

Noko Solar Power Project: Comments and Response Report

**Comments received on the Draft Basic Assessment Report during the 30-day review and commenting period (06 January 2022 – 04 February 2022)**

Organisation	Person	Issue or comment raised (see Appendix C4 & C5 of the Final Basic Assessment report)	Addressing or incorporation of issue or comment
South African Heritage Resources Agency (SARHA)	Elijah Dumisani Katsetse	<p>In a letter dated 07 January 2022. The following comments were raised on the Draft Basic Assessment Report:</p> <p>The following comments are made as a requirement in terms of section 38(8) of the NHRA in the format provided in section 38(4) of the NHRA and must be included in the Final BAR and EMPr:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38(4)a – The SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit has no objections to the proposed development;</li> <li>• 38(4)b – The recommendations of the specialists are supported and must be adhered to. Further additional specific conditions are provided for the development;</li> <li>• The farmstead (7.3.1) must be preserved in-situ with a no-go buffer zone of a 100m. If the farmstead cannot be avoided a permit for mitigation must be obtained from the North West Provincial Heritage Resources Authority;</li> <li>• A 100m no-go buffer zone must be maintained for both burial sites (7.3.2 &amp; 7.3.3) as recommended in the HIA report;</li> <li>• 38(4)c(i) – If any evidence of archaeological sites or remains (e.g. remnants of stone-made structures, indigenous ceramics, bones, stone artefacts, ostrich eggshell</li> </ul>	<p>The following responses are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is noted that there are no objections from a heritage perspective on the development of the Noko Solar Power Plant.</li> <li>• The recommendations from the specialist will be adhered to and is included in the Final BAR as well as the EMPr.</li> <li>• The farmstead (7.3.1) will be preserved in-situ and the 100m buffer will be adhered to (see Appendix H and Figure H1-H4). If the 100m buffer cannot be adhered to when the final layout is completed or the farmstead cannot be avoided a permit for mitigation will be obtained from the North West Provincial Heritage Resources Authority.</li> <li>• The 100m buffer for the burial sites will be adhered to as depicted in the layout for the facility (see Appendix H).</li> <li>• If any evidence of archaeological sites or remains (e.g. remnants of stone-made structures, indigenous ceramics, bones, stone artefacts, ostrich eggshell fragments, charcoal and ash concentrations), fossils or</li> </ul>

