

# STORMWATER MANAGEMENT GUIDE

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## 1. PURPOSE

By taking greater cognisance of natural hydrological patterns and processes, it is possible to develop storm water management systems in a manner that reduces these potentially negative impacts and mimic nature. The main risks associated with inappropriate storm water management are increased erosion risk and risks associated with flooding. Therefore, this Stormwater Management Guide and the Erosion Management Plan are closely linked to one another and should be managed together.

This Stormwater Management Guide addresses the management of stormwater runoff from the development area and significant impacts relating to resultant impacts such as soil erosion and downstream sedimentation. The main factors influencing the planning of stormwater management measures and infrastructure are:

- » Topography and slope gradients.
- » Placing of infrastructure and infrastructure design.
- » Annual average rainfall.
- » Rainfall intensities.

The objective of these guiding principles is therefore to provide measures to address runoff from disturbed portions of the development area, such that they:

- » Do not result in concentrated flows into natural watercourses i.e., provision should be made for temporary or permanent measures that allow for attenuation, control of velocities and capturing of sediment upstream of natural watercourses.
- » Do not result in any necessity for concrete or other lining of natural watercourses to protect them from concentrated flows off the development if not necessary.
- » Do not divert flows out of their natural flow pathways, thus depriving downstream watercourses of water.

This Stormwater Management Guide must be updated and refined once the construction/ civil engineering plans have been finalised following detailed design.

## 2. RELEVANT ASPECTS OF THE SITE

The project area is situated within the Nama Karoo Biome and (SANBI, 2018). The Nama Karoo Biome is found in the central plateau of the western half of South Africa. The geology underlying the biome is varied, as the distribution of this biome is determined primarily by rainfall. The rain falls in summer, and varies between 100 and 520mm per year. This also determines the predominant soil type - over 80% of the area is covered by a lime-rich, weakly developed soil over rock. Although less than 5% of rain reaches the rivers, the high erodibility of soils poses a major problem where overgrazing occurs (SANBI, 2019).

### Wetlands and Freshwater Resources

One (1) form of a watercourse was identified and delineated within the regulated area. This includes an ephemeral river (watercourse). No natural wetland systems, or even cryptic wetlands were identified for the area. The proposed development area is more than 100 m east of the watercourse. The results of the habitat

assessment indicates natural (class A) and largely natural (class B) instream and riparian conditions for the watercourse catchment respectively. The recommended buffer was calculated to be 20 m for the river. A site sensitivity verification forms part of reporting requirements. In this regard, the allocated sensitivities of low for the general area and medium to high sensitivity for the drainage features agrees with the Environmental Screening Tool. The project must take cognizance of this and avoid any unnecessary disturbance of the drainage features and adjacent habitat. Therefore, the aforementioned post-mitigation buffer should be implemented and treated as 'no go areas'.

The development footprint is not located within 100 m of the delineated water resource [as per the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998) in accordance with GN509 of 2016 as it relates to the National Water Act, 1998 (Act 36 of 1998), a regulated area of a watercourse in terms of water uses as listed in Section 21 (c) and 21 (i)].

Since the development footprint is outside of the regulation zone and buffer zone, no risks to the freshwater systems are foreseen for the proposed project. Therefore, no impacts or risks were anticipated to the freshwater systems and therefore not assessed in this report. Despite the absence of risks expected for the project, this report presents supporting mitigation and management measures for consideration.

### **3. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES**

In the design phase, various stormwater management principles should be considered including:

