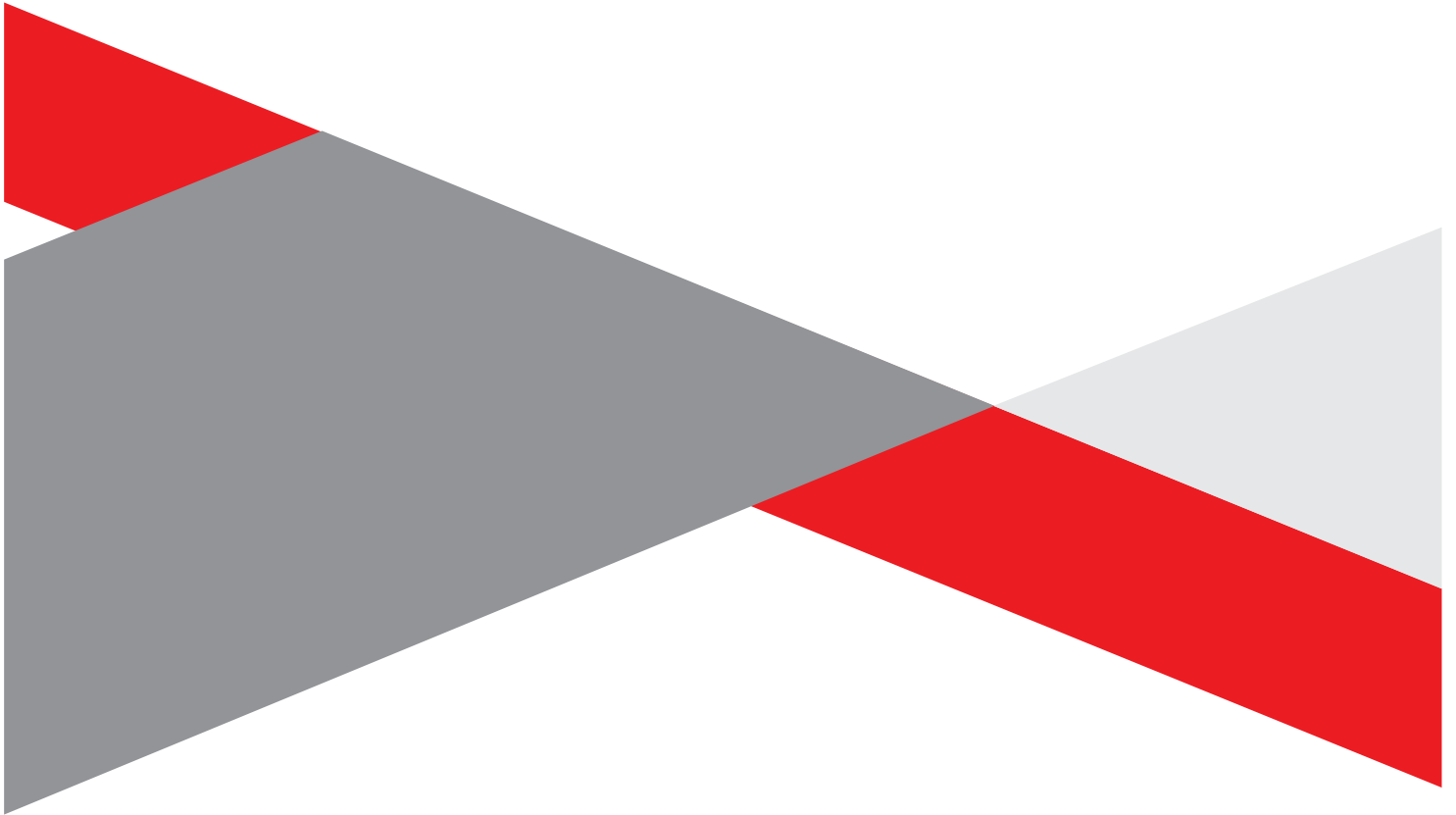


APPENDIX C8
COMMENTS & RESPONSES REPORT



**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE RUSPOORT SOLAR PV1, PIXLEY KA SEME DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE
(DFFE Ref. No.: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2280)**

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES REPORT

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The Scoping phase of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process for the Ruspoort Solar PV1 project located near Phillipstown and Petrusville, Northern Cape Province was announced on Thursday, 30 June 2022. The Background Information Document, which included the information on the cluster of 21 solar PV facilities, was distributed together with a notification letter which served to invite Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) to register their interest in the project and to submit any comments / queries that they might have on any of the proposed developments. All written comments received during the Scoping Phase of the EIA process to date have been included in the table below and in **Appendix C6** of the Scoping Report.

The Scoping Report was made available for a 30-day review and comment period from **Friday, 18 January 2023** until **Friday, 17 February 2023**. The Comments and Responses Report (C&RR) has been updated with comments received during the review and comment period and included in **Appendix C6** of the final Scoping Report.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report is being made available for a 30-day review and comment period from **Friday, 02 June 2023** until **Monday, 03 July 2023**. All written comments received during the 30-day review and comment period of the EIA Report will be included in **Appendix C6** and captured in this Comments and Responses Report (C&RR) which will be submitted to the DFFE with the final EIA Report for decision-making.

The C&RR is included as a separate document to the Scoping Report as **Appendix C8**.

NOTE:

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

NOTE:

In terms of Regulation 44(1) of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended, please note that the comments raised, and responses provided at the various virtual Meetings held during the 30-day review period of the EIA Report will be attached as **Appendix C7** of the final EIA Report.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS

BC	Biodiversity Conservation	IRP	Integrated Resource Plan
CA	Competent Authority	I&AP	Interested and Affected Party
CBA	Critical Biodiversity Area	LN	Listing Notice
C&R	Comments and Responses	MW	Megawatt
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment	NC DAEARD&LR	Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform
DG	Director-General	NFA	National Forestry Act
DMRE	Department of Minerals Resources and Energy	NGO	None-Government Organisation
EAP	Environmental Assessment Practitioner	NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act
EGI	Electrical Grid Infrastructure	REIPPP	Renewable energy Independent Power Producer Procurement
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	RFI	Radio Frequency Inteference
EMPr	Environmental Management Programme	SACNASP	South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions
ESA	Ecological Support Areas	SANDF	South African National Defense Force
GN	Government Notice	SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
IBA	Important Bird Areas	SR	Scoping Report
IPP	Independent Power Producer	S&EIA	Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment

1. COMMENTS SUBMITTED ON THE SCOPING REPORT

1.1. Organs of State

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
1.	<p>1. Herewith to respond to your request sent to the Department of Defence (DOD) for clearance.</p> <p>2. Please note that this office can not respond to your request as there is a Formal and Standard process for Applications in the DOD</p> <p>3. The correct Application Process:</p> <p>a. Send your request to the following e-mail addresses only.</p> <p>i. clogfac@gmail.com</p> <p>ii. dfacmiem@gmail.com</p> <p>b. Formulate a comprehensive request, with the Project Plan and formal letter with details of the Project. (Not a n e-mail Message with the criteria) It must be on a formal company letterhead, please.</p> <p>c. Include KMZ / KML file for use in Google Earth.</p> <p>4. Once received by the environments in Par 3, the DOD will request all DOD Stakeholders to respond in writing (Telecoms, Aviation, Environmental, Facilities etc).</p> <p>5. Once the stakeholders has responded, a single response will be sent to the Applicant with Objection / No -objection.</p> <p>6. Stakeholders may not correspond directly to the Applicant.</p>	<p>Lt CI Francois P Strydom Command and Management Information Systems Division Directorate CMIS Static Systems Radion Spectrum & Communication Site Management SANDF</p> <p>E-mail: 07 February 2023</p>	<p>The SANDF has been identified as a key stakeholder to be part of the EIA and public participation process and to ensure that the proposed development will not have an impact on their infrastructure in the study area and therefore the notifications sent to the SANDF, at this stage, is not an "Application" process, but an information sharing process.</p> <p>The Formal and Standard process provided will be followed for the public participation process of this application.</p>
2.	<p><u>This letter serves to inform you that the following information must be included to the final SR:</u></p>	<p>Olivia Letlalo Case Officer DFFE</p>	

