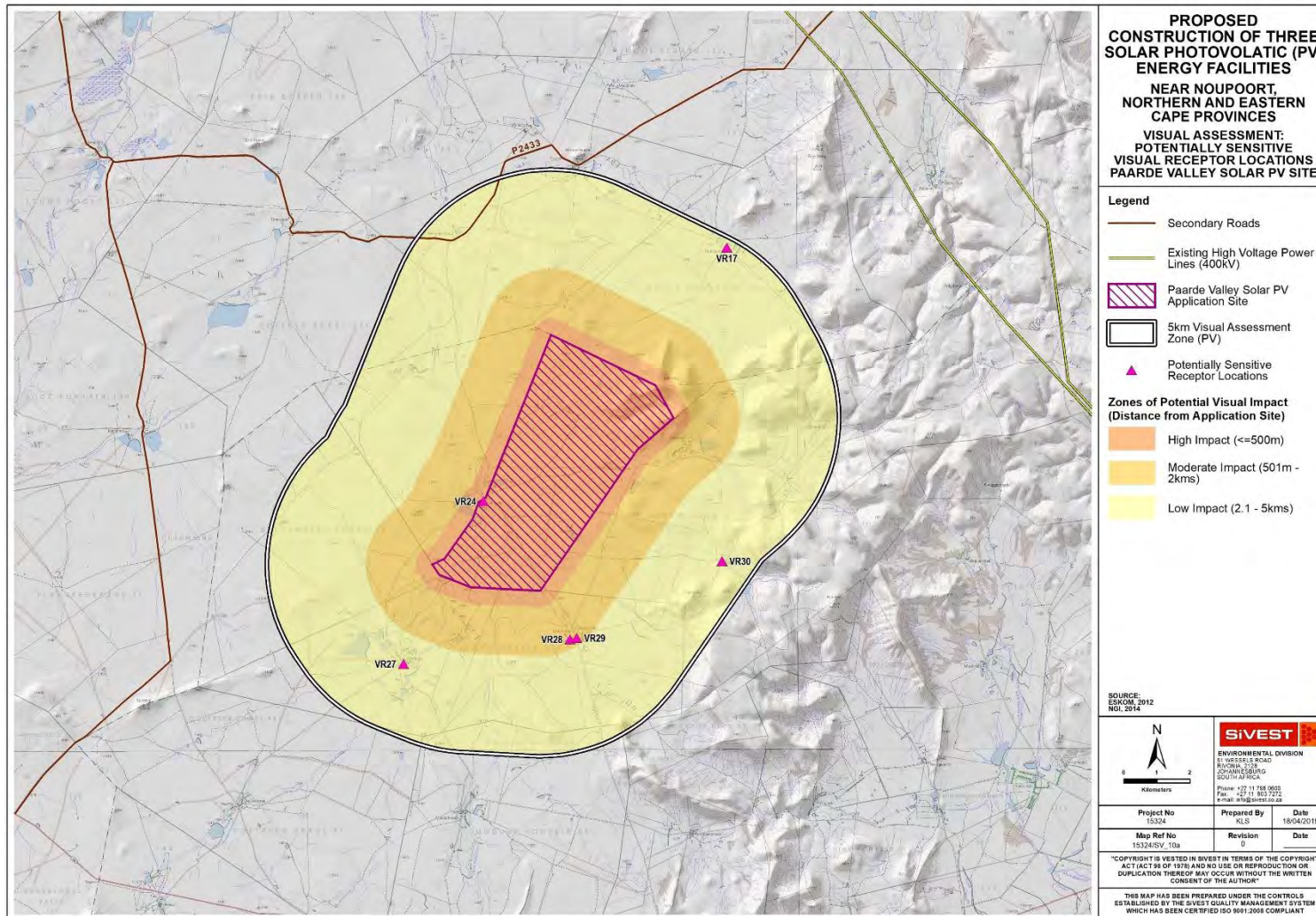
**Figure 36:** Potential visibility of Grid Connection Infrastructure from N10 (Wonderheuveld project).

### 5.2.3 Paarde Valley Solar PV Project

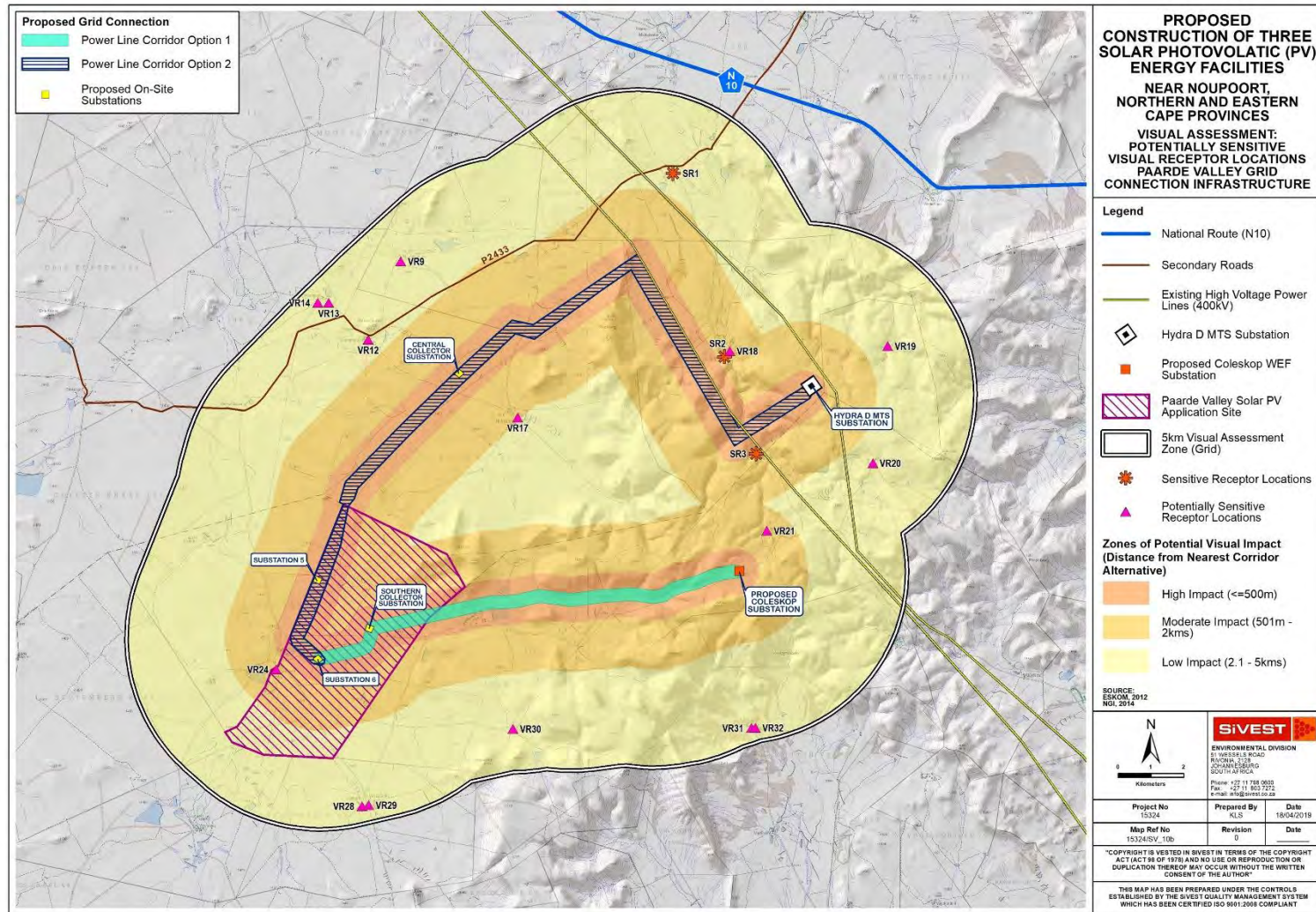
A total of six (6) of the potentially sensitive receptors identified in the study area were found to be within 5kms of the Paarde Valley PV application site. None of these receptor locations are considered to be sensitive receptors, although all six (6) receptors are existing farmsteads or farm houses which are regarded as potentially sensitive visual receptors. These receptor locations are indicated in **Figure 37**.

Eighteen (18) potentially sensitive receptors were also found to be within 5kms of the proposed Paarde Valley grid connection infrastructure. Three (3) sensitive receptor locations are located in this area, namely SR1, SR2 and SR3, while the remaining fifteen (15) receptors, which are existing farm houses, are regarded as potentially sensitive visual receptors. These receptor locations are indicated in **Figure 38**.