		<p>fragments, charcoal and ash concentrations), fossils or other categories of heritage resources are found during the proposed development, SAHRA APM Unit (Elijah D. Katsetse/Phillip Hine 021 462 5402) must be alerted as per section 35(3) of the NHRA. Non-compliance with section of the NHRA is an offence in terms of section 51(1)e of the NHRA and item 5 of the Schedule;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38(4)c(ii) – If unmarked human burials are uncovered, the SAHRA Burial Grounds and Graves (BGG) Unit (Thingahangwi Tshivhase/Ngqalabutho Madida 012 320 8490), must be alerted immediately as per section 36(6) of the NHRA. Non-compliance with section of the NHRA is an offence in terms of section 51(1)e of the NHRA and item 5 of the Schedule;</li> <li>• 38(4)d – See section 51(1) of the NHRA regarding offences;</li> <li>• 38(4)e – The following conditions apply with regards to the appointment of specialists: i) If heritage resources are uncovered during the course of the development, a professional archaeologist or palaeontologist, depending on the nature of the finds, must be contracted as soon as possible to inspect the heritage resource. If the newly discovered heritage resources prove to be of archaeological or palaeontological significance, a Phase 2 rescue operation may be required subject to permits issued by SAHRA;</li> <li>• The Final BAR and EMPr must be submitted to the SAHRIS application for record purposes;</li> </ul>	<p>other categories of heritage resources are found during the proposed development, SAHRA APM Unit will be alerted as per section 35(3) of the NHRA. This measure has been added to the EMPr for the development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If unmarked human burials are uncovered, the SAHRA Burial Grounds and Graves (BGG) Unit will be alerted immediately as per section 36(6) of the NHRA. This measure has been added to the EMPr for the development.</li> <li>• section 51(1) of the NHRA regarding offences is noted. No further response required.</li> <li>• The appointment of specialist will be in accordance with the requirements set out by SAHRA, should the need arise.</li> <li>• The final BAR and EMPr has been uploaded to SARHIS, as required.</li> <li>• The decision on the Application for Environmental Authorisation will be uploaded to the SAHRIS case file once available.</li> </ul>
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<p>Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Protected Areas Planning and Management Effectiveness</p>	<p>Thivhulawi Nethononda</p>	<p>In an email dated 18 January 2022, the following comments were raised on the Draft Basic Assessment Report:</p> <p>The Directorate: Protected Areas Planning and Management Effectiveness, would like to thank you for the opportunity to review the Basic Assessments reports for the proposed Thakadu, Paleso, and Noko solar power plant and associated infrastructure.</p> <p>We have noted that the proposed development will not take place within any kind of protected areas in terms of Section 9 of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (NEMPAA), Act No. 57 of 2003.</p> <p>Subsequently, this directorate provides comments or input on the projects which are affecting the protected areas.</p> <p>However, the following must be taken into consideration:</p> <p>Noko Solar Power Plant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed site falls within a five-kilometer buffer of the Boskoppie Game Reserve, therefore, the landowner and management authority of such area must be notified of the project.</li> <li>The area also falls within the Vaal grassland and NPAES priority focus area. Therefore, all areas of CBA, Vaal Grassland, priority focus area, and other increased</li> </ul>	<p>The following responses are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is noted that there are no objections on the development of the Noko Solar Power Plant.</li> <li>The location of the Boskoppie nature reserve has been queried with the Department via email on 19 January 2022 (see Appendix C4 for proof). The proclamation for the Boskoppie Game reserve is proclaimed on the farm Bellevue no. 110 in the District of Kroonstad. Whereas the shapefile for the South African Protected Areas Database shows that the Boskoppie Game Reserve is located on the Farm Bellevue no. 365 in the district of Viljoenskroon according to the Surveyor General Cadastral map. Therefore, there is uncertainty whether the Boskoppie Game Reserve is relevant to the proposed project. No response from the department has been received to date. It is confirmed that the landowner and management authority of the Boskoppie Game Reserve have been notified of the project as per the proof included in Appendix C4 of the final BAR&gt;</li> </ul>

		<p>ecological sensitivity falling outside of the proposed footprints must be designated as No-Go areas and be off-limits to all construction vehicles and personnel</p> <p>However, kindly consult and confirm with the North West Parks Board Agency, North West Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism, local municipality, and other provincial departments for other sensitive areas that might be affected by the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All areas of CBA, Vaal Grassland, priority focus area, and other increased ecological sensitivity falling outside of the proposed footprints will be designated as No-Go areas and be off-limits to all construction vehicles and personnel. This is included in the EMPr of the project.</li> <li>• NWDEDECT, North West Parks Board and the City of Matlosana Local municipality has been notified of the development and the draft BAR was made available to the authority for review and comment.</li> </ul>
<p>Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)</p>	<p>Ms. Makhosazane Yeni</p>	<p>In a letter dated 28 January 2022, the following comments were raised on the Draft Basic Assessment Report:</p> <p>The draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) dated 06 January 2022 and received by this Department on 06 January 2022, refer.</p> <p>This letter serves to inform you that the following information must be included to the final BAR:</p>	<p>The comments submitted by the Department are noted and are responded to accordingly below.</p>
		<p><b><u>Listed Activities:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On page 33 of the draft BAR, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) has been identified as part of the proposed infrastructure for this development. It was further indicated on page 73 of the draft BAR that Lithium-ion,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Risk and Impact Assessment for the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) has been conducted and is included in the Final Basic Assessment Report (BAR) in Section 6</li> </ul>