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p><u>Application form</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please note that the Minister is the CA for applications for the development of facilities or infrastructure which relates to the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) 2010- - 2030 and any updates thereto, for technologies in which the Applicant will bid the project in the Department of Minerals Resources and Energy (DMRE) IPP bidding rounds. It is noted that page 8 of 34 of the application form mentioned that "it is the developer's intention to bid the Ruspoort 1 Solar PV Facility under the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy's (DMRE's) Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement (REIPPP) Programme, or similar renewable energy programme organized by public or private commercial & industrial customers through tenders or bilateral consultations, with the aim of evacuating the generated power into the national grid". Therefore, you are advised to be clear on whether this project will bid as part of the DMRE IPP bidding rounds or not. <p>In addition, please ensure that the need and desirability of the proposed development are aligned to the abovementioned plan.</p> <p><u>Specific comments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been noted that the assessment is focusing on the whole Hydra B development, however the projects have been submitted separately. You are advised to ensure that each report adequately address relevant issues of concern considering the environmental sensitivity on each site (in this case Ruspoort 1 Solar PV Facility), the activities that will take place and provide relevant mitigation measures in the EIAR. <p><u>Screening report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been noted that the screening report for the abovementioned application has been included in the draft 	<p>Letter: 10 February 2023</p>	<p>The Final Scoping Report has been updated to clarify that it is the developer's intention to bid the Ruspoort 1 Solar PV Facility <u>in terms of a regulated power purchase procurement process (e.g., the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy's (DMRE's) Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement (REIPPP) Programme) to evacuate the generated power into the national grid.</u></p> <p>This has been included in Chapter 6 of the Scoping Report (refer specifically to Section 6.4).</p> <p>The project details provided in the report and the issues/impacts identified are specific to the Ruspoort 1 Solar PV project. A project-specific sensitivity map has been compiled and included in the final Scoping Report (refer to Chapter 10).</p> <p>The DFFE Screening Report included within the Final Scoping Report has been signed with the Compiler's signature as requested.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>SR, however, there is no compiler signature on the aforesaid report. Therefore, you are advised to sign the abovementioned report to be submitted with the final SR.</p> <p>Project Description and Listed Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The portion numbers in the project description are Portion 5 of the Farm Bokken Kraal 81 (Option A) and Portion 4 on the Farm Knoffelfontein 74, Portion 1 on the Farm 78, Portion 2 on the Farm Leeuwberg 79 (Option B), whereas page 4 of 20 of the screening report indicated Portion 0 and Portion 5 of the Farm Bokken Kraal 81 as the property details for the proposed development. You are advised to clarify the following in the amended application form and final SR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The property description or Portion numbers to be affected by the proposed development. Please ensure that the project description refers to only applicable property details for the proposed development. ➢ The meaning of option A and B in relation to the proposed development. ➢ Ensure the sensitivity of all the proposed sites as mentioned above (should they be affected by the proposed development) are presented. • It has been noted in Section 5 of the application form, on page 8 of 34, that "<i>the exact location of the development area within the project site for the Ruspoort 1 Solar PV Facility is not defined at this stage of the process.</i>" Therefore, you are advised to ensure that the project description and the exact location is well defined and clear on what is being proposed in the final SR. 		<p>The DFFE screening tool for Ruspoort 1 has been updated with the correct and updated property and farm portion descriptions that are affected by the Ruspoort 1 Solar PV Facility as aligned within the amended EA application Form and FSR. The newly generated DFFE screening report for Ruspoort 1 has been signed and attached together with the FSR as well as amended EA Application Form and submitted to the DFFE.</p> <p>Options A and B refer to the two possible sites that will be selected to develop the PV Facility for Ruspoort 1. The assessment as well as identifying the preferred option will be provided within the EIA phase once Specialist assessment reports have been received.</p> <p>Sensitivities experienced by proposed sites for the Ruspoort 1 PV Facility are provided within the FSR in chapters 8 and 9 submitted together with the amended EA Application Form. Once specialists have submitted their Assessment reports, further sensitivities and details will be added into the EIA report during the EIA phase.</p> <p>The property on which the project is proposed is clearly defined within the application form and the Scoping Report. The specific location of the development footprint within the property will be provided by the applicant in the EIA phase of the process.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been noted that the exclusions on the triggered listed activities applied for are not included. Therefore, you are advised to include in the amended application form as well as final SR all the relevant exclusions related to the listed activities applied for. For instance, activity 11 of Listing Notice (LN) 1 have been applied for, however the exclusions have not been quoted in the application form. 		<p>The listed activities applied for have been updated within the application form and the Scoping Report to include the relevant exclusions as listed in the Listing Notices of the EIA Regulations.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been noted that the words "may, likely and could" have been used in the description of activities 12, 19, 24 and 56 of Listing Notice (LN) 1, and activities 18 of LN 3. Please refrain from using such word/s, since it creates an uncertainty regarding the applicability of the listed activity applied for, for the proposed development. In addition, please note that the Project Description and Listed Activities are not based on a precautionary approach. 		<p>The wording for the highlighted listed activities have been rectified accordingly within the final Scoping Report and a revised application form has been submitted with the final report.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 15 of LN 2 and 12 of LN 3 for the clearance of an area more than 20ha and 300 square metres, (respectively) of indigenous vegetation are applied for without specifying the total amount of vegetation to be cleared. You are advised to include this information in the amended application form and final SR. 		<p>The expected amount of vegetation to be cleared will be dependent on the proposed facility design, which will be provided in the EIA Phase. Expected amounts have been inserted as requested but may be updated during the EIA Phase following the detailed assessments.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under activity 56 of LN 1 and 4 of LN 3, the CA acknowledged that the access roads to be widened or upgraded have been provided. However, the length of the aforesaid access roads has not been included in the application form and draft SR to determine the applicability of the abovementioned activity. You are advised to include the relevant details to determine if the said activity is triggered by the proposed development or not. 		<p>The length of said access road will be dependent on the proposed facility design, which will be provided in the EIA Phase.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been noted that activities 4,10, 12, 14, and 18 of LN 3 have been applied for. Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) has been indicated as the area to be affected by for the 		<p>As detailed in the Scoping Report, CBA and ESA areas are present within the study area. The extent of impact on these areas by the project (if any) will be dependent on the</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>proposed development and the description of the portion of the proposed project to which the applicable listed activity relates indicated as Ecological Support Areas (ESA). However, the listed activities under Listing Notice 3 does not include ESA in order for the development to trigger a listed activity. Therefore, you are requested to explain and provide evidence why the above-mentioned listed activities are triggered for the proposed development. In addition, the description of the proposed project must make reference to the systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the CA or in bioregional plans and proof of such must be obtained from the relevant CA and be part of the amended application form and final SR.</p>		<p>proposed facility design, which will be provided in the EIA Phase. Should these areas be impacted, the relevant CA will be consulted to confirm the status of the relevant systematic biodiversity plans and/or bioregional plans. This evidence and confirmation will be included in the EIA Report for the project.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This CA has noted that the description given under activity 4 of LN 3 is that "<i>The project area does not overlap with a NPAES protected area</i>". This is further supported by the statement under section 4 of the Visual Scoping report, which indicate that "<i>there are no formally protected or conservation areas within the study area</i>". However, activity 10 of Listing Notice 3, the sub activity refers to Protected Areas has been applied for. Please clarify this in the final SR. 		<p>The reference of the sub-activity in activity 10 of Listing Notice 3 is clarified within Chapters 8 and 9 in the final Scoping Report which has been submitted together with an amended EA Application Form to the DFFE.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noting that under activity 10 of Listing Notice 3, the project area is within 3,25km of Platberg-Karoo conservancy, this information is in contradiction to what is specified in other LN 3 activities applied for, for example activity 4 of LN 3. Therefore, you are advised to ensure that the correct sub-activities are specified for in all the activities trigger. 		<p>The comment has been acknowledged and the relevant activities have been rectified in the amended EA Application Form that has been submitted together with the Final Scoping Report to the DFFE.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further to the above, you are required to submit with the final report a Section 50 approval in terms of NEM: PAA. This must be done for all Hydra B projects that trigger these sub-activities. 		<p>A Section 50 approval in terms of NEM: PAA will be drawn up and submitted together with the Final EIA Report in the EIA phase to the DFFE.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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 and the final SR. Failure to do so may result in unnecessary delays in the processing of the application. 		<p>All relevant listed activities have been applied for, and have been refined with relevant exact descriptions as required. Where no exact amount/quantity is available at this stage in the process, the applicant will provide said information within the EIA phase.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the activities applied for in the application form differ from those mentioned in the draft SR, an amended application form must be submitted with the final SR. Please note that the Department's application form template has been amended and can be downloaded from the following link https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms. 		<p>An amended application form has been submitted together with the Final Scoping Report.</p>
	<p>Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noting that there are two options (Option A and Option B) for this project, you are expected to provide a clear assessment comparing the two options and in providing the preferred alternative, there must be clear reasons in support of the preferred. 		<p>The comment is acknowledged. A clear assessment between options A and B for Ruspoort 1 as well as identifying and the reasoning for the preferred option will be provided within the EIA phase and inserted into the EIA report once the Specialists submit their respective assessment reports.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been indicated on page 24 of the draft SR that <i>"the project could include Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). The BESS capacity will depend on technology to be used and total installed capacity of solar, and it is expected to be up to 1MWh per MW of solar PV facility"</i>. Please be informed that the above statement shows uncertainty regarding the BESS been part of the proposed development, therefore, it is expected that this be clarified in the amended application form and the final SR. 		<p>The final Scoping Report has been updated to reflect that a BESS will form part of the project.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been noted on page 27 of the draft SR that three BESS technologies will be considered for the proposed development. You are advised to indicate if the 		<p>As detailed in the report, a number of technology alternatives are being investigated for the BESS. The detailed information on the BESS technologies and the preferred</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>abovementioned technologies would or not trigger any listed activity and ensure the impacts that might be generated by the technologies are adequately assessed in the final report.</p>		<p>option/s will be provided in the EIA phase by the applicant once these have been assessed from a technical perspective.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are further required to provide details of the all the alternatives considered for this development and indicate the preferred alternatives as per Appendix 2 (2) (1) (g) (i) (v) (vi) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended in the final report. 		<p>Detailed of all alternatives identified for the project are provided in Chapter 3 of the Scoping Report.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternatively, you should submit written proof of an investigation and motivation if no reasonable or feasible alternatives exist in terms of Appendix 2. 		<p>Where no reasonable or feasible alternatives exist a motivation in this regard has been included in Chapter 3 of the Scoping Report.</p>
	<p><u>Cumulative Impact</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been noted on page iii and 1 of the draft SR that the proposed project is one (1) of 9 projects (in-process application submitted) in batch 1, summing up all 3 batches into a total of 21 projects. Further to this there are other similar projects or renewable projects within a 30km radius of the proposed development site, therefore, the cumulative impact assessment for all identified and assessed impacts must be refined to indicate the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assess the cumulative impacts of the proposed (not yet authorised), authorised (not yet constructed) and existing solar energy facilities. 		<p>The purpose of the Scoping phase of the process is to identify and evaluate issues associated with the project. Potential cumulative impacts have been identified within the Scoping Report (refer to Section 9.5). This includes an indication of the proposed projects within a 30km radius of the site. These impacts will be assessed within the EIA phase of the process based on the specialist's relevant findings. Distinction will be made between proposed (not yet authorised), authorised (not yet constructed) and existing solar energy facilities as required.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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. 		<p>The required process flow and proof will be provided within the cumulative assessment to be undertaken in the EIA phase.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The cumulative impacts significance rating must also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development. 		<p>The cumulative impacts significance rating to be defined in the EIA Phase will also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed. 		<p>A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed will be included within the EIA report based on the findings of the specialist studies to be undertaken.</p>
	<p>Specialist Assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The specialists reports submitted refers to Hydra B, which is the umbrella body of the entire development, this helps in giving the full scope of what is proposed and its associated developments. However, for ease of reference you are advised to make sure that the maps provided in the reports clearly name and highlight the individual projects. 		<p>Specialist reports make reference to the specific project under consideration. Specific assessments and detailed maps for the project site will be included in the EIA Reports.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Terrestrial Ecology scoping report states on page 18 that "<i>Ecological Support Areas (ESAs) are not essential for meeting biodiversity targets but play an important role in supporting the ecological functioning of Critical Biodiversity Areas and/or in delivering ecosystem services</i>". As such you are expected to elaborate on why the ESA is deemed suitable for this project, since ESAs play an important role in supporting the ecological functioning of the CBAs. In addition, elaborate on why ESAs are not important for meeting biodiversity targets whereas ESAs <i>play an important role in supporting the ecological functioning of Critical Biodiversity Areas</i>. 		<p>Relevant information pertaining to the ESAs functioning and suitability for the project will be further clarified by the specialists within the EIA phase following detailed fieldwork and assessment of impacts related to the proposed development layout to be provided by the applicant.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is also noted on figure 5.4 on page 20 of the Terrestrial Ecology scoping report that the whole site falls within the Platberg–Karoo Conservancy Important Bird Areas (IBA) and on page 19 of the terrestrial ecology scoping report, it is stated that "<i>this IBA is important because it contributes significantly to the conservation of large terrestrial birds as well</i> 		<p>As detailed in the Plan of Study included in the Scoping Report (Chapter 11), an Avifauna Impact Assessment will be undertaken for the project. This will be informed by 2 monitoring surveys of the project site in accordance with the requirements of the BirdLife South Africa Best Practice Guidelines for Solar Developments.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>as raptors. These birds include Blue Crane (<i>Anthropoides paradiseus</i>), Ludwig's Bustard (<i>Neotis ludwigii</i>), Kori Bustard (<i>Ardeotis kori</i>), Blue Korhaan (<i>Eupodotis caerulescens</i>), Black Stork (<i>Ciconia nigra</i>), Secretarybird (<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>), Martial Eagle (<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>), Verreaux's Eagle (<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>) and Tawny Eagle (<i>A. rapax</i>) (Birdlife South Africa, 2015)". Based on the above, you are advised to undertake the assessment of the above-mentioned species, cumulative impacts and indicate the practical mitigation measures based on the findings of the specialist. In addition, you are advised to include in the final report the development layout map overlaid by the sensitive features.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the heritage assessment, there is the potential for the cumulative impact of proposed solar energy facilities to negatively impact the cultural landscape due to a change in the landscape character from rural and mining to semi-industrial. However, due to the density of mining activities in the area, the impact on the experience of the cultural landscape is not foreseen to be significant. You are expected to ensure that this is assessed and included in the final SR. 		<p>The Heritage Impact Assessment to be undertaken within the EIA Phase of the process will include an assessment of impacts on the Cultural Landscape. This has been added to the Plan of Study for EIA In the Final Scoping Report.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the screening report, the aquatic, landscape, paleontology and terrestrial biodiversity themes are very high, while cultural heritage, avian, civil aviation, defense, and plant species themes. Therefore, you are advised to submit a site verification report and motivation for the exclusions of any specialist studies identified by the screening tool. 		<p>A Site sensitivity Verification report was included within the DSR and again with the FSR (refer to Appendix K). In addition, details of studies undertaken in the scoping phase and those to be undertaken in the EIA Phase are detailed in Table 7.6 of the Scoping Report.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to the above, you are hereby drawn to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Specialist Declaration of interest forms must be attached for all specialist studies to be conducted in the final SR. The 		<p>All specialist declaration of interest forms for specialist studies conducted have been included in Appendix M of the FSR.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	forms are available on Department's website (please use the Department's template).		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Specialist studies to be conducted must provide a detailed description of their methodology, as well as indicate the locations and descriptions of proposed rehabilitation, and all other proposed structures that they have assessed and are recommending for authorisations. 		Specialist EIA reports will include this information.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The specialist studies must also provide a detailed description of all limitations to their studies. All specialist studies must be conducted in the right season and providing that as a limitation, will not be accepted. 		Specialist EIA reports will include this information.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations, the EAP must clearly indicate the most reasonable recommendation and substantiate this with defensible reasons; and where necessary, include further expertise advice. 		The comment is noted and will be actioned accordingly as relevant in the EIA Phase of the process.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that specialist studies as identified in the screening tool, 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. 		Specialist studies to be undertaken in the EIA Phase of the process will comply with the requirements of all protocols, guidelines and regulations, as applicable.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Please note further that the protocols require certain specialists' to be registered with SACNASP. Refer to the relevant protocols in this regard. 		Where relevant, Specialists are registered with SACNASP.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Please include a table in the final SR summarising the specialist studies required by the Screening Tool, a column indicating whether these studies will be conducted or not, and a column with motivation for any studies that will not be undertaken. Please note that if any of the specialists' 		Table 7.4 and Table 7.5 provide the details of the screening tool requirements as well as the specialist studies identified for the project. Table 11.1 provides further details of the specialist studies to be undertaken in the EIA Phase of the process.