No part of the N10 receptor road is within 5kms of the solar PV application site and as such motorists travelling along this route will not be affected by the proposed Paarde Valley solar PV facility. Elements of the grid connection infrastructure may however be visible to passing motorists, although the N10 is at least 3.5km from the grid assessment corridor and as such will not give rise to any significant visual impacts on motorists travelling along this route.



**Figure 37:** Potentially sensitive receptor locations within 5kms of the Paarde Valley PV application site.



**Figure 38:** Potentially sensitive receptor locations within 5kms of the Paarde Valley grid connection infrastructure.

**Table 6** below presents a summary of the overall visual impact of the proposed Paarde Valley solar PV facility and grid connection infrastructure on each of the potentially sensitive visual receptor locations which were identified within 5kms of the proposed development.

**Table 6: Receptor impact rating for Paarde Valley Solar PV Project**

PAARDE VALLEY SOLAR PV FACILITY					
Receptor Number	Distance to application site boundary		Screening	Contrast	OVERALL IMPACT RATING
VR 17 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.7km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 24 – Farmstead*	High (3)	-	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 27 – Farmstead	Low (1)	2.9km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 28 – Farmstead	Mod (2)	1.7km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 29 – Farmstead	Mod (2)	1.8km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 30 – Farmstead	Low (1)	4.0km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
PAARDE VALLEY GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE					
Receptor Number	Distance to nearest corridor alternative		Screening	Contrast	OVERALL IMPACT RATING
SR1 – Transkaroo Adventures	Low (1)	2.7km	Mod (2)	Low (1)	<b>LOW (4)</b>
SR2 – Transkaroo Adventures	Mod (2)	0.7km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
SR3 – Wilgerfontein Guest House	Mod (2)	0.6km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 9 – Farmstead	Low (1)	3.6km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 12 - Farmstead	Low (1)	2.5km	Low (1)	Low (1)	<b>LOW (3)</b>
VR 13 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.2km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>LOW (4)</b>
VR 14 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.4km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 17 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	1.9km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 18 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	0.9km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 19 - Farmstead	Low (1)	2.7km	Mod (2)	High (3)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 20 - Farmstead	Low (1)	2.7km	Mod (2)	High (3)	<b>MODERATE (6)</b>
VR 21 - Farmstead	Mod (2)	1.4km	Mod (2)	High (3)	<b>MODERATE (7)</b>
VR 24 – Farmstead*	Mod (2)	0.8km	Low (1)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 28 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.5km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 29 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.5km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 30 - Farmstead	Low (1)	3.7km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 31 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.5km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>
VR 32 - Farmstead	Low (1)	4.6km	Mod (2)	Mod (2)	<b>MODERATE (5)</b>

\*Farmstead / homestead is located within the proposed Paarde Valley solar PV application site.

It is assumed that the occupants would have a vested interest in the development and would therefore not perceive the proposed development in a negative light.

As shown in the table above, none of the potentially sensitive receptors would experience high levels of visual impact as a result of either the proposed Paarde Valley solar PV development or the grid connection infrastructure. This is largely indicative of the presence of screening vegetation around many of the existing farmsteads in the area as well as the presence of existing power lines and other infrastructure which reduces the level of contrast.

All six (6) receptor locations within 5km of the proposed Paarde Valley solar PV development would be subjected to moderate levels of visual impact. Fifteen (15) receptor locations would experience moderate levels of visual impact from the grid connection infrastructure, while the remaining three (3) receptor locations will be subjected to low levels of visual impact.

The N10 receptor road is more than 5kms from the solar PV application site and as such motorists travelling along this route will not be affected by the proposed Paarde Valley solar PV facility. In addition. Although elements of the grid connection infrastructure may be visible to passing motorists, the N10 is at least 3.5km from the grid assessment corridor, the grid infrastructure will not give rise to any significant visual impacts on motorists travelling along this route.

### **5.3 Night-time Impacts**

The visual impact of lighting on the nightscape is largely dependent on the existing lighting present in the surrounding area at night. The night scene in areas where there are numerous light sources will be visually degraded by the existing light pollution and therefore additional light sources are unlikely to have a significant impact on the nightscape. In contrast, introducing new light sources into a relatively dark night sky will impact on the visual quality of the area at night. It is thus important to identify a night-time visual baseline before exploring the potential visual impact of the proposed wind farm at night.

Much of the study area is characterised by natural areas with pastoral elements and low densities of human settlement. As a result, relatively few light sources are present in the broader area surrounding the proposed development site. The closest built-up areas are the towns of Noupport and Middelburg which are both situated more than 30kms from the application sites and are thus too far away to have significant impacts on the night scene. At night, the general study area is characterised by a picturesque dark starry sky and the visual character of the night environment across the broader area is largely 'unpolluted' and pristine. Sources of light in the area are largely limited to isolated lighting from surrounding farmsteads and transient light from the passing cars travelling along the N10 national route.

Given the scale of the proposed solar PV facilities, the operational and security lighting required for each of the proposed projects is likely to intrude on the nightscape and create glare, which will contrast with the dark backdrop of the surrounding area.

Power lines and associated towers or pylons are not generally lit up at night and, thus light spill associated with the proposed grid connection infrastructure is only likely to emanate from the

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proposed on-site substations. Lighting from these facilities is therefore expected to intrude on the nightscape to some degree. It should however be noted that the grid connection infrastructure will only be constructed if the proposed solar PV facilities are developed and thus the lighting impacts from the proposed substations would be subsumed by the glare and contrast of the lights associated with the PV facilities. As such, the grid connection infrastructure is not expected to result in significant lighting impacts.

## 5.4 Cumulative Impacts

Although it is important to assess the visual impacts of the proposed solar PV facilities and grid connection infrastructure specifically, it is equally important to assess the cumulative visual impact that could materialise if other renewable energy facilities (both wind and solar facilities) and associated infrastructure projects are developed in the broader area. Cumulative impacts occur where existing or planned developments, in conjunction with the proposed development, result in significant incremental changes in the broader study area. In this instance, such developments would include renewable energy facilities and associated infrastructure development.

Renewable energy facilities have the potential to cause large scale visual impacts and the location of several such developments in close proximity to each other could significantly alter the sense of place and visual character in the broader region. Although power lines and substations are relatively small developments when compared to renewable energy facilities, they may still introduce a more industrial character into the landscape, thus altering the sense of place.

Seventeen renewable energy projects were identified within a 35 km radius of the proposed solar PV facilities and grid connection infrastructure (**Figure 39**). These projects, as listed in **Table 7** below, were identified using the DEA's Renewable Energy EIA Application Database for SA in conjunction with information provided by Independent Power Producers operating in the broader region. It is assumed that all of these renewable energy developments include grid connection infrastructure, although few details of this infrastructure were available at the time of writing this report.

The relatively large number of renewable energy facilities within the surrounding area and their potential for large scale visual impacts could significantly alter the sense of place and visual character in the broader region, as well as exacerbate the visual impacts on surrounding visual receptors, once constructed.

**Table 7: Renewable energy developments proposed within a 35km radius of the Mooi Plaats, Wonderheuveld and Paarde Valley solar PV application sites.**

Project	DEA Reference No	Technology	Capacity	Status of Application / Development
Allemans Fontein SEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/730	Solar	20MW	Approved

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Carolus Poort SEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/729	Solar	20MW	Approved
Damfontein SEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/728	Solar	20MW	Approved
Gillmer SEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/735	Solar	20MW	Approved
Inkululeko SEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/553	Solar	20MW	Approved
Kleinfontein SEF	12/12/20/2654	Solar	20MW	Approved
Klip Gat SEF	14/12/16/3/3/2/354	Solar	75M	Approved
Linde SEF	12/12/20/2258	Solar	40MW	In Operation
Linde SEF (Expansion)	14/12/16/3/3/1/1122	Solar	75MW	Approved
Middelburg Solar Park 1	12/12/20/2465/2	Solar	75MW	Approved
Middelburg Solar Park 2	12/12/20/2465/1	Solar	75MW	Approved
Naauw Poort SEF	14/12/16/3/3/2/355	Solar	75MW	Approved
Toitdale SEF	12/12/20/2653	Solar	20MW	Approved
Noupoort Wind Farm	12/12/20/2319	Wind	188MW	In Operation
Phezukomoya WEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/1028	Wind	315MW	EIA in Process
San Kraal WEF	14/12/16/3/3/1/1069	Wind	390MW	EIA in Process
Umsobomvu WEF	14/12/16/3/3/2/730	Wind	140MW	Approved

As can be seen from this table, thirteen (13) of these projects are Solar Energy facilities (SEFs), most of which are located more than 10kms from the application sites, clustered on the western edge of Noupoort and also to the north of Main Road 389 and along an existing rail route . Given the distance from the study area and the concentration of these facilities in close proximity to existing built infrastructure, it is not anticipated that these developments will result in any significant cumulative impacts affecting the landscape or the visual receptors within the combined assessment zone for the three solar PV projects. It should be noted that although all of these SEF applications were approved at least five years ago, to date only one has been constructed.