		<p>Sodium-sulphur or Vanadium Redox flow battery would be considered, however, Lithium-ion (Li-ion) battery energy storage is the preferred technology. You are advised to assess impacts associated with the risks of the preferred and alternative battery technology, provide measures to mitigate those impacts and ensure that these measures are included in the final environmental management programme (EMPr).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition, you are also requested to indicate how the battery energy storage system (BESS) will be assembled (either on the factory or on site), whether a listed activity will be triggered by this and ensure the description of such activity include such information.</li> <li>• It has been noted that decommissioning of the facility forms part of activity description on page 39 to 40 of the draft BAR. You are advised to confirm whether decommissioning activities would not trigger any listed activity. Should this trigger listed activities, its impact must be clearly assessed for it to be approved as part of this proposed development.</li> <li>• It is noted that activity 14 of Listing Notice 1 and 10 of Listing Notice 3 has been applied for (on page 11 of 31 of the application form), which is related to storage and handling of dangerous goods. However, project description provided on page 6 of 31 of the application form does not provide the specific dangerous goods to be stored and the exact capacity of the dangerous goods applied for. Therefore, you are requested to specify the dangerous goods applied for and the capacity as well. In addition, you</li> </ul>	<p>and the Matrix Analysis in Table 6.3. Mitigation measures for the risk associated with the BESS has been included in the Final EMPr on page 92. This assessment and mitigation measures cover all battery technology options relevant to the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BESS will arrive at the PV Facility pre-assembled and will therefore not trigger any additional listed activities that have not already been applied for as part of the solar power plant.</li> <li>• The decommissioning of the facility is unlikely as the technology will likely be upgraded and the life of the project extended accordingly. However, should the facility be decommissioned it will not trigger any additional listed activities.</li> <li>• The capacity of dangerous goods that will be stored on site will be between 80 and 90 cubic meters. An amended Application for Environmental Authorisation has been submitted to the DFFE with the final BAR to include these specifications. The impacts associated with the storage and handling of dangerous goods were assessed in Section 6 and Table 6.3. Mitigation measures for the storage and handling of dangerous goods have been included in the final EMPr.</li> </ul>
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		<p>are also required to assess the impacts associated with the risks of the dangerous goods applied for and provide measures to mitigate those impacts and ensure that these measures are included in the final EMPr.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Furthermore, activity 56 of Listing Notice 1 and 18 of Listing Notice 3 has been applied for (on page 11 and 12 of 31 of the application form), which is related to widening of a road. However, project description provided on page 6 of 31 of the application form as well as under the description of the project in relation to the aforesaid listed activities does not provide the dimensions of road widening applied for. Therefore, you are requested to provide the details of the road to be widened. In addition, you are also required to assess the impacts associated with the risks of the road widening and provide measures to mitigate those impacts and ensure that these measures are included in the final EMPr.</li> <li>• In addition, you are also requested to provide the length of the new road and 132kV overhead power line in the final BAR</li> <li>• Please ensure that all relevant listed activities are applied for, are specific and can be linked to the development activity or infrastructure as described in the project description. Only activities applicable to the development must be applied for and assessed. In addition, the onus is on the applicant and the environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) to ensure that all the applicable listed activities are included in the application form. Failure to do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The road width will be between 6m and 12m. The existing access road will be widened to 10m. The perimeter road will be 8m and internal road will be 6m in width. The layout plan (Appendix H and Figure I) indicates the location of the planned and existing roads. The total length of the internal roads will be ~15km as indicated in Section 2.4 Table 2.3. Mitigation measure have been included in the EMPr with the most being relevant to the clearance of vegetation and stormwater management.</li> <li>• The length of the roads as well as the power line has been included in the Final BAR in Section 2.4.</li> <li>• The activities applied for in the Amended Application for Environmental Authorisation and included in the final BAR are correct and specific to the development in terms of the activities required for the construction and operation of the development. Project specific descriptions are provided for each listed activity which illustrates why a certain activity has been triggered by the proposed development.</li> <li>• An amended application form has been submitted to the Department with the Final BAR.</li> </ul>
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		<p>so may result in unnecessary delays in the processing of the application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the activities applied for in the application form differ from those mentioned in the final BAR, an amended application form must be submitted. Please note that the Department's application form template has been amended and can be downloaded from the following link <a href="https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms">https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms</a>.</li> </ul>	
		<p><b><u>Specialist Assessment</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that specialist studies, where applicable comply with the requirements of GN 320 of 20 March 2020 and GN 1150 of 30 October 2020 unless proof is provided that indicates that the specialist study was commissioned within 50 days after the date of gazetting of the notice i.e. 20 March 2020 and was commissioned prior to 30 October 2020 respectively. Failure to comply with the abovementioned notices presents a risk to this application.</li> <li>• It has been mentioned in the draft BAR that 376ha site has been assessed, however, the development footprint including supporting structures will occupy 297ha of the site. You are advised to ensure that this is considered by the specialists when assessing the site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The requirements of GN 320 of 20 March 2020 and GN 1150 of 30 October 2020 have been made available to the specialists. The specialist studies comply with these requirements as relevant to the site under assessment. Where a specialist study is undertaken in terms of GNR320 this is indicated in the respective specialist studies (Appendices D1 – D9).</li> <li>• The development footprint of 297ha completely falls within the 376ha that was assessed by the specialists. Therefore, the 297ha development footprint has been considered by the specialists during the site assessment.</li> </ul>