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>studies and requirements recommended in the Department's Screening Tool are not commissioned, motivation for such must be provided in the report, as per the requirements of the Protocols.</p>		
	<p>➤ Please also ensure that the final SR includes the Site Verification Report as required by the relevant environmental themes and assessments.</p>		<p>A Site sensitivity Verification report was included within the DSR and again with the FSR (refer to Appendix K). Specialist reports include information on site sensitivities based on the desk-top scoping study. Updated Site Sensitivity Verification reports based on field investigations will be included in the EIA Report.</p>
	<p>➤ Should it be determined that there is a need for additional specialist studies to be undertaken based on the outcome of public participation, these must be commissioned and be included in the draft EIA reports for public comment.</p>		<p>No additional specialist studies have been identified as being required at this stage in the process. Should any additional studies be identified, these will be included in the EIA Report.</p>
	<p>Layout & Sensitivity Maps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure 5.12 on page 28 of the terrestrial ecology scoping report shows the respective farm portions in consideration of the ecological features. However, this refers to Hydra B project and projects are not named making difficult to identify projects individually. You are advised make sure that individual Hydra B developments are named while making sure that the specific development (Ruspoort 1 Solar PV) is highlighted preferably in a different colour to other proposed PVs that form part of Hydra B. 		<p>Sensitivity information presented within the specialist scoping reports is based largely on desktop data and is therefore presented at a broader scale in order to adequately identify potential issues. Site-specific sensitivity data per project will be presented in the EIA Phase as requested.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are advised to submit a layout map that indicates the following (but not limited to the below, however, the findings of the specialists must advise on what needs to be incorporated in the layout). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the PV development area. ➤ Position of all infrastructure e.g., panels, BESS, substations, grid connection etc. ➤ Permanent laydown area footprint. 		<p>The layout map for Ruspoort 1 Solar PV is not yet available. The layout will be defined by the applicant considering the identified environmental and technical constraints. The layout map, including the details requested will be compiled and added into EIA Report.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All supporting onsite infrastructure e.g., roads (existing and proposed). ➤ Substation(s) and/or transformer(s) sites including their entire footprint. ➤ Connection routes (including pylon positions) to the distribution/transmission network; and ➤ All existing infrastructure on the site. ➤ The location of sensitive environmental features on site e.g., CBAs, protected areas, wetlands, drainage lines etc. that will be affected. ➤ Buffer areas of the above sensitive areas; and ➤ All "no-go" areas. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please ensure that the above map has a clear legend that communicate with details of the map. 		<p>The comment is acknowledged, and the Layout map will have a clear legend that communicates with details of the map.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The above map must be overlain with a sensitivity map and a cumulative map which shows all Hydra B development as well as neighbouring renewable energy developments and existing grid infrastructure. All available biodiversity information must be used in the finalisation of the map and infrastructure must not encroach on highly sensitive areas as far as possible. 		<p>A combined map for Layout and Sensitivity and a Cumulative map will be compiled in the EIA phase once all relevant information and data has been received from specialists and the applicant.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that similar colours are not used to differentiate between infrastructure. i.e., items must be easily distinguishable in the Legend. 		<p>The comment is noted and will be actioned accordingly.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google maps will not be accepted for decision-making purposes. 		<p>Google maps will not be used.</p>
	<p>Generic EMPr</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The on-site substation has been mentioned as part of the infrastructure to form part of the proposed development in activity 11 of LN 1. Therefore, ensure that the generic EMPr 		<p>The relevant generic EMPr for the substation will be drafted and submitted together with the EIA Report.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>that complies with the GN 435 of March 2022 is submitted in the final report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EMPr that complies with Appendix 4 of the EIA Regulations, as amended, for the facility must be submitted with the final report. <p>Public Participation Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments received from various stakeholders, not limited to the Department of agriculture, environmental affairs, rural development, and land reform must be addressed and this must be clear in the assessments to be conducted and the information must be included in the SR. Please ensure that comments from all relevant stakeholders are submitted to the Department with the final SR. This includes but not limited to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE): Protected Areas Planning and Management Effectiveness Directorate, Biodiversity Planning and Conservation (BCAdmin@environment.gov.za); Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform), Telkom, South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), South African Civil Aviation Authority, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Birdlife South Africa, Department of Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation, South African National Defence Force, Local interest groups, for example: Councillors and Rate Payers associations; Surrounding landowners, Farmer Organisations, Environmental Groups and NGOs; and Grassroots communities and structures as well as the affected district and local municipalities. Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders must be included in the Final SR. Should you be unable to obtain 		<p>An EMPr for the facility that complies with Appendix 4 of the EIA Regulations, as amended will be drafted and submitted together with the EIA Report.</p> <p>All comments received from stakeholders are included in Appendix C6: Comments Received of the final Scoping Report.</p> <p>All comments received from stakeholders are included in Appendix C6: Comments Received of the final Scoping Report.</p> <p>Proof of notification to all Organs of State (OoS) and attempt to follow-up on written comments are included in Appendix C4: Organs of State Correspondence and that to key</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>comments, proof must be submitted to the Department of the attempts that were made to obtain comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulations 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended and the approved Public Participation Plan. 		<p>stakeholders and I&APs are included in Appendix C5: Stakeholder Correspondence of the final Scoping Report.</p> <p>The Public Participation Process has been conducted in terms of Regulations 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended (GNR 326), as well as in accordance with the approved Public Participation Plan (Appendix C1) as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project database: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A register of I&APs has been compiled and will be updated throughout the EIA process (Appendix C21: I&AP Database). • EIA & Public Participation process announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The BID, accompanied by a cover letter inviting I&APs to register on the project database, was distributed via email to identified I&APs and relevant OoS on 30 June 2022 (refer to Appendix C4: Organs of State Correspondence and to key stakeholders and I&APs Appendix C5: Stakeholder Correspondence of the final Scoping Report. The BID is included in Appendix C2: Site Notices & Newspaper Advertisement of the final Scoping Report. ○ An advertisement was placed in The Echo Newspaper, a community newspaper, on Friday, 08 July 2022 (refer to Appendix C2: Site Notices & Newspaper Advertisement of the final Scoping Report). ○ Site Notices announcing the EIA process were placed at visible points the along the boundary of the proposed development site in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations on 28 May 2022