The remaining four (4) projects are wind energy facilities (WEFs), all of which are located on the hillier terrain to the east of the solar PV application site. Although WEFs are expected to have different impacts when compared to solar PV projects, these renewable energy developments are however relevant as they influence the cumulative visual impact of the proposed development.

The proposed San Kraal WEF is located well outside the combined zone, just east of the N9 national route, while only a small portion of the Phezukomoya WEF, which is located immediately west of the N9, is located within 5kms of the proposed solar PV facilities. As such, these WEFs are not expected to give rise to any significant cumulative impacts on the landscape or visual receptors within the study area.

The remaining WEF, namely Umsobomvu WEF is however almost entirely within 5kms of the proposed solar PV facilities, and is in fact adjacent to sections of each of the application sites.

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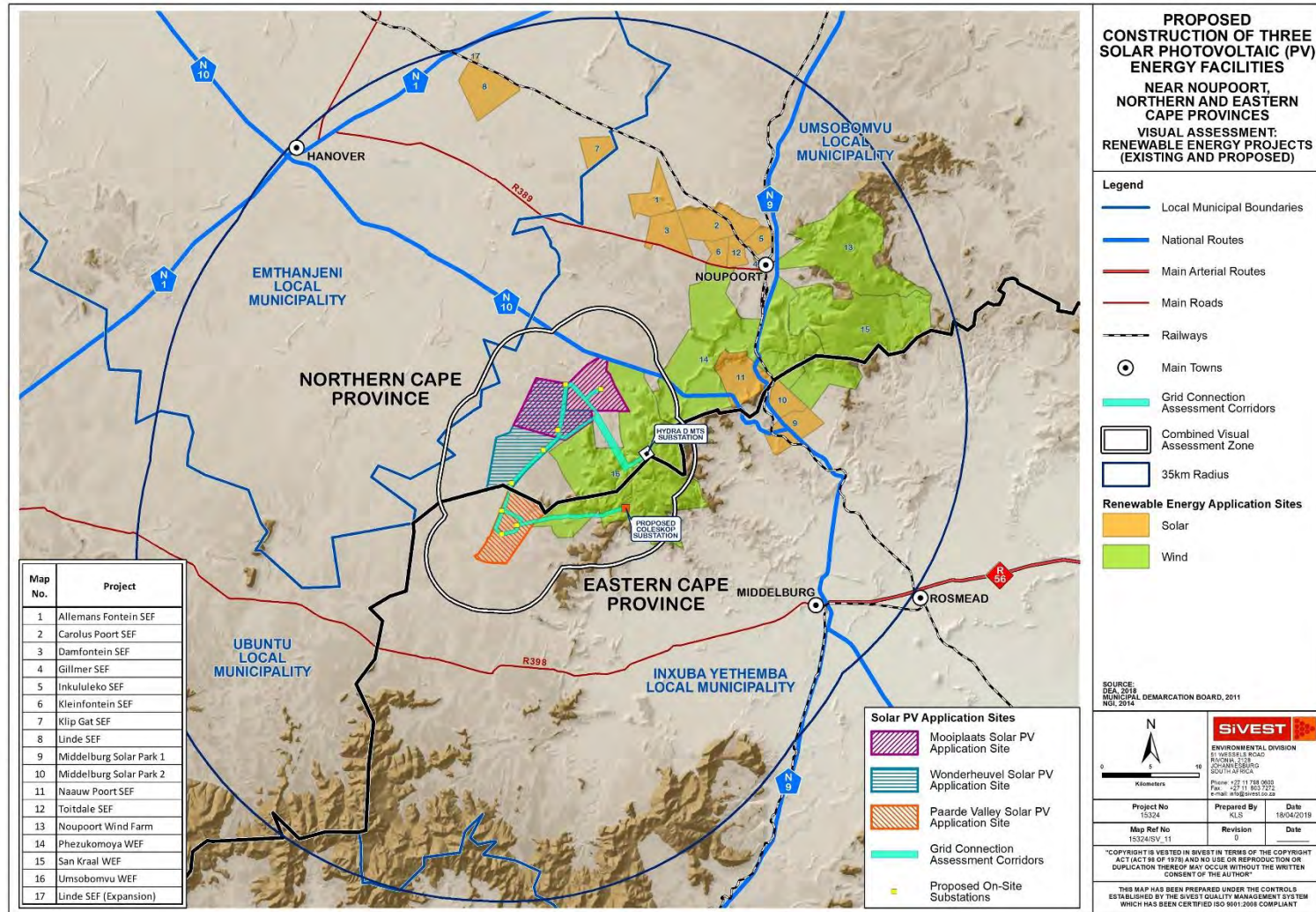
It is understood that most of the proposed turbines on the WEF development site will be located on high-lying plateaus and ridges and as such they will be visible to many of the visual receptors in the combined assessment area.

This proposed WEF, in conjunction with the three proposed solar PV facilities and associated grid connection infrastructure, will inevitably introduce an increasingly industrial character into a largely natural, paroral landscape, thus giving rise to significant cumulative impacts.

It should be noted however that PV panels, at an approximate height of 4m, are considerably less visible than wind turbines and as such the proposed solar PV facilities would be outside the viewshed of many of the potentially sensitive receptor locations identified in the study area. Cumulative impacts affecting these receptors would therefore be reduced and the severity of these impacts would depend on the perceptions of the receptors.

A cursory examination of the literature available for the environmental assessments undertaken for many of these renewable energy applications showed that the visual impacts identified and the recommendations and mitigation measures provided are largely consistent with those identified in this report. Where additional mitigation measures were provided in respect of the other renewable energy applications, these have been incorporated into this report where relevant.

From a visual perspective, the further concentration of renewable energy facilities as proposed will inevitably change the visual character of the area and alter the inherent sense of place, introducing an increasingly industrial character into the broader area, and resulting in significant cumulative impacts. It is however anticipated that these impacts could be mitigated to acceptable levels with the implementation of the recommendations and mitigation measures put forward by the visual specialists in their respective reports.



**Figure 39:** Renewable energy facilities proposed within a 35km radius of the Mooi Plaats, Wonderheuvell and Paarde Valley solar PV application sites.

## 5.5 Overall Visual Impact Rating

The EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended) require that an overall rating for visual impact be provided to allow the visual impact to be assessed alongside other environmental parameters. The tables below present the impact matrix for visual impacts associated with the proposed construction and operation of the Mooi Plaats, Wonderheuvel and Paarde Kraal solar PV facilities the associated grid connection infrastructure. Preliminary mitigation measures have determined based on best practice and literature reviews.

Please refer to **Appendix A** for an explanation of the impact rating methodology.