		<p><b><u>Cumulative Assessment</u></b></p> <p>Should there be authorised renewable projects, which are located within a 30km radius of the project site, the cumulative impact assessment for all identified and assessed impacts must be refined to indicate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified cumulative impacts must be clearly defined, and where possible the size of the identified impact must be quantified and indicated, i.e. hectares of cumulatively transformed land.</li> <li>• Detailed process flow and proof must be provided, to indicate how the specialist’s recommendations, mitigation measures and conclusions from the various similar developments in the area were taken into consideration in the assessment of cumulative impacts and when the conclusion and mitigation measures were drafted for this project.</li> <li>• The cumulative impacts significance rating must also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development.</li> <li>• A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the DFFE database approximately twelve (12) applications have been submitted for renewable energy projects within the geographical area of investigation, with six (6) of these being considered valid in terms of an Environmental authorisation, two (2) applications have lapsed or was withdrawn, one (1) application is only for transmission infrastructure and one (1) is incorrectly listed on the DFFE database. Two projects are not yet listed on the DFFE database which are the Paleso and Siyanda SPP’s that have recently been authorised (Environamics was the EAP responsible for these applications). The majority of these projects are located in close proximity to Orkney, and to the east of the site considered for the Noko Solar Power Plant. The cumulative impacts identified and assessed have been informed by the independent specialist studies undertaken for the project. The impacts have been defined in section 7.5 of the report and further assessed in section 7.6 (Table 7.2) of the final BAR.</li> </ul>
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		<p><b><u>Layout and sensitivity map</u></b></p> <p>The Department has noted that in Appendix A, a locality map and a sensitivity map for the proposed development has been provided however the layout is not provided, ensure that the layout plan is provided as required in terms of Appendix 1 (3)(1) (c) and must indicate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All onsite infrastructure (existing and proposed);</li> <li>• The location of sensitive environmental features on site, e.g., CBA, wetlands, drainage lines etc. that will be affected;</li> <li>• Buffer areas;</li> <li>• Clear legend with details communicating with information on the map; and</li> <li>• All “no-go” areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The layout map is included as Figure I and the layout plan is included as Appendix H of the final BAR.</li> <li>• Figures H1 – H4 indicates the layout plan and sensitivities associated with the site as was made available to the Department for the 30-day review and comment period and as is included in the final BAR.</li> <li>• A map indicating that the proposed project is located within Klerksdorp Renewable Development Zone (REDZ) is included as Figure D of the final BAR, and was also included in the draft BAR which was made available to the Department for review.</li> <li>• The specific location of the dangerous goods will be determined during the micro siting process before construction. The dangerous</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It has been mentioned on page 10, 18 and 55 of the draft BAR that the proposed project is located within Klerksdorp Renewable Development Zone (REDZ), therefore, you are required to include a map showing the location of the site with the REDZ.</li> <li>Furthermore, you are requested to indicate the location of the dangerous goods, new road and the road to be widened applied for in the final Layout Map.</li> </ul>	<p>goods will be stored within the construction areas. The proposed roads are included on the layout plan (Appendix H) and the layout maps (Figure I).</p>
		<p><b><u>Public Participation Process (PPP)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please ensure that comments from all relevant stakeholders are submitted to the Department with the final BAR. This includes but not limited to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE): Biodiversity Conservation; North West Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (NWDEDECT); Boskoppie Nature Reserve; Department of Agriculture, Land Reform &amp; Rural Development, Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS); City of Matlosana Local Municipality; Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality; Department Roads and Public Works; Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd; Department of Mineral Resources and Energy; South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA); Endangered Wildlife Trust; Birdlife South Africa; Airports Company of South Africa; South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA); and Square Kilometre Array (SKA).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All relevant stakeholders, including the DFFE Biodiversity Planning and Conservation, NWDEDECT, SAHRA, and the SKA, were notified of the availability of the Draft BAR and the relevant details thereof. An email was sent on 28 January 2022 to remind the stakeholders to provide comment on the Draft BAR. Proof of correspondence is included in Appendix C4. All comments received from the stakeholders are included as Appendix C4.</li> <li>All comments received to date are included in the comments and response report (Appendix C6) and are addressed in the Final BAR, as relevant. The full wording of the comments and proof of correspondence is included under Appendix C4.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Furthermore, ensure that all issues raised and comments received during the circulation of the draft BAR from registered I&amp;APs and organs of state which have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are adequately addressed in the final BAR.</li> <li>• Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders must be included in the final BAR. This must indicate that this draft BAR has been subjected to 30 days' PPP, stating the start and end date of the public participation process (PPP). Should you be unable to obtain comments, proof must be submitted to the Department of the attempts that were made to obtain comments.</li> <li>• The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulations 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 &amp; 44 of the EIA Regulations, 2014.</li> <li>• It is noted that the proposed development falls within 5km (approximately 3.4km) of a protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA. You are required to obtain comments from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE): Protected Areas Directorate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notifications of the availability of the Draft BAR were sent out to all stakeholders via email on 06 January 2022 and a reminder was also sent out on 28 January 2022 in an effort to obtain comments. Proof of all correspondence and email proof is included in Appendix C4 of the final BAR. The correspondence communicated to the I&amp;APs makes specific reference to the fact that the BAR is subjected to a 30-day review and comment period and states the start and end dates of the 30-day period.</li> <li>• The Public Participation Process undertaken for the Noko Solar Power Plant was as per the requirements of the EIA Regulations, 2014, including Regulations 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 &amp; 44.</li> <li>• Comments were obtained from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE): Protected Areas Directorate and is included in the Comments and Responses Report and proof of correspondence is included under Appendix C4.</li> </ul>
		<p>You are further reminded to comply with Regulation 19(1)(a) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states that: "Where basic assessment must be applied to an application, the applicant must, within 90 days of receipt of the</p>	<p>The submission of the final Basic Assessment Report to the DFFE for decision-making falls well within the prescribed timeframe of 90 days from submission of the application for EA to the Department. The final BA Report includes all the</p>