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
			<p>(refer to Appendix C2: Site Notices & Newspaper Advertisement of the final Scoping Report).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Process Notices were placed at various public places in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Phillipstown; ➤ Petrusville; ➤ Renosterberg Local Municipal Office; ➤ SAPS Petrusville; ➤ De Aair Library; ➤ Pixley ka Seme District Municipal Offices; and ➤ Shop at Vanderkloof <p>on 26, 27 & 28 May 2022 (refer to Appendix C2: Site Notices & Newspaper Advertisement of the final Scoping Report)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping Report available for review and comment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Registered I&APs were notified of the availability of the Scoping Report for a 30-day review and comment period via e-mail on 13 January 2023 (refer Appendix C5: Stakeholder Correspondence of the final Scoping Report). o Commenting authorities, municipal councillors and local and district municipalities which have jurisdiction in the area were requested to submit written comments on the Scoping Report via e-mail on 13 January 2023 (refer to Appendix C4: Organs of State Correspondence of the final Scoping Report). o Advertisements were placed in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Volksblad: 13 January 2023; and ➤ The Echo Newspaper: 20 January 2023. An earlier publication was not available as the newspaper offices opened on 09 January 2023 after the 2022 festive season (refer to Appendix C2: Site Notices

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
			<p>& Newspaper Advertisement of the final Scoping Report).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to obtain comments on the Scoping Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An e-mail to all registered I&APs and OoS as a reminder of the availability of the Scoping Report for review and comment was sent on 07 February 2023 (refer to Appendix C4: Organs of State Correspondence and Appendix C5: Stakeholder Correspondence of the final Scoping Report). • Various virtual meetings were held during the 30-day review and comment period of the Scoping Report (refer to Appendix C7: Meeting Notes of the final Scoping Report for the meeting notes): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FGM with landowners: 26 January 2023 at 09h00. ○ FGM with NC DAERD&LR and DWS Officials: 26 January at 11h00 ○ Key Stakeholder Workshop: 31 January 2023 at 14h00. • Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proof of consultation with I&APs and OoS throughout the Scoping Phase to date is included in Appendix C4: Organs of State Correspondence and Appendix C5: Stakeholder Correspondence of the final Scoping Report. • Comments & Responses Report: All comments received from the announcement of the Scoping and EIA process and those submitted during the 30-day review and comment period of the Scoping Report have been captured in this C&RR which is attached to the final Scoping Report as Appendix C8: Comments & Responses Report final Scoping Report.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The comments and response trail report (C&R) must be submitted with the Final SR. The C&R report must incorporate 		<p>All comments received during the EIA process to date have been captured in this C&RR which is attached as a separate</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>all comments for this development. The C&R report must be a separate document from the main report and the format must be in the table format as indicated in Annexure 1 of this comments letter.</p>		<p>document to the final Scoping Report as Appendix C8: Comments & Responses Report.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please ensure that all issues raised, and comments received during the circulation of the SR from registered I&APs and organs of state which have jurisdiction (including this Department's comments) in respect of the proposed activity are adequately addressed. Comments made by I&APs must be comprehensively captured (copy verbatim if required) and responded to clearly and fully. Please note that a response such as "Noted" is not regarded as an adequate response to I&AP's comments. 		<p>Comments received have not been summarised for inclusion in the C&RR and have been captured verbatim, and all comments have been responded to adequately, as applicable, and no comments have been responded to as "noted".</p>
	<p>General You are further reminded to comply with Regulation 21(1) of the NEMA EIA Regulations 2014, as amended, which states that:</p> <p><i>"If S&EIR must be applied to an application, the applicant must, within 44 days of receipt of the application by the competent authority, submit to the competent authority a scoping report which has been subjected to a public participation process of at least 30 days and which reflects the incorporation of comments received, including any comments of the competent authority"</i></p>		<p>The DSR has been subjected to the public participation process through a 30-day review period from 18 January 2023 to 17 February 2023. The C&RR has been compiled and submitted together with the FSR. The FSR has been submitted within the regulated timeframe.</p>
	<p>You are further reminded that the final SR to be submitted to this Department must comply with all the requirements in terms of the scope of assessment and content of Scoping reports in accordance with Appendix 2 and Regulation 21(1) of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended.</p>		<p>The FSR submitted to DFFE complies with all the requirements in terms of the scope of assessment and content of Scoping reports in accordance with Appendix 2 and Regulation 21(1) of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended. The location of where each requirement has been complied with is detailed within the Scoping Report.</p>
	<p>Further note that in terms of Regulation 45 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended, this application will lapse if the applicant fails to meet any of the timeframes prescribed in terms of these</p>		<p>This application is currently within the regulated timeframes.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>Regulations, unless an extension has been granted in terms of Regulation 3(7).</p> <p>You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.</p>		<p>Applicant has been informed that no activity pertaining to this proposed project may commence prior to receiving an Environmental Authorisation from the DFFE.</p>
3.	<p>You may proceed with the environmental impact assessment process in accordance with the tasks contemplated in the PoSEIA as required in terms of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.</p> <p><u>In addition, the following amendments and additional information are required for the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR):</u></p> <p>a) Project description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been noted that two options A and B are identified as locations for the proposed Ruspoort 1 Solar PV, when submitting the draft EIAR please ensure that you indicate the preferred option for the proposed development. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been noted on page 3 of Appendix C8 (comments and Response Report), that “the specific location of the development footprint within the property will be provided by the applicant in the EIA phase of the process.” Please ensure that the exact location for the Ruspoort 1 Solar PV and its associated is provided in the final EIAR. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is noted that the final SR on page 6 indicated that the development area for option A is 203ha and option B is 370ha, whereas page 12 refers 390ha area to be occupied 	<p>Olivia Letlalo Case Officer DFFE</p> <p>Letter: 13 April 2023</p>	<p>The two options for Ruspoort 1 have been assessed accordingly and the preferred option has been indicated within the Draft EIA Report after the specialists assessed the options. The preferred option has been indicated within Chapter 6.</p> <p>The exact location for the Ruspoort 1 Solar PV and its associated infrastructure is provided in the EIA report in figure 2.5. The EIA report has been submitted to the DFFE.</p> <p>The discrepancies regarding the development area amount for Option B have been rectified accordingly within the EIA report submitted to the DFFE.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>by the solar array. Please ensure that these discrepancies are rectified in the EIA phase.</p>		
	<p>b) Listed Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As indicated on page 4 to 5 of Appendix C8 (comments and Response Report), that the "<i>the expected amount of vegetation to be cleared, the length of the road will be dependent on the proposed facility design, and the evidence and confirmation of CBA and ESA areas will be provided in the EIA Phase</i>". Please ensure that for both Application Form and final EIAR include the aforementioned information to the relevant listed activities applied for. 		<p>The listed activities triggered by the proposed development have been applied for in the amended application form and the draft EIA report that have been submitted to the DFFE.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is noted that certain listed activities applied for will be confirmed during the EIA Phase. Please ensure that only listed activities that are triggered by the proposed development are applied for, in the amended application form and draft EIAR for the proposed development. 		<p>The listed activities triggered by the proposed development have been applied for in the amended application form and the draft EIAR.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 15 of LN 2 and 12 of LN 3 for the clearance of an area more than 20ha and 300 square metres, (respectively) of indigenous vegetation are applied for without specifying the exact total amount of vegetation to be cleared. You are advised to include this information in the amended application form and final SR. In addition, please specify the type of vegetation to be cleared for activity 15 of LN 2. 		<p>Activity 15 has been updated to include the exact amount of vegetation to be cleared as well as the type of vegetation within the amended application form and EIA report which has been submitted to the DFFE.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under activity 56 of LN 1, the CA acknowledged that the access roads to be widened or upgraded have been provided, however, the length of the aforesaid access roads has not been included in the application form and draft SR to determine the applicability of the abovementioned activity. You are advised to include the 		<p>Activity 56 of LN 1 and 4 of LN 3 have been removed from the amended application form and draft EIA report as it has been advised that the said activities are not triggered and said documents have been submitted to the DFFE.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>relevant details to determine if the said activity is triggered by the proposed development or not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 19 is hereby applied for, quoting the infilling or depositing of any material of more than 5 cubic metres, however, the Regulations refer to more than 10 cubic meters. You are expected to quote the correct activity and indicate how this activity is triggered. It has been noted that activities 4,10, 12, 14, and 18 of LN 3 have been applied for because Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) will be affected by the proposed development, however, the description of the portion of the proposed project to which the applicable listed activity relates indicated as Ecological Support Areas (ESA) will be affected. However, the listed activities under Listing Notice 3 does not include ESA specifically for the Northern Cape Province in order for the development to trigger a listed activity. Therefore, you are requested to explain and provide evidence why the above-mentioned listed activities are triggered for the proposed development. In addition, the description of the proposed project must make reference to the systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the CA or in bioregional plans and proof of such must be obtained from the relevant CA and be part of the amended application form and draft EIAR. Activity 11 of LN 1 has been applied for, however, page 13 of 34 of the application form indicated that "the switching station forming part of the 132kV collector substation and the new 132kV double circuit will be assessed as part of a separate Environmental Impact Assessment process in support of an application for Environmental Authorisation". As such, you are requested to clarify why this activity is triggered for the proposed development. 		<p>Activity 19 has been removed and updated from the listed activities list within the amended application form as well as within the draft EIAR that has been submitted to the DFFE.</p> <p>The activities 4,10, 12, 14, and 18 of LN 3 have been removed from the amended application form and the draft EIA report as it has been noted that they are not triggered activities and said documents have been submitted to the DFFE.</p> <p>Activity 11 of LN 1 has been included as a triggered activity because the development of Ruspoort 1 Solar PV Facility will include a 33/132kV on-site substation (IPP portion) which will be connected to the proposed central collector substation via overhead cabling with a capacity of up to 132kV. This has been updated within the amended application form and the draft EIA report which have been submitted to the DFFE.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CA has noted that Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) will form part of the proposed development and it is not applied for and it is unclear whether BESS will trigger activity 14 of LN 1. Therefore, you are required to explain whether the BESS will trigger or not trigger the listed activity in terms of EIA regulations and confirm whether BESS will be assembled on site or pre-assembled. This information will assist the CA to determine the applicability of activity 14 of LN 1. 		<p>A preferred technology in terms of BESS has been chosen and clear motivation and reasons as to why the preferred alternative proves to be the preferred compared to other alternatives has been added within the draft EIA report in Chapters 2,6 and 7 and has been submitted to the DFFE.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EIAR must provide an assessment of the impacts and mitigation measures for each of the Listed Activities applied for. 		<p>The EIAR provides an assessment of the impacts and mitigation measures for each of the listed activities applied for and has been submitted to the DFFE.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The description of activities applied for in the amended application form is not the same as the description given in the final SR. You are advised to ensure that the information submitted in the draft EIAR is consistent. 		<p>The listed activities have been updated within the amended application form as well as within the draft EIAR which now correlate and have been submitted to the DFFE.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been noted that the exclusions on the triggered listed activities applied for are not included. Therefore, you are advised to include in the amended application form as well as final SR all the relevant exclusions related to the listed activities applied for. For instance, activity 11 of Listing Notice (LN) 1 have been applied for, however the exclusions have not been quoted in the application form. 		<p>The listed activities have been updated within the amended application form as well as within the draft EIAR which now correlate and have been submitted to the DFFE.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. In addition, the onus is thus on the applicant and the environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) to ensure that all the applicable listed activities are included in the application. Failure to do so may result in unnecessary delays in the processing of the application. 		<p>All relevant listed activities that are triggered have been updated both within the amended application form and the draft EIA report which have been submitted to the DFFE.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the activities applied for in the application form differ from those mentioned in the final EIA, 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 https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms. 		<p>An amended application form has been submitted to the DFFE along with draft EIA report.</p>
	<p>c) Public Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please ensure that comments from all relevant stakeholders are submitted to the Department with the final EIA. This includes but is not limited to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE): Protected Areas Planning and Management Effectiveness Directorate, DFFE: Biodiversity Planning and Conservation (BCAdmin@environment.gov.za); Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform, Telkom, South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), South African Civil Aviation Authority, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Birdlife South Africa, Department of Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation, South African National Defence Force, Local interest groups, for example: Councillors and Rate Payers associations; Surrounding landowners, Farmer Organisations, Environmental Groups and NGOs; and Grassroots communities and structures as well as the affected district and local municipalities. 		<p>All comments received from stakeholders are included in Appendix C6: Comments Received of the EIA Report, and those to be submitted on the EIA Report will be included in Appendix C6: Comments Received of the final EIA Report.</p> <p>The stakeholders, as listed by the DFFE, are included in the I&AP database and any additional identified stakeholders will be registered on the project database and included in the consultation process.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please ensure that all issues raised, and comments received during the circulation of the FSR from registered I&APs and organs of state which have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are adequately addressed in the final EIA. Please ensure that these concerns and objections are addressed and adequately 		<p>Comments received have not been summarised for inclusion in the C&RR and have been captured verbatim, and all comments have been responded to adequately, as applicable, and no comments have been responded to as "noted".</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>responded to. Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders must be included in the final EIAR. Should you be unable to obtain comments, proof should be submitted to the Department of the attempts that were made to obtain comments.</p>		<p>Notification of the availability of the Reports are included in Appendix C4: Correspondence Organs of State and Appendix C5: Correspondence Stakeholders, and includes the attempt to obtain written comments from the various Departments and stakeholders.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Comments and Response trail report (CRR) must be submitted with the final EIAR. The CRR must incorporate all comments for this development. The CRR must be a separate document from the main report and the format must be in the table format as indicated in Annexure 1 of this comments letter in chronological order. Please refrain from summarising comments made by I&APs. All comments from I&APs must be copied verbatim and responded to clearly. Please note that a response such as "noted" is not regarded as an adequate response to I&AP's comments. 		<p>All comments received during the EIA process to date have been captured in this C&RR which is attached as a separate document to the EIA Report as Appendix C8: Comments & Responses Report.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulations 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended. 		<p>The Public Participation Process has been conducted in terms of Regulations 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended (GNR 326), as well as in accordance with the approved Public Participation Plan (Appendix C1) as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project database: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A register of I&APs has been compiled and will be updated throughout the EIA process (Appendix C21: I&AP Database). EIA & Public Participation process announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BID, accompanied by a cover letter inviting I&APs to register on the project database, was distributed via email to identified I&APs and relevant OoS on 30 June 2022 (refer to Appendix C4: Organs of State Correspondence and to key stakeholders and I&APs