5.5.1 Mooi Plaats solar PV Project

MOOI PLAATS SOLAR PV FACILITY																				
ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION									RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION								
		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S
<b>Construction Phase</b>																				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large construction vehicles and equipment will alter the natural character of the study area and expose visual receptors to impacts associated with construction.</li> <li>Construction activities may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from increased traffic on the gravel roads serving the construction site may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>Surface disturbance during construction would expose bare soil (scarring) which could visually contrast with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Temporary stockpiling of soil during construction may alter the flat landscape. Wind blowing over these disturbed areas could result in dust which would have a visual impact.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully plan to minimise the construction period and avoid construction delays.</li> <li>Inform receptors of the construction programme and schedules.</li> <li>Minimise vegetation clearing and rehabilitate cleared areas as soon as possible.</li> <li>Vegetation clearing should take place in a phased manner.</li> <li>Locally occurring indigenous woody vegetation (trees and shrubs) should be planted along the northern boundary of the site to screen views from the N10.</li> <li>Retain a buffer (approximately 100m wide) of intact natural vegetation along the perimeter of the development area (i.e. the CPV panel blocks) and along the site boundary.</li> <li>Maintain a neat construction site by removing rubble and waste materials regularly.</li> <li>Temporarily fence-off the construction site (for the duration of the construction period).</li> <li>Where possible, the operation and maintenance buildings and laydown areas should be consolidated to reduce visual clutter.</li> </ul>	2	2	1	2	1	2	16	-	Low

												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buildings and similar structures must be in keeping with relevant regional planning policy documents.</li> <li>Where possible, underground cabling should be utilised.</li> <li>Make use of existing gravel access roads where possible.</li> <li>Limit the number of vehicles and trucks travelling to and from the construction site, where possible.</li> <li>Unless there are water shortages, ensure that dust suppression techniques are implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on all access roads;</li> <li>in all areas where vegetation clearing has taken place;</li> <li>on all soil stockpiles.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>									
<b>Operational Phase</b>																					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on the night time visual environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>The proposed solar PV facility will alter the visual character of the surrounding area and expose potentially sensitive visual receptor locations to visual impacts.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from maintenance vehicles accessing the site via gravel roads may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>The night time visual environment will be altered as a result of operational and security lighting at the proposed PV facility.</li> </ul>	2	3	3	3	3	2	28	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrict vegetation clearance on the site to that which is required for the correct operation of the facility.</li> <li>Ensure that the PV arrays are not located within 500m of any farmhouses or the N10 national route in order to minimise visual impacts on these dwellings and on the receptor road.</li> <li>Locally occurring indigenous woody vegetation (trees and shrubs) should be planted along the northern boundary of the site to screen views from the N10.</li> <li>Retain a buffer (approximately 100m wide) of intact natural vegetation along the perimeter of the development area (i.e. the CPV panel blocks) and along the site boundary.</li> <li>Where possible, the operation and maintenance buildings should be consolidated to reduce visual clutter.</li> <li>As far as possible, limit the number of maintenance vehicles which are allowed to access the site.</li> <li>Ensure that dust suppression techniques are implemented on all gravel access roads.</li> </ul>	2	3	3	2	2	2	24	-	Medium	

																				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As far as possible, limit the amount of security and operational lighting present on site.</li> <li>Light fittings for security at night should reflect the light toward the ground and prevent light spill.</li> <li>Lighting fixtures should make use of minimum lumen or wattage.</li> <li>Mounting heights of lighting fixtures should be limited, or alternatively foot-light or bollard level lights should be used.</li> <li>If possible, make use of motion detectors on security lighting.</li> <li>The operations and maintenance (O&amp;M) buildings should not be illuminated at night.</li> <li>The O&amp;M buildings should be painted in natural tones that fit with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Buildings and similar structures must be in keeping with relevant regional planning policy documents.</li> </ul>																	
<b>Decommissioning Phase</b>																																					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential visual intrusion resulting from vehicles and equipment involved in the decommissioning process;</li> <li>Potential visual impacts of increased dust emissions from decommissioning activities and related traffic; and</li> <li>Potential visual intrusion of any remaining infrastructure on the site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vehicles and equipment required for decommissioning will alter the natural character of the study area and expose visual receptors to visual impacts.</li> <li>Decommissioning activities may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from increased traffic on the gravel roads serving the decommissioning site may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>Surface disturbance during decommissioning would expose bare soil (scarring) which could visually contrast with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Temporary stockpiling of soil during decommissioning may alter the flat landscape. Wind blowing over these disturbed areas could result in dust which would have a visual impact.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All infrastructure that is not required for post-decommissioning use should be removed.</li> <li>Carefully plan to minimize the decommissioning period and avoid delays.</li> <li>Maintain a neat decommissioning site by removing rubble and waste materials regularly.</li> <li>Ensure that dust suppression procedures are maintained on all gravel access roads throughout the decommissioning phase.</li> <li>All cleared areas should be rehabilitated as soon as possible.</li> <li>Rehabilitated areas should be monitored post-decommissioning and remedial actions implemented as required.</li> </ul>	2	2	1	2	1	2	16	-	Low																	

Cumulative																				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place in the broader area.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on the night time visual environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional renewable energy developments in the broader area will alter the natural character of the study area towards a more industrial landscape and expose a greater number of receptors to visual impacts.</li> <li>Visual intrusion of multiple renewable energy developments may be exacerbated, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>Additional renewable energy facilities in the area would generate additional traffic on gravel roads thus resulting in increased impacts from dust emissions and dust plumes.</li> <li>The night time visual environment could be altered as a result of operational and security lighting at multiple renewable energy facilities in the broader area.</li> </ul>	3	3	2	3	3	2	28	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrict vegetation clearance on development sites to that which is required for the correct operation of the facility.</li> <li>Ensure that the PV arrays are not located within 500m of any farmhouses or national routes in order to minimise visual impacts on these dwellings and on the receptor road.</li> <li>Suitable buffers of intact natural vegetation should be provided along the perimeter of the development area and along the site boundary.</li> <li>Where possible, the operation and maintenance buildings should be consolidated to reduce visual clutter.</li> <li>As far as possible, limit the number of maintenance vehicles which are allowed to access the facility.</li> <li>Ensure that dust suppression techniques are implemented on all gravel access roads.</li> <li>As far as possible, limit the amount of security and operational lighting present on site.</li> <li>Light fittings for security at night should reflect the light toward the ground and prevent light spill.</li> <li>Lighting fixtures should make use of minimum lumen or wattage.</li> <li>Mounting heights of lighting fixtures should be limited, or alternatively foot-light or bollard level lights should be used.</li> <li>If possible, make use of motion detectors on security lighting.</li> <li>The operations and maintenance (O&amp;M) buildings should not be illuminated at night.</li> <li>The O&amp;M buildings should be painted in natural tones that fit with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Buildings and similar structures must be in keeping with relevant regional planning policy documents.</li> </ul>	3	3	2	2	2	2	24	-	Medium



MOOI PLAATS GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE																				
ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION									RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION								
		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S
<b>Construction Phase</b>																				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large construction vehicles and equipment will alter the natural character of the study area and expose visual receptors to impacts associated with construction.</li> <li>Construction activities may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from increased traffic on gravel roads serving the construction site may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>Surface disturbance during construction would expose bare soil which could visually contrast with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Vegetation clearance required for the construction of the proposed substation is expected to increase dust emissions and alter the natural character of the surrounding area, thus creating a visual impact.</li> <li>Temporary stockpiling of soil during construction may alter the flat landscape. Wind blowing over these disturbed areas could result in dust which would have a visual impact.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully plan to minimise the construction period and avoid construction delays.</li> <li>Inform receptors of the construction programme and schedules.</li> <li>Minimise vegetation clearing and rehabilitate cleared areas as soon as possible.</li> <li>Maintain a neat construction site by removing rubble and waste materials regularly.</li> <li>Make use of existing gravel access roads where possible.</li> <li>Limit the number of vehicles and trucks travelling to and from the construction site, where possible.</li> <li>Unless there are water shortages, ensure that dust suppression techniques are implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on all access roads;</li> <li>in all areas where vegetation clearing has taken place;</li> <li>on all soil stockpiles.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2	2	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low
<b>Operational Phase</b>																				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed power line and substations could alter the visual character of the surrounding area and expose sensitive visual receptor locations to visual impacts.</li> </ul>	2	4	2	2	3	1	13	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where possible, limit the number of maintenance vehicles using access roads.</li> </ul>	2	4	2	2	3	1	13	-	Low

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from maintenance vehicles accessing the site via gravel roads may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>The night time visual environment could be altered as a result of operational and security lighting at the proposed substation.</li> </ul>																																				
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**Decommissioning Phase**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential visual intrusion resulting from vehicles and equipment involved in the decommissioning process;</li> <li>Potential visual impacts of increased dust emissions from decommissioning activities and related traffic; and</li> <li>Potential visual intrusion of any remaining infrastructure on the site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vehicles and equipment required for decommissioning will alter the natural character of the study area and expose visual receptors to visual impacts.</li> <li>Decommissioning activities may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from increased traffic on the gravel roads serving the decommissioning site may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>Surface disturbance during decommissioning would expose bare soil (scarring) which could visually contrast with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Temporary stockpiling of soil during decommissioning may alter the flat landscape. Wind blowing over these disturbed areas could result in dust which would have a visual impact.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All infrastructure that is not required for post-decommissioning use should be removed.</li> <li>Carefully plan to minimize the decommissioning period and avoid delays.</li> <li>Maintain a neat decommissioning site by removing rubble and waste materials regularly.</li> <li>Ensure that dust suppression procedures are maintained on all gravel access roads throughout the decommissioning phase.</li> <li>All cleared areas should be rehabilitated as soon as possible.</li> <li>Rehabilitated areas should be monitored post-decommissioning and remedial actions implemented as required.</li> </ul>	2	2	1	2	1	2	16	-	Low
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**Cumulative**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place in the broader area.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area.</li> <li>Potential impact on the night time visual environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional renewable energy and associated infrastructure developments in the broader area will alter the natural character of the study area towards a more industrial landscape and expose a greater number of receptors to visual impacts.</li> <li>Visual intrusion of multiple renewable energy and infrastructure developments may be exacerbated, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> </ul>	3	3	2	3	3	2	28	-	Medium		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where possible, limit the number of maintenance vehicles using access roads.</li> <li>Non-reflective surfaces should be utilised where possible.</li> <li>Where possible, limit the amount of security and operational lighting present at the on-site substation.</li> </ul>	3	3	2	2	2	2	24	-	Medium
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Additional renewable energy facilities in the area would generate additional traffic on gravel roads thus resulting in increased impacts from dust emissions and dust plumes.</li> <li>▪ The night time visual environment could be altered as a result of operational and security lighting at multiple renewable energy facilities in the broader area.</li> </ul>																																					
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5.5.2 Wonderheuvall solar PV Project