		<p>application by the competent authority, submit to the competent authority – (a) a basic assessment report, inclusive of any specialist reports, an EMPr, a closure plan in the case of a closure activity and where the application is a mining application, the plans, report and calculations contemplated in the Financial Provisioning Regulations, which have been subjected to a public participation process of at least 30 days and which reflects the incorporation of comments received, including any comments of the competent authority”.</p>	<p>relevant specialist reports and the EMPr(s) as required for the development. This requirement has therefore been complied with.</p>
		<p>Should there be significant changes or new information that has been added to the BAR or EMPr which changes or information was not contained in the reports or plans consulted on during the initial public participation process, you are required to comply with Regulation 19(1)(b) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states: “the applicant must, within 90 days of receipt of the application by the competent authority, submit to the competent authority – (b) a notification in writing that the documents contemplated in sub-regulation 1(a) will be submitted within 140 days of receipt of the application by the competent authority, as significant changes have been made or significant new information has been added to the documents which changes or information was not contained in the original documents consulted on during the initial public participation process contemplated in sub-regulation (1)(a) and that the revised documents will be subjected to another public participation process of at least 30 days.”</p>	<p>No significant changes or new information has been added to the final Basic Assessment Report which was not made available for the 30-day review and comment period from 06 January – 04 February 2022. Therefore Regulation 23(1)(b) is not relevant.</p>