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
			<p>Appendix C5: Stakeholder Correspondence of the final Scoping Report. The BID is included in Appendix C2: Site Notices & Newspaper Advertisement of the final Scoping Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o An advertisement was placed in The Echo Newspaper, a community newspaper, on Friday, 08 July 2022 (refer to Appendix C2: Site Notices & Newspaper Advertisement of the final Scoping Report). o Site Notices announcing the EIA process were placed at visible points the along the boundary of the proposed development site in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations on 28 May 2022 (refer to Appendix C2: Site Notices & Newspaper Advertisement of the final Scoping Report). o Process Notices were placed at various public places in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Phillipstown; ➢ Petrusville; ➢ Renosterberg Local Municipal Office; ➢ SAPS Petrusville; ➢ De Aair Library; ➢ Pixley ka Seme District Municipal Offices; and ➢ Shop at Vanderkloof on 26, 27 & 28 May 2022 (refer to Appendix C2: Site Notices & Newspaper Advertisement of the final Scoping Report) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCOPING PHASE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Scoping Report available for review and comment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Registered I&APs were notified of the availability of the Scoping Report for a 30-day review and comment period via e-mail on 13 January 2023

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
			<p>(refer Appendix C5: Stakeholder Correspondence of the final Scoping Report).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commenting authorities, municipal councillors and local and district municipalities which have jurisdiction in the area were requested to submit written comments on the Scoping Report via e-mail on 13 January 2023 (refer to Appendix C4: Organs of State Correspondence of the final Scoping Report). ▪ Advertisements were placed in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Volksblad: 13 January 2023; and ➢ The Echo Newspaper: 20 January 2023. An earlier publication was not available as the newspaper offices opened on 09 January 2023 after the 2022 festive season (refer to Appendix C2: Site Notices & Newspaper Advertisement of the final Scoping Report). ○ Attempt to obtain comments on the Scoping Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An e-mail to all registered I&APs and OoS as a reminder of the availability of the Scoping Report for review and comment was sent on 07 February 2023 (refer to Appendix C4: Organs of State Correspondence and Appendix C5: Stakeholder Correspondence of the final Scoping Report). ▪ Various virtual meetings were held during the 30-day review and comment period of the Scoping Report (refer to Appendix C7: Meeting Notes of the final Scoping Report for the meeting notes): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ FGM with landowners: 26 January 2023 at 09h00. ➢ FGM with NC DAERD&LR and DWS Officials: 26 January at 11h00

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Key Stakeholder Workshop: 31 January 2023 at 14h00. ○ Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proof of consultation with I&APs and OoS throughout the Scoping Phase to date is included in Appendix C4: Organs of State Correspondence and Appendix C5: Stakeholder Correspondence of the final Scoping Report. ○ Comments & Responses Report: <p>All comments received from the announcement of the Scoping and EIA process and those submitted during the 30-day review and comment period of the Scoping Report have been captured in this C&RR which was attached to the final Scoping Report as Appendix C8: Comments & Responses Report final Scoping Report, and is now attached to the EIA Report.</p> • EIA REPORT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EIA Report available for review and comment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Registered I&APs were notified of the availability of the EIA Report for a 30-day review and comment period via e-mail on 29 May 2023 (refer Appendix C5: Stakeholder Correspondence of the final Scoping Report). ▪ Commenting authorities, municipal councillors and local and district municipalities which have jurisdiction in the area were requested to submit written comments on the EIA Report via e-mail on 29 May 2023 (refer to Appendix C4: Organs of State Correspondence of the EIA Report). ▪ Advertisements were placed in:

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Volksblad: 26 May 2023; and ➤ The Echo/Midland Nuus Newspaper: 26 May 2023 (refer to Appendix C2: Site Notices & Newspaper Advertisement of the EIA Report). ○ Various virtual, in-person and public meetings will be held during the 30-day review and comment period of the EIA Report and all meeting notes will be included in Appendix C7: Meeting Notes of the final EIA Report. ○ Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proof of consultation with I&APs and OoS during the EIA Report review and comment period will be included in Appendix C4: Organs of State Correspondence and Appendix C5: Stakeholder Correspondence of the final EIA Report. ○ Comments & Responses Report: The C&RR will be updated with all comments received from stakeholders and OoS during the 30-day review and comment period of the EIA Report and will be attached as Appendix C8: Comments & Responses Report to the final EIA Report.
	<p>d) Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final SR indicates that three technologies, i.e., Lithium-Ion BESS, Lithium-LiC and Redox Flow BESS are being considered and that <i>“these alternatives will be further described and assessed in the EIA Phase of the process”</i>. Please note the EAP is required to present a preferred technology in terms of BESS. The CA will not grant authorisation for combined technologies i.e., one technology for BESS must be chosen in the final EIAR. You are required to further provide clear motivation and reasons as to why the preferred alternative proves to be 		<p>A preferred technology in terms of BESS has been chosen and clear motivation and reasons as to why the preferred alternative proves to be the preferred compared to other alternatives has been added within the draft EIA report in Chapters 2,6 and 7 and has been submitted to the DFFE.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>the preferred compared to other alternatives. This applies to all other alternatives considered.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are advised to provide details of the all the alternatives considered for this development and indicate the preferred alternatives as per Appendix 2 (2) (1) (g) (i) (v) (vi) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended in the final report. 		<p>Detailed of all alternatives identified for the project are provided in Chapter 2 of the EIA Report that has been submitted to the DFFE.</p>
	<p>e) <u>Layout & Sensitivity Maps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please provide a layout map which indicates the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The PV development area. ➤ Position of all infrastructure e.g., panels, BESS, on-site substations, etc. ➤ Permanent laydown area footprint. ➤ All supporting onsite infrastructure e.g., roads (existing and proposed). ➤ The location of sensitive environmental features on site e.g., CBAs, heritage sites, wetlands, drainage lines etc. that will be affected. ➤ Buffer areas; and ➤ All "no-go" areas. 		<p>The comment has been acknowledged and a layout map overlain with the sensitivities as well as with the relevant requested information has been added into the draft EIA report (refer to chapter 6) which has been submitted to the DFFE.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The above map must be overlain with a sensitivity map and a cumulative map which shows neighbouring renewable energy developments and existing grid infrastructure. All available biodiversity information must be used in the finalisation of the map and infrastructure must not encroach on highly sensitive areas as far as possible. 		<p>The above map has been overlain with a sensitivity map and a cumulative map which shows neighbouring renewable energy developments and existing grid infrastructure. All available biodiversity information has been used in the finalisation of the map and infrastructure does not encroach on highly sensitive areas. The aforementioned has been added into the draft EIA report (refer to Appendix L – Maps) which has been submitted to the DFFE.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that similar colours are not used to differentiate between infrastructure. i.e., items must be easily distinguishable in the Legend. 		<p>Different colours have been used to clearly distinguish between the projects components and has been added into the draft EIA report that has been submitted to the DFFE.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google maps will not be accepted for decision-making purposes. 		<p>No Google maps have been used within the draft EIA report which has been submitted to the DFFE.</p>
	<p>f) Specialist assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please note that the signed comments dated 14 February 2023, are still valid for the acceptance of the final scoping report. 		<p>The comments dated 14 February 2023 from this CA have been addressed in the draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report which has been submitted to the DFFE.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following Specialist Assessments will form part of the EIAR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agriculture and Soils Impact Assessment; ✓ Terrestrial Biodiversity, Terrestrial Plan Species, and Terrestrial Animal Species Assessment; ✓ Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment. ✓ Avifauna Impact Assessment. ✓ Visual Impact Assessment. ✓ Heritage Impact Assessment (Archaeology and Cultural Landscape). ✓ Social Impact Assessment; ✓ Traffic Impact Assessment; and ✓ Battery Storage High Level Safety, Health and Environment Risk Assessment 		<p>The following Specialist Assessments form part of the EIAR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Soils and Agriculture Potential. ✓ Ecology (Terrestrial, and Freshwater) Assessment. ✓ Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment. ✓ Avifauna Impact Assessment. ✓ Visual Impact Assessment. ✓ Heritage Impact Assessment (Archaeology, Cultural Landscape, and palaeontology). ✓ Social Impact Assessment, and ✓ Traffic Impact Assessment. <p>The aforementioned specialist assessments have been included with the draft EIAR as Appendices D to K which has been submitted to the DFFE.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is brought to your attention that Procedures for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting on identified Environmental Themes in terms of Sections 24(5)(a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998, when applying for Environmental Authorisation, which were promulgated in Government Notice No. 320 of 20 March 2020 (i.e., "the Protocols"), and in Government Notice No. 1150 of 30 October 2020, have come into effect. Please note that specialist assessments (for all environmental themes identified by screening tool) must be conducted in accordance with these protocols unless proof is provided to demonstrate that the specialist 		<p>Specialist assessments (for all environmental themes identified by screening tool) have been conducted in accordance with the aforementioned protocols and have been included with the draft EIAR as Appendices D to K which has been submitted to the DFFE.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>assessments were commissioned prior to 50 days after the promulgation of GN 320 and after promulgation of GN1150 (30 October 2020).</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additionally, the protocols specify that an assessment must be prepared by a specialist who is an expert in the field and is SACNASP registered for e.g.an aquatic assessment must be prepared by a specialist registered with SACNASP, with expertise in the field of aquatics sciences. 		<p>Where relevant, Specialists are registered with SACNASP.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EAP must ensure that the terms of reference for all the identified specialist studies include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A detailed description of the study's methodology; indication of the locations and descriptions of the development footprint, and all other associated infrastructures that they have assessed and are recommending for authorisations. You are advised to provide a table listing all the specialist studies undertaken with the recommendation for the proposed development. 		<p>A detailed description of the study's methodology; indication of the locations and descriptions of the development footprint, and all other associated infrastructures that they have assessed and are recommending for authorisations have been added in the relevant specialist studies and a table listing all the specialist studies undertaken with the recommendation for the proposed development have been added in the draft EIA report (refer to table).</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide a detailed description of all limitations to the studies. All specialist studies must be conducted in the right season and providing that as a limitation will not be allowed. 		<p>Specialist reports include details of methodology used, a description of all limitations to the studies, are final and provide detailed/practical mitigation measures for the preferred alternatives and recommendations.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Please note that the Department considers a 'no-go' area, as an area where no development of any infrastructure is allowed; therefore, no development of associated infrastructure including access roads is allowed in the 'no-go' areas. 		<p>Development of associated infrastructure including access roads has avoided the 'no-go' areas.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Should the specialist definition of 'no-go' area differ from the Departments definition; this must be clearly indicated. The specialist must also indicate the 'no-go' area's buffer. 		<p>The definition of 'no go' areas used by the specialists does not differ from that of the Department.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All specialist studies must be final, and provide detailed/practical mitigation measures for the preferred alternatives and recommendations, and must not recommend further studies to be completed post EA. 		<p>Specific mitigation measures are detailed and have been included within the project EMPr, included in Appendix M and N of this report.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Should a specialist recommend specific mitigation measures, these must be clearly indicated. 		<p>Specific mitigation measures are detailed and have been included within the project EMPr, included in Appendix M and N of this report.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations, the EAP must clearly indicate the most reasonable recommendation and substantiate this with defensible reasons; and were necessary, include further expertise advice. 		<p>Findings of the specialist studies, including conclusions in terms of alternatives considered (where relevant) have been included in Chapter 6 and 7 of this EIA Report.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ It is the responsibility of the EAP to confirm the list of specialist assessments and to motivate in the assessment report, the reason for not including any of the identified specialist studies including the provision of photographic evidence of the site situation. The site sensitivity verification for each of the recommended studies, as per the protocols, must be compiled and attached. 		<p>Table 4.6 provides the outcome of the site sensitivity verification undertaken by the specialists in the scoping phase (and confirmed in the EIA Phase), and the assessment undertaken in terms of the relevant protocols (i.e. full impact assessment or Compliance Statement).</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Please include a table that shows the proposed studies and the relevant specialists carrying out the study. In addition, a summary should be included of the specialist's recommendations in terms of the alternatives that are preferred based on the findings of their study. 		<p>Specialist studies undertaken are listed in Table 4.7 and reports are included in Appendix D-K of this report.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All specialist studies must be final, and provide detailed/practical mitigation measures for the preferred alternative and recommendations, and must not recommend further studies to be completed post EA. 		<p>Findings of the specialist studies, including conclusions in terms of alternatives considered (where relevant) have been included in Chapter 6 and 7 of this EIA Report.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>g) Cumulative Impact Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been noted on page iii and 1 of the final SR that the proposed project is one (1) of 9 projects (in process application submitted) in batch 1, summing up all 3 batches into a total of 21 projects. Further to this there are other similar projects or renewable projects within a 30km radius of the proposed development site, therefore, the cumulative impact assessment for all identified and assessed impacts must be refined to indicate the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assess the cumulative impacts of the proposed (not yet authorised), authorised (not yet constructed) and existing solar energy facilities. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The cumulative impacts significance rating must also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed. <hr/> <p>h) Environmental Management Programme (EMPr)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 13 of 34 of the application form indicated that <i>“the switching station forming part of the 132kV collector substation and the new 132kV double circuit will be assessed as part of a separate Environmental Impact</i> 		<p>An assessment of cumulative impacts is included in Chapter 6 of this EIA Report as well as within the specialist reports included in Appendix D-K.</p> <hr/> <p>The cumulative impact significance rating is considered in the overall conclusion on the need and desirability of the project and the impact statement for the project included in Chapter 7 of this EIA Report.</p> <hr/> <p>The cumulative impact significance rating is considered in the overall conclusion on the need and desirability of the project and the impact statement for the project included in Chapter 7 of this EIA Report.</p> <hr/> <p>The cumulative impact significance rating is considered in the overall conclusion on the need and desirability of the project and the impact statement for the project included in Chapter 7 of this EIA Report.</p> <hr/> <p>The PV facility will include an onsite substation (IPP portion). The generic EMPr for substation development has been compiled and is included in the EIA Report as Appendix N.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>Assessment process in support of an application for Environmental Authorisation". However, it is unclear whether the abovementioned infrastructures will form part of the proposed development. Therefore, should these infrastructure form part of the proposed development, ensure that the generic EMPr (for both 132kV collector substation and 132kV double circuit) that complies with the GN 435 of March 2022 is submitted in the final report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the EMPr in terms of Appendix 4 of the EIA Regulations includes mitigation and monitoring measures for the Solar PV is submitted with the final EIAR. <p>General The EIAR must provide the technical details for the proposed facility in a table format as well as their description and/or dimensions. A sample for the minimum information required is listed under Annexure 2 below.</p> <p>The applicant is hereby reminded to comply with the requirements of Regulation 45 of GN R982 of 04 December 2014, as amendment, regarding the time allowed for complying with the requirements of the Regulations.</p> <p>You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an environmental authorisation being granted by the Department.</p>		<p>An EMPr for the facility compiled in terms of Appendix 4 of the EIA Regulations and which includes mitigation and monitoring measures for the Solar PV is included in Appendix M of this EIA Report.</p> <p>The PV facility will include an onsite substation (IPP portion). The generic EMPr for substation development has been compiled and is included in the EIA Report as Appendix N.</p> <p>An EMPr for the facility compiled in terms of Appendix 4 of the EIA Regulations and which includes mitigation and monitoring measures for the Solar PV is included in Appendix M of this EIA Report.</p> <p>Technical details for the proposed facility are included in Table 2.7 of this EIA Report.</p> <p>The Applicant acknowledges the time allowed for complying with the requirements of the Regulations.</p> <p>The Applicant acknowledges that no activity may commence prior to receipt of the Environmental Authorisation.</p>
4.	<p><u>The mandate of the Forestry Branch in the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), as an EIA commenting</u></p>	<p>Jacoline Mans Chief Forester PP Nomfundo Tshabalala: DG</p>	