- » Prevent concentration of stormwater flow at any point where the ground is susceptible to erosion.
- » Reduce stormwater flows as far as possible by the effective use of attenuating devices (such as swales, berms, and silt fences). As construction progresses, the stormwater control measures are to be monitored and adjusted to ensure complete erosion and pollution control at all times.
- » Silt traps must be used where there is a danger of topsoil or material stockpiles eroding and entering streams and other sensitive areas.
- » Construction of gabions and other stabilisation features on steep slopes may be undertaken to prevent erosion, if deemed necessary.
- » Minimise the area of exposed bare soils to minimise the erosive forces of wind, water and all forms of traffic.
- » Ensure that development does not increase the rate of stormwater flow above that which the natural ground can safely accommodate at any point in the sub-catchments.
- » Ensure that all stormwater control works are constructed in a safe and aesthetic manner in keeping with the overall development.
- » Plan and construct stormwater management systems to remove contaminants before they pollute surface waters or groundwater resources.
- » Contain soil erosion, whether induced by wind or water forces, by constructing protective works to trap sediment at appropriate locations. This applies particularly during construction.
- » Avoid situations where natural or artificial slopes may become saturated and unstable, both during and after the construction process.
- » Design and construct roads to avoid concentration of flow along and off the road. Where flow concentration is unavoidable, measures to incorporate the road into the pre-development stormwater flow should not exceed the capacity of the culvert. To assist with the stormwater run-off, gravel roads should typically be graded and shaped with a 2-3% cross fall back into the slope, allowing stormwater to be channelled in a controlled manner towards the natural drainage lines and to assist with any sheet flow on the project area.

- » Design culvert inlet structures to ensure that the capacity of the culvert does not exceed the pre-development stormwater flow at that point. Provide detention storage on the road and/or upstream of the stormwater culvert.
- » Design outlet culvert structures to dissipate flow energy. Any unlined downstream channel must be adequately protected against soil erosion.
- » Where the construction of a building causes a change in the vegetative cover of the site that might result in soil erosion, the risk of soil erosion by stormwater must be minimised by the provision of appropriate artificial soil stabilisation mechanisms or re-vegetation of the area. Any inlet to a piped system should be fitted with a screen or grating to prevent debris and refuse from entering the stormwater system.
- » Release only clean water into the environment.
- » Preferably all drainage channels on the project area and contained within the larger area of the property (i.e., including buffer zone) should remain in the natural state so that the existing hydrology is not disturbed.

### **3.1. Engineering Specifications**

Detailed engineering specifications for a Stormwater Management Plan describing and illustrating the proposed stormwater control measures must be prepared by the Civil Engineers during the detailed design phase and should be based on the underlying principles of this Stormwater Management Guide. This should include erosion control measures. Requirements for project design include:

- » Erosion control measures to be implemented before and during the construction period, including the final stormwater control measures (post construction) must be indicated within the Final/Updated Stormwater Management Plan.
- » All temporary and permanent water management structures or stabilisation methods must be indicated within the Final/Updated Stormwater Management Plan.
- » The drainage system for the project area should be designed to specifications that can adequately deal with a 1:50 year intensity rainfall event or more to ensure sufficient capacity for carrying stormwater around and away from infrastructure.
- » Procedures for stormwater flow through a project area need to take into consideration both normal operating practice and special circumstances. Special circumstances in this case typically include severe rainfall events.
- » An on-site Engineer or Environmental Officer (EO) is to be responsible for ensuring implementation of the erosion control measures on site during the construction period.
- » The Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Contractor holds ultimate responsibility for remedial action in the event that the approved stormwater plan is not correctly or appropriately implemented and damage to the environment is caused.

During the construction phase, the contractor must prepare a Stormwater Control Method Statement to ensure that all construction methods adopted on the project area do not cause, or precipitate soil erosion and shall take adequate steps to ensure that the requirements of the Stormwater Management Plan are met before, during and after construction. The designated responsible person on the project area, must be indicated in the Stormwater Control Method Statement and shall ensure that no construction work takes place before the relevant stormwater control measures are in place.

An operation phase Stormwater Management Plan should be designed and implemented if not already addressed by the mitigations implemented as part of construction, with a view to preventing the passage of concentrated flows off hardened surfaces and onto natural areas.



## PRINCIPLES FOR EROSION MANAGEMENT

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### 1. PURPOSE

Exposed and unprotected soils are the main cause of erosion in most situations. Therefore, this Erosion Management Plan, the Storm water Management Plan and the Revegetation and Habitat Rehabilitation Plan are closely linked to one another and should not operate independently but should rather be seen as complementary activities within the broader environmental management of the site and should therefore be managed together.