WONDERVEUVEL SOLAR PV FACILITY																				
ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION									RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION								
		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S
<b>Construction Phase</b>																				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large construction vehicles and equipment will alter the natural character of the study area and expose visual receptors to impacts associated with construction.</li> <li>Construction activities may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from increased traffic on the gravel roads serving the construction site may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>Surface disturbance during construction would expose bare soil (scarring) which could visually contrast with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Temporary stockpiling of soil during construction may alter the flat landscape. Wind blowing over these disturbed areas could result in dust which would have a visual impact.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully plan to minimise the construction period and avoid construction delays.</li> <li>Inform receptors of the construction programme and schedules.</li> <li>Minimise vegetation clearing and rehabilitate cleared areas as soon as possible.</li> <li>Vegetation clearing should take place in a phased manner.</li> <li>Retain a buffer (approximately 100m wide) of intact natural vegetation along the perimeter of the development area (i.e. the CPV panel blocks) and along the site boundary.</li> <li>Maintain a neat construction site by removing rubble and waste materials regularly.</li> <li>Temporarily fence-off the construction site (for the duration of the construction period).</li> <li>Where possible, the operation and maintenance buildings and laydown areas should be consolidated to reduce visual clutter.</li> <li>Buildings and similar structures must be in keeping with regional planning policy documents.</li> <li>Where possible, underground cabling should be utilised.</li> </ul>	2	2	1	2	1	2	16	-	Low

												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make use of existing gravel access roads where possible.</li> <li>Limit the number of vehicles and trucks travelling to and from the proposed site, where possible.</li> <li>Unless there are water shortages, ensure that dust suppression techniques are implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on all access roads;</li> <li>in all areas where vegetation clearing has taken place;</li> <li>on all soil stockpiles.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>									
Operational Phase																					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area.</li> <li>Potential impact on the night time visual environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>The proposed solar PV facility will alter the visual character of the surrounding area and expose potentially sensitive visual receptor locations to visual impacts.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from maintenance vehicles accessing the site via gravel roads may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>The night time visual environment will be altered as a result of operational and security lighting at the proposed PV facility.</li> </ul>	2	3	3	3	3	2	28	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrict vegetation clearance on the site to that which is required for the correct operation of the facility.</li> <li>Ensure that the PV arrays are not located within 500m of any farmhouses in order to minimize visual impacts on these dwellings.</li> <li>Retain a buffer (approximately 100m wide) of intact natural vegetation along the perimeter of the development area (i.e. the CPV panel blocks) and along the site boundary.</li> <li>Where possible, the operation and maintenance buildings should be consolidated to reduce visual clutter.</li> <li>As far as possible, limit the number of maintenance vehicles which are allowed to access the site.</li> <li>Ensure that dust suppression techniques are implemented on all gravel access roads.</li> <li>As far as possible, limit the amount of security and operational lighting present on site.</li> </ul>	2	3	3	2	2	2	24	-	Medium	

												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Light fittings for security at night should reflect the light toward the ground and prevent light spill.</li> <li>Lighting fixtures should make use of minimum lumen or wattage.</li> <li>Mounting heights of lighting fixtures should be limited, or alternatively foot-light or bollard level lights should be used.</li> <li>If possible, make use of motion detectors on security lighting.</li> <li>The operations and maintenance (O&amp;M) buildings should not be illuminated at night.</li> <li>The O&amp;M buildings should be painted in natural tones that fit with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Buildings and similar structures must be in keeping with regional planning policy documents.</li> </ul>									
<b>Decommissioning Phase</b>																					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential visual intrusion resulting from vehicles and equipment involved in the decommissioning process;</li> <li>Potential visual impacts of increased dust emissions from decommissioning activities and related traffic; and</li> <li>Potential visual intrusion of any remaining infrastructure on the site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vehicles and equipment required for decommissioning will alter the natural character of the study area and expose visual receptors to visual impacts.</li> <li>Decommissioning activities may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from increased traffic on the gravel roads serving the decommissioning site may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>Surface disturbance during decommissioning would expose bare soil (scarring) which could visually contrast with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Temporary stockpiling of soil during decommissioning may alter the flat landscape. Wind blowing over these disturbed areas could result in dust which would have a visual impact.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All infrastructure that is not required for post-decommissioning use should be removed.</li> <li>Carefully plan to minimize the decommissioning period and avoid delays.</li> <li>Maintain a neat decommissioning site by removing rubble and waste materials regularly.</li> <li>Ensure that dust suppression procedures are maintained on all gravel access roads throughout the decommissioning phase.</li> <li>All cleared areas should be rehabilitated as soon as possible.</li> <li>Rehabilitated areas should be monitored post-decommissioning and remedial actions implemented as required.</li> </ul>	2	2	1	2	1	2	16	-	Low	
<b>Cumulative</b>																					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place in the broader area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional renewable energy developments in the broader area will alter the natural character of the study area towards a more industrial</li> </ul>	3	3	2	3	3	2	28	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrict vegetation clearance on development sites to that which is required for the correct operation of the facility.</li> </ul>	3	3	2	2	2	2	24	-	Medium	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area.</li> <li>▪ Potential impact on the night time visual environment.</li> </ul>	<p>landscape and expose a greater number of receptors to visual impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visual intrusion of multiple renewable energy developments may be exacerbated, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>▪ Additional renewable energy facilities in the area would generate additional traffic on gravel roads thus resulting in increased impacts from dust emissions and dust plumes.</li> <li>▪ The night time visual environment could be altered as a result of operational and security lighting at multiple renewable energy facilities in the broader area.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that the PV arrays are not located within 500m of any farmhouses or national routes in order to minimise visual impacts on these dwellings and on the receptor road.</li> <li>▪ Suitable buffers of intact natural vegetation should be provided along the perimeter of the development area and along the site boundary.</li> <li>▪ Where possible, the operation and maintenance buildings should be consolidated to reduce visual clutter.</li> <li>▪ As far as possible, limit the number of maintenance vehicles which are allowed to access the facility.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that dust suppression techniques are implemented on all gravel access roads.</li> <li>▪ As far as possible, limit the amount of security and operational lighting present on site.</li> <li>▪ Light fittings for security at night should reflect the light toward the ground and prevent light spill.</li> <li>▪ Lighting fixtures should make use of minimum lumen or wattage.</li> <li>▪ Mounting heights of lighting fixtures should be limited, or alternatively foot-light or bollard level lights should be used.</li> <li>▪ If possible, make use of motion detectors on security lighting.</li> <li>▪ The operations and maintenance (O&amp;M) buildings should not be illuminated at night.</li> <li>▪ The O&amp;M buildings should be painted in natural tones that fit with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>▪ Buildings and similar structures must be in keeping with relevant regional planning policy documents.</li> </ul>				
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WONDERHEUVEL GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE																				
ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION								RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION									
		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)		S	E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S
<b>Construction Phase</b>																				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large construction vehicles and equipment will alter the natural character of the study area and expose visual receptors to impacts associated with construction.</li> <li>Construction activities may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from increased traffic on gravel roads serving the construction site may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>Surface disturbance during construction would expose bare soil which could visually contrast with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Vegetation clearance required for the construction of the proposed substation is expected to increase dust emissions and alter the natural character of the surrounding area, thus creating a visual impact.</li> <li>Temporary stockpiling of soil during construction may alter the flat landscape. Wind blowing over these disturbed areas could result in dust which would have a visual impact.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully plan to minimise the construction period and avoid construction delays.</li> <li>Inform receptors of the construction programme and schedules.</li> <li>Minimise vegetation clearing and rehabilitate cleared areas as soon as possible.</li> <li>Maintain a neat construction site by removing rubble and waste materials regularly.</li> <li>Make use of existing gravel access roads where possible.</li> <li>Limit the number of vehicles and trucks travelling to and from the construction site, where possible.</li> <li>Unless there are water shortages, ensure that dust suppression techniques are implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on all access roads;</li> <li>in all areas where vegetation clearing has taken place;</li> <li>on all soil stockpiles.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2	2	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low
<b>Operational Phase</b>																				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed power line and substations could alter the visual character of the surrounding area and expose sensitive visual receptor locations to visual impacts.</li> </ul>	2	4	2	2	3	1	13	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where possible, limit the number of maintenance vehicles using access roads.</li> </ul>	2	4	2	2	3	1	13	-	Low