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p><u>authority, is to ensure control over developments that affect State forests, natural forests, forest nature reserves and protected trees.</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant must assess the site for the presence of protected trees [section 12 of the National Forests Act, Act No. 84 of 1998 (NFA)] and the potential risk and impact on such tree species. See Government Notice (GN) 2984, Government Gazette No. 47927 of 27 January 2023 for the list of protected tree species. Protected species such as <i>Vachellia erioloba</i>, <i>Vachellia haematoxylon</i> and <i>Boscia albitrunca</i> might occur on site. 2. Section 15(1) of the NFA stated that no person may cut, disturb, damage or destroy any protected tree; or possess, collect, remove, transport, export, purchase, sell, donate or in any other manner acquire or dispose of any protected tree, or any forest product derived from a protected tree, except under a licence granted by the Minister; or in terms of an exemption published by the Minister. 3. The prohibition on protected trees applies to all trees, alive and dead. It also applies to all size classes of the species listed as protected. 	<p>Letter: 08 February 2023</p>	<p>The comment has been acknowledged. The Ecologists will undertake detailed surveys and fieldwork of the proposed development layout and will identify potentially occurring protected trees within the area of the proposed project and site. This will be conducted and provided within the EIA phase. Where protected trees are to be impacted by the project, recommendations will be made regarding appropriate mitigation measures and permitting requirements.</p>
	<p><u>Draft Scoping Report (DSR) (Comments):</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The applicant is Akuo Energy Afrique and Phase 1 of the proposed Crossroads Green Energy entails the development of nine (9) solar energy facilities, 20 km north of Philipstown and 30 km west of Petrusville. These comments are generic and applicable to all nine (9) projects, namely Tafelkop Solar PV, Koppy Alleen Solar PV, Vrede Solar PV, Zionsheuwel Solar PV, Amper Daar Solar PV, Wag-'n-Bietjie Solar PV, Ruspoort 		<p>The comment has been acknowledged. The Ecologists will undertake detailed surveys and fieldwork of the proposed development layout and will identify potentially occurring protected trees within the area of the proposed project and site. This will be conducted and provided within the EIA phase. As recommended, the specialist will be requested to determine the density of the protected trees per project, to</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>Solar PV1, Ruspoot Solar PV2 and Middelpaas Solar PV. As indicated above, the project sites must be assessed for the presence of NFA listed protected trees in the proposed development footprints. If found on site, Forestry strongly recommends that the specialist(s) doing the fauna and flora (terrestrial biodiversity or ecological) specialist reports also determine the density of the <u>protected trees per project</u>, to get an accurate estimation of the number of protected trees that would be destroyed per project. This information cannot be gathered through desktop studies, fieldwork is required. Protected tree density and numbers of trees to be destroyed is required for processing of Forest Act Licence applications. If accurate information is gathered during the EIA phase, it can be used when applying for a Forest Act Licence, thus saving time and money. Otherwise, it might be necessary to appoint another specialist prior to submitting the applications for the Forest Act Licence and/or Fauna and Flora Permits, before construction and commencement of vegetation clearance.</p>		<p>get an accurate estimation of the number of protected trees that would be destroyed per project. Where protected trees are to be impacted by the project, recommendations will be made regarding appropriate mitigation measures and permitting requirements.</p>
5.	<p>It is important to assess the cumulative impacts on protected trees because this is phase 1, implying further phases are planned. If there are significant impacts on protected trees and/or Critical Biodiversity Areas which cannot be avoided or mitigated to acceptable levels, a biodiversity offset may be triggered, causing delays in the processing of a Forest Act Licence and Flora Permits. If evident that there might be significant impacts, it is advisable to appoint an offset specialist to do an offset investigation during the EIA phase (see the National Guidelines on Biodiversity Offsets) and present the findings and/or recommendations to the Forestry Branch of the DFFE and the provincial Conservation Authority in the Northern Cape Department of Agriculture,</p>		<p>The ecological impact assessment will include an assessment of the cumulative impacts on protected trees considering all similar developments within a 30km radius of the site. Recommendations regarding mitigation and permitting/offset requirements will be provided.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform (DAERL).</p> <p>Additional information</p> <p>6. The Department is kindly requesting an accurate indication of the number of protected trees to be destroyed to facilitate construction of the nine (9) PV facilities and associated infrastructure.</p> <p>7. Electronic copies of the Specialist Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessments (once available).</p> <p>NOTE: The Department may request to do site inspections to confirm the findings in the reports or when processing Forest Act Licence applications and/or request a virtual meeting to discuss the findings in relation to protected tree impacts and/or biodiversity offsets.</p>		<p>The ecological impact assessment will include an assessment of the cumulative impacts on protected trees considering all similar developments within a 30km radius of the site. Recommendations regarding mitigation and permitting/offset requirements will be provided.</p> <p>Electronic copies of the Specialist Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessments will be provided as requested</p> <p>The comment has been acknowledged. A site visit can be undertaken with the Department if required.</p>
5.	<p>The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation has reviewed and evaluated the reports and does not have any objection to the Scoping Report and the Plan of Study, however, the final report must comply with the procedures for the assessment and minimum criteria for reporting on identified environmental themes in terms of sections 24(5)(A) and (H) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998.</p> <p>The final report must comply with all the requirements as outlined in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guideline for renewable energy projects and the Best Practice Guideline for Birds & Solar energy for assessing and monitoring the impact of solar energy facilities on birds in Southern Africa.</p> <p>In conclusion, the Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA for review and queries should be submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation at Email; BCAdmin@dfpe.gov.za.</p>	<p>Portia Makitla Case Officer: DFFE: BC</p> <p>Letter: 13 February 2023</p>	<p>The comment has been acknowledged. The EIA Report comply with the regulations as required.</p> <p>The comment has been acknowledged. The EIA Report comply with the guidelines as required.</p> <p>The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation received personal notification of the availability of the Scoping Report and this process will be continued throughout the EIA process.</p>
6.	<p>Interim Comment</p>	<p>Natasha Higgitt</p>	

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>The SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit requests that the pending assessment of the impact to heritage resources comply with section 38(3) of the NHRA as required by section 38(8) of the NHRA. The HIA must include an archaeological and palaeontological component.</p> <p>The field-based archaeological component of the HIA must be conducted by a qualified archaeologist and must comply with the SAHRA 2007 Minimum Standards: Archaeological and Palaeontological Components of Impact Assessment Reports.</p> <p>The proposed development is located within an area of high Palaeontological Sensitivity as per the SAHRIS PalaeoSensitivity map. As such, a desktop based Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) must be undertaken by a qualified palaeontologist. The report must comply with the 2012 Minimum Standards: Palaeontological Components of Heritage Impact Assessments.</p> <p>Any other heritage resources as defined in section 3 of the NHRA that may be impacted, such as built structures over 60 years old, sites of cultural significance associated with oral histories, burial grounds and graves, graves of victims of conflict, and cultural landscapes or viewsapes must also be assessed.</p> <p>Further comments will be issued upon receipt of the pending heritage reports and the Draft EIA inclusive of appendices.</p>	<p>Manager: Development Applications Unit and Phillip Hine Manager: Archaeology, Palaeontology & Meteorites Unit SAHRA Letter: 15 February 2023</p>	<p>The comment has been acknowledged.</p> <p>The HIA to be submitted in the EIA phase will comply with section 38(3) of the NHRA as required by section 38(8) of the NHRA and include an archaeological and palaeontological component as requested by the SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit.</p> <p>The field-based archaeological component of the HIA will be conducted by a qualified archaeologist and will comply with the SAHRA 2007 Minimum Standards: Archaeological and Palaeontological Components of Impact Assessment Reports.</p> <p>A Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) will be undertaken by a qualified palaeontologist as requested. The report will comply with the 2012 Minimum Standards: Palaeontological Components of Heritage Impact Assessments.</p> <p>If any other heritage resources as defined in section 3 of the NHRA that might be impacted, such as built structures over 60 years old, sites of cultural significance associated with oral histories, burial grounds and graves, graves of victims of conflict, and cultural landscapes or viewsapes will then be assessed in the EIA phase and presented within the EIA report.</p> <p>Comment has been acknowledged. No further comment is required</p>

1.2. Key Stakeholders and Interested & Affected Parties

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
1.	<p>With reference to your above-mentioned application, I hereby inform you that our Client (OPENSERVE) approves the proposed work indicated on your drawings in terms Section 29 of the Electronic Communications Act 36 of 2005 as amended.</p> <p>No infrastructure of our Client (Openserve) will be affected by this proposal. We did our utmost to ensure that we indicate our route as accurate as possible and should you discover any of our cables that are not on the sketch please stop and contact us immediately to arrange a site meeting. In the event that our cables are exposed and damaged/stolen by a third party the damages will be repaired at the customer's account. Please make use of pilot holes in order not to damage our infrastructure. Therefore, any damages occurred during construction of work will be repaired at the customer's account.</p> <p>Although we are not affected by this proposal, Mr Vivian Groenewald must be contracted at telephone number 081 362 6738 from our Network Field Service. Two (2) weeks prior to commencement of proposed work.</p> <p>Approval of the proposed route is valid for six months. If construction has not yet commenced within this period, then the file must be resubmitted for approval.</p> <p>Any changes/deviations from the original planning during or prior to construction must immediately be communicated to this office.</p> <p>On completion of this project, please certify that all requirements as stipulated in this letter have been met. Please note that should any of our Client (Openserve) infrastructure has to be relocated or altered as a result of your activities the cost for such alteration of relocation will be for your account in terms of section 25 of the Electronic Communication Act.</p>	<p>Chris Schutte Mvelaphande Trading Openserve Service Provider</p> <p>Letter: 05 February 2023</p>	<p>It was noted that the comments are applicable to the Ruspoort 1 Solar PV project as the sketch (Appendix A to the letter) reference the project site for Ruspoort 1 Solar PV, although the subject heading refers to "Limestone Solar PV1 and Limestone Solar PV2 Facilities near Danielskuil, Northern Cape Province".</p> <p>This information has been shared with the Applicant who will consult with Mvelphande Trading at the applicable time in the application process.</p> <p>The applicant has been advised of this requirement.</p> <p>The applicant has been advised of this requirement.</p> <p>The applicant has been advised of this requirement.</p> <p>The applicant has been advised of this requirement.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>Mr Vivian Groenewald must be contracted at telephone number 081 362 6738. Two (2) weeks prior to commencement of proposed work. It's important that all services are shown on site before construction starts.</p>		
	<p>Approval of the proposed route is valid for six months. If construction has not yet commenced within this period, then the file must be resubmitted for approval. Any changes / deviations from the original planning during or prior to construction must immediately be communicated to this office.</p> <p>Please notify this office and forward an as built plan, within 30 days of completion of construction.</p>		<p>The applicant has been advised of this requirement.</p>
	<p>Mr Vivian Groenewald must be contacted at 054 338 6501 /081 362 6738. Two weeks prior to commencement of proposed work. It's important that all services are shown on site before construction starts.</p>		<p>The applicant has been advised of this requirement.</p>