		Should you fail to meet any of the timeframes stipulated in Regulation 19 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, your application will lapse.	The submission of the final Basic Assessment Report to the DFFE for decision-making is within the prescribed timeframe of the EIA Regulations.
		You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.	It is noted and acknowledged by the Applicant that no activity may commence prior to obtaining an Environmental Authorisation.
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Forestry Regulation and Oversight	Mr. Cyril Ndou	<p>In a letter date 31 January 2022, the following comment was raised on the Draft Basic Assessment Report:</p> <p>The Department therefore comments that if any tree species protected by the NFA are encountered in the proposed area, such trees may not be cut, removed, destroyed or damage without a license in terms of the Act.</p> <p>Application has to be made to the Department of Forestry Fisheries and the Environment North West Regional Office for a license to remove, cut, damage or destroy protected trees as per section 15 of the NFA.</p>	The comment on the protected trees were noted. No protected trees were identified on site. If during the pre-construction phase protected tree species are identified on site, an application will be launched as per section 15 of the NFA. These conditions are included in the Final EMPR.
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:	Mr. Seoka Lekota	<p>In a letter dated 04 February 2022, the following comment was raised on the Draft Basic Assessment Report:</p> <p>The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation reviewed and evaluated the aforementioned draft report.</p>	<p>The following responses are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is noted that there are no objections or fatal flaws from a biodiversity conservation</li> </ul>

<p>Biodiversity and Conservation</p>		<p>Based on the information provided in the report, the site falls within the Critical Biodiversity Area 2, as well as Ecological Support Area 2. The vegetation in the development area is regarded as being degraded due to the cultivation and overgrazing. Moreover, the proposed development footprint falls within an area considered to have limited environmental sensitivity. Therefore, no fatal flaws are to be anticipated regarding the proposed development.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, the following recommendations must be considered in the final report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-construction walk-through of the solar power plant footprint must be undertaken to locate and identify Species of Conservation Concern that can be translocated or avoided.</li> <li>• Search and rescue plan must be developed for confirmation of those species that have a high probability of occurrence which and will be impacted by the proposed development.</li> <li>• Appropriate buffer must be established around medium sensitive habitats (i.e. Jagspruit, Pans and Streams).</li> <li>• Sensitive habitats in close proximity to the development footprint must be avoided or demarcated as No-Go area (i.e. NPAES, Pans and Streams).</li> <li>• Alien Invasive Plant Species Management and Rehabilitation Plans must be developed to mitigate on habitat degradation due to erosion and alien plant invasion and submitted as part of the final report.</li> </ul>	<p>perspective on the development of the Noko Solar Power Plant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A pre-construction walk-through will be undertaken to locate and identify species of conservation concern. The recommendation is included in Section 8 of the Final BAR and in the final EMPr.</li> <li>• A search and rescue plan will be developed. The recommendation is included in Section 8 of the Final BAR. It is also included in the EMPr.</li> <li>• The recommended site specific buffers identified by the specialists based on the confirmed environmental sensitivities will be adhered to.</li> <li>• Sensitive habitats surrounding the development footprints will be avoided and marked as No-Go areas.</li> <li>• An alien invasive plant species management plan is included as Appendix F4 of the Final BAR.</li> <li>• Suitable bird repelling structures and bird diverters will be utilized to avoid collision of birds with the PV facility and power lines as recommended by the Avifaunal Specialist (see appendix D2) and is included in the final EMPr.</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitable bird repelling structures and bird diverters must be considered to avoid collision of birds with the PV facility.</li> </ul>	
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**Comments received prior to the release of the Draft Basic Assessment Report and during the initial Public Participation 30-day comment period**