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from maintenance vehicles accessing the site via gravel roads may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>The night time visual environment could be altered as a result of operational and security lighting at the proposed substation.</li> </ul>											<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-reflective surfaces should be utilised where possible.</li> <li>Where possible, limit the amount of security and operational lighting present at the on-site substation.</li> <li>Light fittings for security at night should reflect the light toward the ground and prevent light spill.</li> </ul>											
<b>Decommissioning Phase</b>																							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential visual intrusion resulting from vehicles and equipment involved in the decommissioning process;</li> <li>Potential visual impacts of increased dust emissions from decommissioning activities and related traffic; and</li> <li>Potential visual intrusion of any remaining infrastructure on the site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vehicles and equipment required for decommissioning will alter the natural character of the study area and expose visual receptors to visual impacts.</li> <li>Decommissioning activities may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from increased traffic on the gravel roads serving the decommissioning site may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>Surface disturbance during decommissioning would expose bare soil (scarring) which could visually contrast with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Temporary stockpiling of soil during decommissioning may alter the flat landscape. Wind blowing over these disturbed areas could result in dust which would have a visual impact.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All infrastructure that is not required for post-decommissioning use should be removed.</li> <li>Carefully plan to minimize the decommissioning period and avoid delays.</li> <li>Maintain a neat decommissioning site by removing rubble and waste materials regularly.</li> <li>Ensure that dust suppression procedures are maintained on all gravel access roads throughout the decommissioning phase.</li> <li>All cleared areas should be rehabilitated as soon as possible.</li> <li>Rehabilitated areas should be monitored post-decommissioning and remedial actions implemented as required.</li> </ul>	2	2	1	2	1	2	16	-	Low			
<b>Cumulative</b>																							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place in the broader area.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area.</li> <li>Potential impact on the night time visual environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional renewable energy and associated infrastructure developments in the broader area will alter the natural character of the study area towards a more industrial landscape and expose a greater number of receptors to visual impacts.</li> <li>Visual intrusion of multiple renewable energy and infrastructure developments may be exacerbated, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>Additional renewable energy facilities in the area would generate additional traffic on gravel roads thus resulting in</li> </ul>	3	3	2	3	3	2	28	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where possible, limit the number of maintenance vehicles using access roads.</li> <li>Non-reflective surfaces should be utilised where possible.</li> <li>Where possible, limit the amount of security and operational lighting present at the on-site substation.</li> <li>Light fittings for security at night should reflect the light toward the ground and prevent light spill.</li> </ul>	3	3	2	2	2	2	24	-	Medium			

	<p>increased impacts from dust emissions and dust plumes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The night time visual environment could be altered as a result of operational and security lighting at multiple renewable energy facilities in the broader area.</li> </ul>																																
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5.5.3 Paarde Valley solar PV Project

PAARDE VALLEY SOLAR PV FACILITY																				
ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION								RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION									
		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)		S	E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S
<b>Construction Phase</b>																				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large construction vehicles and equipment will alter the natural character of the study area and expose visual receptors to impacts associated with construction.</li> <li>Construction activities may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from increased traffic on the gravel roads serving the construction site may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>Surface disturbance during construction would expose bare soil (scarring) which could visually contrast with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Temporary stockpiling of soil during construction may alter the flat landscape. Wind blowing over these disturbed areas could result in dust which would have a visual impact.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully plan to minimise the construction period and avoid construction delays.</li> <li>Inform receptors of the construction programme and schedules.</li> <li>Minimise vegetation clearing and rehabilitate cleared areas as soon as possible.</li> <li>Vegetation clearing should take place in a phased manner.</li> <li>Retain a buffer (approximately 100m wide) of intact natural vegetation along the perimeter of the development area (i.e. the CPV panel blocks) and along the site boundary.</li> <li>Maintain a neat construction site by removing rubble and waste materials regularly.</li> <li>Temporarily fence-off the construction site (for the duration of the construction period).</li> <li>Temporarily fence-off the construction site (for the duration of the construction period).</li> <li>Where possible, the operation and maintenance buildings and laydown areas should be consolidated to reduce visual clutter.</li> </ul>	2	2	1	2	1	2	16	-	Low





exacerbated, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.

- Additional renewable energy facilities in the area would generate additional traffic on gravel roads thus resulting in increased impacts from dust emissions and dust plumes.
- The night time visual environment could be altered as a result of operational and security lighting at multiple renewable energy facilities in the broader area.

on these dwellings and on the receptor road.

- Suitable buffers of intact natural vegetation should be provided along the perimeter of the development area and along the site boundary.
- Where possible, the operation and maintenance buildings should be consolidated to reduce visual clutter.
- As far as possible, limit the number of maintenance vehicles which are allowed to access the facility.
- Ensure that dust suppression techniques are implemented on all gravel access roads.
- As far as possible, limit the amount of security and operational lighting present on site.
- Light fittings for security at night should reflect the light toward the ground and prevent light spill.
- Lighting fixtures should make use of minimum lumen or wattage.
- Mounting heights of lighting fixtures should be limited, or alternatively foot-light or bollard level lights should be used.
- If possible, make use of motion detectors on security lighting.
- The operations and maintenance (O&M) buildings should not be illuminated at night.
- The O&M buildings should be painted in natural tones that fit with the surrounding environment.
- Buildings and similar structures must be in keeping with relevant regional planning policy documents.

PAARDE VALLEY GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE																				
ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETER	ISSUE / IMPACT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT/ NATURE	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE BEFORE MITIGATION									RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION								
		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S		E	P	R	L	D	I / M	TOTAL	STATUS (+ OR -)	S
<b>Construction Phase</b>																				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large construction vehicles and equipment will alter the natural character of the study area and expose visual receptors to impacts associated with construction.</li> <li>Construction activities may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from increased traffic on gravel roads serving the construction site may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>Surface disturbance during construction would expose bare soil which could visually contrast with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Vegetation clearance required for the construction of the proposed substation is expected to increase dust emissions and alter the natural character of the surrounding area, thus creating a visual impact.</li> <li>Temporary stockpiling of soil during construction may alter the flat landscape. Wind blowing over these disturbed areas could result in dust which would have a visual impact.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully plan to minimise the construction period and avoid construction delays.</li> <li>Inform receptors of the construction programme and schedules.</li> <li>Minimise vegetation clearing and rehabilitate cleared areas as soon as possible.</li> <li>Maintain a neat construction site by removing rubble and waste materials regularly.</li> <li>Make use of existing gravel access roads where possible.</li> <li>Limit the number of vehicles and trucks travelling to and from the construction site, where possible.</li> <li>Unless there are water shortages, ensure that dust suppression techniques are implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on all access roads;</li> <li>in all areas where vegetation clearing has taken place;</li> <li>on all soil stockpiles.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2	2	1	1	1	2	14	-	Low
<b>Operational Phase</b>																				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed power line and substations could alter the visual character of the surrounding area and expose sensitive visual receptor locations to visual impacts.</li> </ul>	2	4	2	2	3	1	13	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where possible, limit the number of maintenance vehicles using access roads.</li> </ul>	2	4	2	2	3	1	13	-	Low