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

2.1. Organs of State

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
7.	1. The biggest concern is that the project falls in an Important Bird Areas and proper avifauna surveys must be conducted in order to mitigate the impacts on birds, as there is already a lot of power lines in the area.	N Uys and E Swart Scientific Manager GR B: Environmental Research & Development Letter: 07 July 2022	An Avifaunal Impact Assessment will be undertaken by a suitably qualified Avifaunal Specialist. The Assessment will identify impacts associated with the proposed development and relevant mitigation measures will be formulated. Furthermore, Birdlife SA will be contacted to provide recommendations as per the latest protocols.
	2. Please incorporate into the assessment the Eskom maintenance roads under power line(s) for maintenance and fire breaks (there is specific sizes for specific line sizes).		The Eskom requirements will be assessed and if required will be included in the Generic EMPs in the EIA Phase of the process.
	3. Please note the area is also an arid landscape and temporary roads leave scars in the landscape for years.		Noted. Where possible existing roads will be used for temporary road access.
	4. Please include under cumulative impacts assessed other developments such as agriculture and mining. Also include in the assessment the other renewable energy projects in the area and their associated power lines, especially the Kudu Solar PV and EGI that is located adjacent to this development.		An in-depth assessment of other developments within the areas will be conducted during the EIA Phase of the S&EIA Phase.
	5. This is a massive project and the cumulative impact of the project size should also be assessed.		The potential cumulative impacts of the proposed project have been included in Section 9.5 of the Draft Scoping Report. An in-depth assessment will be further conducted during the EIA Phase of the S&EIA Process.
	6. It is recommended that all Environmental Authorisations for Renewable Energy (RE) projects as well as power lines must be re-evaluated if there are any changes in the way RE projects are approved for the De Aar area.		During the S&EIA Phase, the DFFE link for renewable projects database: https://egis.environment.gov.za will be utilised to assess Renewable Energy Projects in the area to assess the cumulative impacts of the proposed development.
	7. Fauna and flora permits will be needed for removal of flora and fauna for both the power line(s) and the renewable energy facilities.		Any required permits will be obtained from relevant authorities prior to any commencement of construction activities.

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
8.	<p>With reference to your above-mentioned application, I hereby inform you that our Client (OPENSERVE) approves the proposed work indicated on your drawings in terms Section 29 of the Electronic Communications Act 36 of 2005 as amended.</p> <p>Any changes/deviations from the original planning during or prior to construction must immediately be communicated to this office.</p>	<p>Mantwa Gabaitumele Mvelaphande Trading (OpenServe Service Provider)</p>	<p>The approval is noted. No further response is required.</p>
	<p>Our Client (OPENSERVE)'s infrastructure is affected by this proposal and the routes are marked in PINK on attached sketch as accurately as possible. We did our utmost to ensure that we indicate our route as accurate as possible and should you discover any of our cables that are not on the sketch please stop and contact us immediately to arrange a site meeting. Please make use of pilot holes in order not to damage our infrastructure. Therefore, any damages occurred during construction of work will be repaired at the customer's account. Consequently, the following conditions apply:</p> <p>Aerial Plant - At points of crossing, the overhead power lines should cross above the communications lines in accordance with and clearances stipulated in the Occupational Health and safety Act no 85 of 1993, Machinery regulations 20 – Crossings, and Electrical Machinery Regulations 15 – Clearance of Power Lines. If the specifications could not be met, all deviation costs will be for the applicant's account. We also refer to section 25 of Electronic Communication Act 36 of 2005.</p> <p>Sketch included in <u>Appendix C6: Comments Received of the Scoping Report</u></p>	<p>Letter: 14 July 2022 Ref.: CPLT0414-22</p>	<p>Noted. The details as contained in the correspondence have been provided to the Applicant for further action, as may be required.</p>

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>At points of crossing, the overhead power line should cross over the overhead communication lines with a minimum vertical separation of 0.8 meters.</p> <p>Suitable protection as laid down in section 5 of the Code of Practice should be provided at all important crossings.</p> <p>The crossing of supply lines or overhead service mains directly above or adjacent to communication poles must be avoided if possible. If not clearance of 3 meters must be provided.</p> <p>In order to minimize noise induction into the telecommunication systems, the angle of crossing between the overhead power line and all communication lines, should be as near to a right angle as possible – the following deviation from the right angle being permitted at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power voltage of 48 kV and higher - 30 degrees • Power voltage of lower than 48 kV - 45 degrees <p>SWER must be as near as 90 degrees as possible</p> <p>Approved on condition that, should it later be found necessary to deviate the existing communication line due to existing noise interference or any other reason whatsoever, the cost of such remedial action shall be repayable.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.4.1 of the Code of Practice stipulates the minimum acceptable horizontal separation between power and the communication lines and where this cannot be met, the design of the power line is also stipulated. This could apply between the attached plans and these requirements should strictly be adhered to.</p> <p>In cases where an underground power cable will run parallel with an existing underground communication cable, a separation as great as possible should be maintained with a minimum separation of 600mm. should the separation be less than 600mm and the power cable are not enclosed in a suitable pipe, a concrete slab must be provided immediately</p>		

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>above the power cable for the length of parallelism. If the separation is less than 300mm, additional protection is required by placing concrete slabs between our Client (OPENSERVE) cables/pipes and the power cables.</p>		
	<p>Underground Crossings - At the points where our Client (OPENSERVE)'s existing underground communication cable will be crossed by an underground cable; the latter should be laid a depth of at least 300mm below the communication cable – normally laid at a depth of 600mm. If the power cable is not enclosed in a suitable pipe, protection in the form of a concrete slab should be provided immediately above the power cable for a minimum of 2 (Two) metres on either side of crossing.</p>		
	<p>Calculations have shown that an earth fault on the high voltage Power lines will induce excessive low frequency induction into the Communication lines. As a result of this, the cost to deviate / alter the communication lines to prevent this induction will be for the power provider.</p>		
	<p>Relocations of our Client (OPENSERVE) plant will be done at customer's request and will be a repayable project.</p>		
	<p>Please notify the office within 21 working days from date of this letter of acceptance and if any alternative proposal is available of if a recoverable work should commence, the liaison officer is Mantwa Gabaitumele at tel. no. 0825216813.</p>		
	<p>As important cables are affected, Mr Vivian Groenewald must be contacted at 054 338 6501 /081 362 6738, (2) two weeks' prior of commencement on construction work. It would be appreciated if this office can be notified within 30 days on completion of construction work. Confirmation is required on completion of construction as per agreed requirements.</p>		
	<p>On completion of this project please certify that all requirements as stipulated in this letter have been met. Please</p>		

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
	<p>note that should any of our Client (OPENSERVE) infrastructure has to be relocated or altered as a result of your activities the cost for such alterations or relocations will be for your account in terms of section 25 of the Electronic Communications Act.</p> <p>This approval is valid for 6 months only, after which re-application must be made if the work has not been completed.</p> <p>Should our Client (OPENSERVE) infrastructure be damaged while work is undertaken, kindly call the Toll-free number 0800203951 immediately.</p> <p>All of our Client (OPENSERVE) rights remain reserved.</p> <p>Mr Vivian Groenewald must be contacted at 054 338 6501 /081 362 6738, Two weeks before any commencement of proposed work.</p>		

2.2. Key Stakeholders and Interested & Affected Parties

No.	Comment	Raised by	Response
1.	The Haumann Family Trust is in favour of the relevant developments proposed.	Eduard Haumann Landowner Reg&Comm Form: 01 July 2022	The positive comment submitted is acknowledged.
2.	<p>Ek besit eiendom naasliggend in die ge-afekteerde areas van Fase 1, 2 & 3.</p> <p>Translation: I own properties adjacent to the affected area of Phase 1, 2 & 3.</p>	Kobus de Villiers Landowner Reg&Comm Form: 23 July 2022	The location of the landowner's property is acknowledged, and the property details were requested to determine the locality of his property in relation to the proposed developments.

<p>3.</p>	<p>We are aware of proposed Hydra B Cluster of Renewable Energy Facilities near Philipstown in the Northern Cape (21 Solar PV Facilities).</p> <p>The Environmental Management Services (EMS) group of the CSIR is also undertaking Environmental Assessment processes for the proposed Kudu Solar Facility cluster in the vicinity. Here is a link to the Background Information Document for additional information:</p> <p>Would it be possible to please register myself and Helen Antonopoulos on the project database of I&APs?</p> <p>Please see our email addresses below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rohaida Abed – RAbed@csir.co.za - Helen Antonopoulos - <p>Our preferred method of notification is email.</p> <p>Our interest in the application is as stated above (i.e. Environmental Assessment Practitioner for a nearby Solar PV development).</p> <p>Would it be possible to please send us a KMZ file of the affected properties of the proposed Hydra B Cluster of Renewable Energy Facilities? Please also kindly let us know what the status of the project is.</p> <p>We have noted your request to register on the Kudu Solar PV project also and will also respond on that separately.</p>	<p>Rohaida Abed Senior Environmental Assessment Practitioner CSIR</p> <p>E-mail: 02 September 2022 @ 09h21</p>	<p>Please receive herewith confirmation that you and Ms Helen Antonopoulos have been registered on the above projects database.</p> <p>Savannah Environmental's registration on the Kudu Solar Facility cluster is acknowledged.</p> <p>A Request was lodged for the .kmz file for the Kudu Solar Facility.</p>
	<p>I hope that you are well. Thank you for registering us on the database for the proposed Hydra B Cluster of Renewable Energy Facilities.</p>	<p>Rohaida Abed Senior Environmental Assessment Practitioner</p>	<p>At the time of the request the KMZ file had not yet been finalized. The affected properties of the proposed project have been included in the draft scoping report. The draft</p>

	<p>Would it be possible to please send us a KMZ file of the affected properties of the proposed Hydra B Cluster of Renewable Energy Facilities? Please also kindly let us know what the status of the project is.</p> <p>We have responded on your request to register on the Kudu Solar PV project also.</p>	<p>CSIR E-mail: 04 September 2022 @ 10h37</p>	<p>scoping report will be made available to all registered interested and affected parties for a 30-day review period from the 13th of January 2023 to the 13th of February 2023.</p>
	<p>I hope that you are well. Apologies for the follow up, we just kindly enquiring on the KMZ file and status of the proposed Hydra B Cluster of Renewable Energy Facilities, and if you have any information on the proposed Hydra B substation (such as proposed location etc.).</p> <p>We look forward to your feedback.</p>	<p>Rohaida Abed Senior Environmental Assessment Practitioner CSIR E-mail: 07 September 2022 @ 17h39</p>	<p>The .kmz file has not yet been finalised and will be forwarded to the I&AP once received from the Applicant.</p>
	<p>I hope that you are well. I am kindly following up on the KMZ for the Hydra B Cluster of RE Facilities please.</p> <p>Please could you kindly share it with us?</p>	<p>Rohaida Abed Senior Environmental Assessment Practitioner CSIR E-mail: 20 October 2022</p>	