Organisation	Person	Issue or comment raised (see Appendix C4 & C5 of the Final Basic Assessment report)	Addressing or incorporation of issue or comment
MTN	Shirley Hlabisa	<p>In a letter dated 14 October 2021, MTN provided comment on the wayleave application which stated that:</p> <p>No MTN distribution services are affected by this application and MTN has no objection for the proposed application.</p>	It is noted that there are no MTN distribution services affected by the application and that there is no objection to the development. No comments or issues raised as part of the BA process.
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE): Biodiversity Directorate	Ms. Tsholofelo Sekonko	<p>In an email dated 02 November 2021, the following feedback was received from DFFE: Biodiversity Directorate in response to the Notification of the BA process for the project:</p> <p>DFFE Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation hereby acknowledge receipt of the invitation to review and comment on the Basic Assessment process for the proposed Noko solar photovoltaic (PV) facility. Kindly note that the project has been allocated to Ms Makitla and Ms Maifo (both copied on this email).</p> <p>Please note: All Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA review and any other Biodiversity EIA queries will be submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation at Email: <a href="mailto:BCAdmin@environment.gov.za">BCAdmin@environment.gov.za</a> for attention of Mr Seoka Lekota.</p>	The feedback from the Biodiversity Directorate is acknowledged, as well as the process of the Directorate for the submission of Public Participation Documents.

ESKOM	Mr. John Geering	<p>In an email dated 02 November 2021, the following feedback was received from Eskom in response to the Notification of the BA process for the project:</p> <p>Please find attached Eskom general requirements for work at or near Eskom infrastructure and servitudes. Find attached also an Eskom setbacks guideline for renewable developments near Eskom infrastructure and servitudes for the applicants consideration during planning. Please send me a KMZ file of the affected property, proposed development area and proposed gird connection</p>	<p>It can be confirmed that the Eskom general requirements for work near or at Eskom Servitudes and Infrastructure and the Eskom setback guideline have been submitted to the Applicant for their consideration and implementation.</p> <p>The KMZ (Google Earth) file requested of the affected property, the proposed development area and the proposed grid connection was submitted to Mr. Geering via email by Ms. Christia van Dyk on 02 November 2021.</p>
South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)	Ms. Natasha Higgitt	<p>In an email dated, 02 November 2021, the following feedback was received from SAHRA in response to the Notification of the BA process for the project:</p> <p>Please note that all development applications are processed via our online portal, the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS) found at the following link: <a href="http://sahra.org.za/sahris/">http://sahra.org.za/sahris/</a>. We do not accept emailed, posted, hardcopy, faxed, website links or DropBox links as official submissions.</p> <p>Please create an application on SAHRIS for each EA application and upload all documents pertaining to the Environmental Authorisation Application Process. As per section 24(4)b(iii) of NEMA and section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources</p>	<p>The feedback on the required process received from SAHRA is acknowledged.</p> <p>The project was submitted and relevant documents uploaded on the SAHRIS portal under the Case ID: 17444, as per the requirements.</p>