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from maintenance vehicles accessing the site via gravel roads may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>The night time visual environment could be altered as a result of operational and security lighting at the proposed substation.</li> </ul>												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-reflective surfaces should be utilised where possible.</li> <li>Where possible, limit the amount of security and operational lighting present at the on-site substation.</li> <li>Light fittings for security at night should reflect the light toward the ground and prevent light spill.</li> </ul>													
<b>Decommissioning Phase</b>																										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential visual intrusion resulting from vehicles and equipment involved in the decommissioning process;</li> <li>Potential visual impacts of increased dust emissions from decommissioning activities and related traffic; and</li> <li>Potential visual intrusion of any remaining infrastructure on the site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vehicles and equipment required for decommissioning will alter the natural character of the study area and expose visual receptors to visual impacts.</li> <li>Decommissioning activities may be perceived as an unwelcome visual intrusion.</li> <li>Dust emissions and dust plumes from increased traffic on the gravel roads serving the decommissioning site may evoke negative sentiments from surrounding viewers.</li> <li>Surface disturbance during decommissioning would expose bare soil (scarring) which could visually contrast with the surrounding environment.</li> <li>Temporary stockpiling of soil during decommissioning may alter the flat landscape. Wind blowing over these disturbed areas could result in dust which would have a visual impact.</li> </ul>	2	3	1	2	1	2	18	-	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All infrastructure that is not required for post-decommissioning use should be removed.</li> <li>Carefully plan to minimize the decommissioning period and avoid delays.</li> <li>Maintain a neat decommissioning site by removing rubble and waste materials regularly.</li> <li>Ensure that dust suppression procedures are maintained on all gravel access roads throughout the decommissioning phase.</li> <li>All cleared areas should be rehabilitated as soon as possible.</li> <li>Rehabilitated areas should be monitored post-decommissioning and remedial actions implemented as required.</li> </ul>	2	2	1	2	1	2	16	-	Low						
<b>Cumulative</b>																										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration of the visual character and sense of place in the broader area.</li> <li>Potential visual impact on receptors in the study area.</li> <li>Potential impact on the night time visual environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional renewable energy and associated infrastructure developments in the broader area will alter the natural character of the study area towards a more industrial landscape and expose a greater number of receptors to visual impacts.</li> <li>Visual intrusion of multiple renewable energy and infrastructure developments may be exacerbated, particularly in more natural undisturbed settings.</li> <li>Additional renewable energy facilities in the area would generate additional traffic on gravel roads thus resulting in</li> </ul>	3	3	2	3	3	2	28	-	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where possible, limit the number of maintenance vehicles using access roads.</li> <li>Non-reflective surfaces should be utilised where possible.</li> <li>Where possible, limit the amount of security and operational lighting present at the on-site substation.</li> <li>Light fittings for security at night should reflect the light toward the ground and prevent light spill.</li> </ul>	3	3	2	2	2	2	24	-	Medium						



	<p>increased impacts from dust emissions and dust plumes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The night time visual environment could be altered as a result of operational and security lighting at multiple renewable energy facilities in the broader area.</li> </ul>																																
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## 6 COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

As previously stated, two grid connection infrastructure alternatives have been provided for each PV project. These alternatives essentially provide for two different route alignments with associated substations contained within an assessment corridor of approximately 400m wide. Details of these alternatives are provided in **Section 1.1.2** above.

A comparative assessment was undertaken for each of the three grid infrastructure projects to determine which of the alternatives would be preferred from a visual perspective. The preference rating for each alternative is provided in Error! Reference source not found. below. The alternatives are rated as preferred; favourable, least-preferred or no-preference.

The degree of visual impact and the preference rating has been determined based on the following factors:

- The location of each alternative in relation to areas of high elevation, especially ridges, koppies or hills;
- The location of each alternative in relation to sensitive visual receptor locations; and
- The location of each alternative in relation to areas of natural vegetation (clearing site for the development worsens the visibility).

### Key

<b>PREFERRED</b>	The alternative will result in a low impact / reduce the impact
<b>FAVOURABLE</b>	The impact will be relatively insignificant
<b>LEAST PREFERRED</b>	The alternative will result in a high impact / increase the impact
<b>NO PREFERENCE</b>	The alternative will result in equal impacts

**Table 8: Comparative Assessment of Alternatives**

<b>GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE ALTERNATIVES (POWER LINE CORRIDORS AND ASSOCIATED SUBSTATIONS)</b>	<b>Preference</b>	<b>Reasons (incl. potential issues)</b>
<b>MOOI PLAATS SOLAR PV FACILITY:</b>		
Grid Connection Option 1	<b>Preferred</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This option is approximately 13kms in length and is considerably shorter than Option 2.</li> <li>▪ Much of this infrastructure alternative is located on relatively flat terrain and as such the power lines would only be moderately</li> </ul>

GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE ALTERNATIVES (POWER LINE CORRIDORS AND ASSOCIATED SUBSTATIONS)	Preference	Reasons (incl. potential issues)
		<p>exposed on the skyline. The eastern section of the corridor does however traverse areas of higher elevation and as such power lines in these areas will be more exposed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Much of this alternative will be visible from the N10 receptor road, although the presence of the existing 400kV power lines would reduce visual impacts on passing motorists to moderate.</li> <li>▪ There are two sensitive receptor locations (SR1 and SR2) and one potentially sensitive receptor location (VR18) within 500m of this alternative and a third sensitive receptor (SR3) only 600m from the edge of the assessment corridor. As much of the assessment corridor is aligned adjacent to existing 400kV power lines however, visual impacts affecting these receptors would be reduced to moderate. As SR1 is located on the Mooi Plaats solar PV application site, it is however assumed that the owner has a vested interest in the Mooi Plaats project and thus the associated grid connection would not be perceived in a negative light.</li> <li>▪ The remaining receptors are all more than 2kms away and thus would only be subjected to low levels of impact.</li> <li>▪ In light of the above, there are no fatal flaws associated with Mooi Plaats Option 1 and this alternative is preferred from a visual perspective.</li> <li>▪ The alternative is preferred over Option 1 as the route is shorter and majority is aligned with the existing power lines.</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>

GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE ALTERNATIVES (POWER LINE CORRIDORS AND ASSOCIATED SUBSTATIONS)	Preference	Reasons (incl. potential issues)
Grid Connection Option 2	Favourable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This option is approximately 27kms in length and is considerably longer than Option 1.</li> <li>▪ Much of this infrastructure alternative is located on relatively flat terrain and as such the power lines would only be moderately exposed on the skyline. The eastern section of the corridor does however traverse areas of higher elevation and as such power lines in these areas will be more exposed.</li> <li>▪ Sections of this alternative will be visible from the N10 receptor road, although the presence of the existing 400kV power lines would reduce visual impacts on passing motorists to moderate. The southern portion of this alternative is however outside the viewshed of the receptor road.</li> <li>▪ There is one sensitive receptor locations (SR1) and within 500m of this alternative and a three receptors (SR2, SR3 and VR18) between 500m and 900m from the edge of the assessment corridor. As the sections of this assessment corridor affecting these receptors are aligned adjacent to existing 400kV power lines however, visual impacts affecting these receptors would be reduced to moderate. As SR1 is located on the Mooi Plaats solar PV application site, it is however assumed that the owner has a vested interest in the Mooi Plaats project and thus the associated grid connection would not be perceived in a negative light.</li> <li>▪ The remaining receptors are all more than 1.8km away and thus would only be subjected to low levels of impact.</li> <li>▪ In light of the above, there are no fatal flaws associated with Mooi Plaats Option 2 and</li> </ul>

GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE ALTERNATIVES (POWER LINE CORRIDORS AND ASSOCIATED SUBSTATIONS)	Preference	Reasons (incl. potential issues)
		<p>this alternative is considered favourable from a visual perspective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The alternative is less preferred than Option 1 as the route is longer and portions are not aligned with the existing power lines.</li> </ul>
<b>WONDERHEUVEL SOLAR PV FACILITY:</b>		
Grid Connection Option 1	Favourable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This option involves two separate grid connections to serve the northern and southern sectors of the application site. The northern connection is approximately 18kms in length, and the southern connection is approximately 17kms in length.</li> <li>Much of the northern connection is located on relatively flat terrain and as such the power lines would only be moderately exposed on the skyline. The eastern section of the corridor does however traverse areas of higher elevation and as such power lines in these areas will be more exposed.</li> <li>The southern connection is largely located on relatively flat terrain and as such the level of exposure would be moderate.</li> <li>Much of the northern connection will be visible from the N10 receptor road, although the presence of the existing 400kV power lines would reduce visual impacts on passing motorists to moderate. The southern connection will not be visible from the N10.</li> <li>Only one sensitive receptor (SR2) is located within 500m of the northern connection, while SR2 and VR18 are both some 600m from the northern connection. As much of the northern connection is aligned adjacent to existing 400kV power lines however, visual impacts affecting</li> </ul>

GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE ALTERNATIVES (POWER LINE CORRIDORS AND ASSOCIATED SUBSTATIONS)	Preference	Reasons (incl. potential issues)
		<p>these receptors would be reduced to moderate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The remaining receptors are all more than 2kms from the northern connection and thus would only be subjected to low levels of impact.</li> <li>▪ The closest receptor to the southern connection is some 1.4kms away and as such would only be subjected to moderate impacts from this alternative.</li> <li>▪ In light of the above, there are no fatal flaws associated with Wonderheuvel Option 1 and this alternative is considered favourable from a visual perspective.</li> <li>▪ The alternative is less preferred than Option 2 as the route is overall much longer.</li> </ul>
Grid Connection Option 2	Preferred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This option involves only one grid connection and is some 20kms in length.</li> <li>▪ Much of this alternative is located on relatively flat terrain and as such the power lines would only be moderately exposed on the skyline. The eastern section of the corridor does however traverse areas of higher elevation and as such power lines in these areas will be more exposed.</li> <li>▪ Only the north-eastern section of this alternative will be visible from the N10 receptor road, although the presence of the existing 400kV power lines would reduce visual impacts on passing motorists to moderate.</li> <li>▪ No sensitive receptors are located within 500m of this alternative, although SR3 is relatively close by at a distance of 540m. In addition, SR2 and VR18 are some 700m away. As much of this section of Option 2 is aligned adjacent to existing 400kV power lines however, visual impacts affecting</li> </ul>

GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE ALTERNATIVES (POWER LINE CORRIDORS AND ASSOCIATED SUBSTATIONS)	Preference	Reasons (incl. potential issues)
		<p>these receptors would be reduced to moderate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The remaining receptors are all more than 2kms from the northern connection and thus would only be subjected to low levels of impact.</li> <li>▪ In light of the above, there are no fatal flaws associated with Wonderheuvvel Option 2 and this alternative is preferred from a visual perspective.</li> <li>▪ The alternative is preferred over Option 1 as the route is overall much shorter.</li> </ul>
<b>PAARDE VALLEY SOLAR PV FACILITY:</b>		
Grid Connection Option 1	Preferred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This option is approximately 14kms in length and is considerably shorter than Option 2.</li> <li>▪ Much of this alternative is located on relatively flat terrain and as such the power lines would only be moderately exposed on the skyline. The eastern section of the corridor does however traverse areas of higher elevation and as such power lines in these areas will be more exposed.</li> <li>▪ This alternative will not be visible from the N10 receptor road.</li> <li>▪ The nearest potentially sensitive receptor to this alternative (VR24) is located 1.2km way, while the remaining receptor locations are all more than 2km away. Thus visual impacts affecting these receptors would be moderate to low.</li> <li>▪ In light of the above, there are no fatal flaws associated with Paarde Valley Option 1 and this alternative is preferred from a visual perspective.</li> <li>▪ The alternative is preferred over Option 2 as the route is overall much shorter and there are less visual receptors in close proximity.</li> </ul>

GRID CONNECTION INFRASTRUCTURE ALTERNATIVES (POWER LINE CORRIDORS AND ASSOCIATED SUBSTATIONS)	Preference	Reasons (incl. potential issues)
Grid Connection Option 2	Favourable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This option is approximately 26kms in length and is considerably longer than Option 1.</li> <li>▪ Much of this alternative is located on relatively flat terrain and as such the power lines would only be moderately exposed on the skyline. The eastern section of the corridor does however traverse areas of higher elevation and as such power lines in these areas will be more exposed.</li> <li>▪ Only the northern section of this alternative will be visible from the N10 receptor road, although the presence of the existing 400kV power lines would reduce visual impacts on passing motorists to moderate.</li> <li>▪ No sensitive receptors are located within 500m of this alternative, although SR3 is relatively close by at a distance of 600m. In addition, SR2 and VR18 are some 700m and 900m away respectively. As much of this section of Option 2 is aligned adjacent to existing 400kV power lines however, visual impacts affecting these receptors would be reduced to moderate.</li> <li>▪ Four of the remaining receptors are between 500m and 2km from this alternative and thus impacts affecting these receptors would be moderate. All other receptors are more than 2kms from this alternative and thus would only be subjected to low levels of impact.</li> <li>▪ In light of the above, there are no fatal flaws associated with Paarde Valley Option 2 and this alternative is considered favourable a visual perspective.</li> <li>▪ The alternative is less preferred over Option 1 as the route is overall much longer and there are more visual receptors in close proximity.</li> </ul>



## 7 CONCLUSION

A scoping level visual study was conducted to assess the magnitude and significance of the visual impacts associated with the development of the proposed Mooi Plaats, Wonderheuvel and Paarde Valley solar PV facilities and associated grid connection infrastructure near Noupoot and Middelburg in the Northern and Eastern Cape Provinces. Overall, sparse human habitation and the predominance of natural vegetation cover across much of the study area would give the viewer the general impression of a largely natural setting with some pastoral elements. As such, solar PV developments would alter the visual character and contrast significantly with the typical land use and/or pattern and form of human elements present across the broader study area. The level of contrast will however be reduced by the presence of the N10 national route and existing high voltage power lines in the northern sector of the study area.

The area is not typically valued for its tourism significance and there is limited human habitation resulting in relatively few potentially sensitive receptors in the area. A total of twenty six (26) potentially sensitive receptors were identified in the combined study area, three (3) of which are considered to be sensitive receptors as they are linked to leisure/nature-based tourism activities in the area. None of the receptors are however expected to experience high levels of visual impact from any of the proposed PV facilities or the grid connection infrastructure. Although the N10 receptor road traverses the study area, motorists travelling along this route are only expected to experience moderate impacts from the proposed Mooi Plaats solar PV facility and from the grid connection infrastructure associated with all three projects.

An overall impact rating was also conducted as part of the scoping phase in order to allow the visual impact to be assessed alongside other environmental parameters. The assessment revealed that impacts associated with the proposed Mooi Plaats, Wonderheuvel and Paarde Valley solar PV facilities and associated grid connection infrastructure will be of low significance during both construction and decommissioning phases.

During operation, visual impacts from all three solar PV facilities would be of medium significance with relatively few mitigation measures available to reduce the visual impact. Visual impacts associated with the grid connection infrastructure during operation would be of low significance.

Although other renewable energy developments and infrastructure projects, either proposed or in operation, were identified within a 35km radius of the Mooi Plaats, Wonderheuvel and Paarde Valley solar PV projects, it was determined that only one of these would have any significant impact on the landscape within the visual assessment zone, namely Umsobomvu WEF. This proposed WEF, in conjunction with the three proposed solar PV facilities and associated grid

connection infrastructure, will alter the inherent sense of place and introduce an increasingly industrial character into a largely natural, rural landscape, thus giving rise to significant cumulative impacts. It is however anticipated that these impacts could be mitigated to acceptable levels with the implementation of the recommendations and mitigation measures stipulated for each of these developments by the visual specialists. In light of this and the relatively low level of human habitation in the study area however, cumulative impacts have been rated as medium.

No fatal flaws were identified for any of the grid connection infrastructure alternatives and the preferred alternatives for each of the projects are listed below:

- Mooi Plaats grid connection infrastructure: Option 1
- Wonderheuveld grid connection infrastructure: Option 2
- Paarde Valley grid connection infrastructure: Option 1

## 7.1 Visual Impact Statement

It is SiVEST's opinion that the visual impacts associated with the proposed Mooi Plaats, Wonderheuveld and Paarde Valley solar PV facilities and associated grid connection infrastructure are of moderate significance. Given the low level of human habitation and the relative absence of sensitive receptors, the project is deemed acceptable from a visual perspective and the Environmental Authorisations (EA) should be granted for all three applications. SiVEST is of the opinion that the impacts associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning phases can be mitigated to acceptable levels provided the recommended mitigation measures are implemented.

## 7.2 EIA Phase Plan of Study

The scoping phase VIA report has adequately assessed the visual impacts of the proposed Mooi Plaats, Wonderheuveld and Paarde Valley solar PV facilities and associated grid connection infrastructure and no further field investigation will be required. The focus of the EIA phase assessment will be to update the scoping phase VIA report. This will entail:

- a review of the findings of the VIA in accordance with detailed site layouts;
- a comparative assessment of the layout alternatives provided;
- addressing any comments or concerns arising from the public participation process.

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