		<p>Act, Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA), an assessment of heritage resources must form part of the process and the assessment must comply with section 38(3) of the NHRA.</p> <p>Once all documents including all appendices are uploaded to each case application, please ensure that the status of each case is changed from DRAFT to SUBMITTED. Please ensure that all documents produced as part of the EA process are submitted as part of each application.</p>	
<p>North West Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (NWDEDECT)</p>	<p>Ms. Eva Mahlangu</p>	<p>In an email dated, 03 November 2021, the following feedback was received from NWDEDECT in response to the Notification of the BA process for the project:</p> <p>Can You Please sent Hard copy of report to Department for comment Attention to Eva Mahlangu to the following Address: Agri- center Building, Opposite to Convention Center Office E35</p>	<p>The feedback from the NWDEDECT is acknowledged. In an email dated 03 November 2021, Ms. Christia van Dyk responded to them by stating that:</p> <p>We are planning on releasing the Draft Basic Assessment Report for the Noko Solar Power Plant early in December. We will send a hard copy of the report to the Department for comment then.</p> <p>The Hard Copy Draft Basic Assessment Report was couriered to NWDEDECT on 07 January 2022. The proof of courier has been included in Appendix C4.</p>
<p>South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO)</p>	<p>Mr Selaelo Matlhane</p>	<p>In a letter dated 04 November 2021, Mr. Matlhane on behalf of SAROA provided the following comment:</p> <p>SARAO has undertaken a high-level impact assessment and based on the information provided it was determined that the project represents a low risk of interference to the SKA radio</p>	<p>It is noted that SARAO has no objection to the development. No comments or issues have been raised as part of the BA process.</p>

		telescope with a compliance surplus of 119.42 dBm/Hz. As such, we do not have any objection to the proposed development.	
SENTECH	Mr. Serame Motlhake	<p>In a letter dated 05 November 2021, SENTECH provided comment on the wayleave application which stated that:</p> <p>We wish to advise that SENTECH SOC Ltd (“SENTECH”) has received an application from Noko Solar Power Plant (RF) (Pty) Ltd (“the applicant”), which plans to construct one solar PV facility as described in annexure 1, hereafter referred to as “Noko Solar Power Plant”, in accordance with the provisions of Section 29(1) (b) of the Electronic Communications Act no. 36 of 2005 (“the Act”).</p> <p>SENTECH has analysed the information provided by the applicant in accordance with the provisions of Section 29(1) (c) of the Act, and specifically the location of the site and confirm that there would be limited degradation of SENTECH transmitted Terrestrial UHF/VHF Television (TV), and/or FM radio services in the planned deployment area, as indicated in annexure 1.</p> <p>SENTECH hereby grants the applicant approval to proceed with the construction of its energy project at the site subject to the terms and conditions stated in the letter (see appendix C5)</p>	It is noted that SENTECH has no objection to the development. No comments or issues have been raised as part of the BA process.
Telkom (Openserve)	Mr. Gary Heslop (Operations Manager)	In a letter dated 08 November 2021, Mr. Heslop on behalf of Telkom (Openserve) provided the following comment:	It is noted that Telkom has no objection to the development. No comments or issues have been raised as part of the BA process.

		<p>The development of up to 150MW Solar Power Plant and associated infrastructure on Portion 15, 19, 45 and 46 of the Farm Goedgenoeg No. 433, Registration Division IP, North West Province by Noko Solar Power Plant (RF) Pty Ltd - TELKOM/ OPENSERVE AFFECTED</p> <p>With reference to your above-mentioned application, I hereby inform you that the proposed services are approved in terms of section 22 of the Electronic Communications Act 36 of 2005.</p>	
South African National Roads Agency SOC Ltd (SANRAL)	Statutory Control Officer (Northern Region)	<p>In a letter dated 16 November 2021, SANRAL provided the following comment:</p> <p>SANRAL has no objection to the establishment of the Noko Solar Power Plant (RF)(PTY) Ltd as no national roads will be affected.</p>	It is noted that SANRAL has no objection to the development. No comments or issues have been raised as part of the BA process.
Cell C	Tiyani Hlongwane	<p>In a letter dated 24 November 2021, Cell C provided comment on the wayleave application which stated that:</p> <p>Wayleave Application Ref's: Farm Goedgenoeg No. 433. We acknowledge receipt of your request regarding the abovementioned subject matters. Cell C HAS NO SERVICES IN THE AREA.</p>	It is noted that there are no Cell C services in the area proposed for the development of the project and that there is no objection to the development. No comments or issues have been raised as part of the BA process.