This Erosion Management Plan addresses the management and mitigation of potential impacts relating to soil erosion. The objective of the plan is to provide:

- » A general framework for soil erosion and sediment control, which enables the contractor to identify areas where erosion can occur and is likely to be accelerated by construction related activities.
- » An outline of general methods to monitor, manage and rehabilitate erosion prone areas, ensuring that all erosion resulting from all phases of the development is addressed.

This plan must be updated and refined once the construction/ civil engineering plans have been finalised following detailed design.

### 2. RELEVANT ASPECTS OF THE SITE

The project area is situated within the Nama Karoo Biome and (SANBI, 2018). The Nama Karoo Biome is found in the central plateau of the western half of South Africa. The geology underlying the biome is varied, as the distribution of this biome is determined primarily by rainfall. The rain falls in summer, and varies between 100 and 520mm per year. This also determines the predominant soil type - over 80% of the area is covered by a lime-rich, weakly developed soil over rock. Although less than 5% of rain reaches the rivers, the high erodibility of soils poses a major problem where overgrazing occurs (SANBI, 2019).

Soil erosion is a frequent risk associated with solar facilities on account of the vegetation clearing and disturbance associated with the construction phase of the development and may continue occurring throughout the operation phase. All areas where vegetation is removed from the soil surface in preparation for the infrastructure construction will result in exposed soil surfaces that will be prone to erosion.

The most sensitive soil forms that can be expected within the assessment corridor is the Hutton and Oakleaf soil forms. The land capability sensitivities (DAFF, 2017) indicate land capabilities with "Very Low to Moderate" sensitivities, which correlates with the requirements for a compliance statement only.

The available climate can limit crop production significantly. The harsh climatic conditions are associated with low annual rainfall and high evapotranspiration potential demands of the area. The area is not favourable for most cropping practices.

The proposed project will have limited impact on the agricultural production ability of the land. Additionally, the solar facility and associated infrastructure will not result in the segregation of any high production agricultural land.

During the operation phase, the areas where vegetation was cleared will remain at risk of soil erosion, especially during a rainfall event when runoff from the cleared surfaces will increase the risk of soil erosion in the areas directly surrounding the project area.

### 3. EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL PRINCIPLES

The goals of erosion control during and after construction at the project area should be to:

- » Protect the land surface from erosion.
- » Intercept and safely direct run-off water from undisturbed upslope areas through the site without allowing it to cause erosion within the site or become contaminated with sediment.
- » Progressively revegetate or stabilise disturbed areas.

These goals can be achieved by applying the management practices outlined in the following sections.

#### 3.1. On-Site Erosion Management

General factors to consider regarding erosion risk at the project area include the following:

- » Release only clean water into the environment.
- » Reduction of a stable vegetation cover and associated below-ground biomass that currently increases soil surface porosity, water infiltration rates and thus improves the soil moisture availability. Without the vegetation, the soil will be prone to extensive surface capping, leading to accelerated erosion and further loss of organic material and soil seed reserves from the local environment.
- » Soil loss is related to the length of time that soils are exposed prior to rehabilitation or stabilisation. Therefore, the gap between construction activities and rehabilitation should be minimised. Phased construction and progressive rehabilitation, where practically possible, are therefore important elements of the erosion control strategy.
- » The extent of disturbance will influence the risk and consequences of erosion. Therefore, site clearing should be restricted to areas required for construction purposes only. As far as possible, large areas should not be cleared all at once, especially in areas where the risk of erosion is higher.
- » Roads should be planned and constructed in a manner which minimises their erosion potential. Roads should therefore follow the natural contour as far as possible. Roads parallel to the slope direction should be avoided as far as possible.
- » Where necessary, new roads constructed should include water diversion structures with energy dissipation features present to slow and disperse the water into the receiving area.
- » Roads used for project-related activities and other disturbed areas should be regularly monitored for erosion. Any erosion problems recorded should be rectified as soon as possible and monitored thereafter to ensure that they do not re-occur.
- » Runoff may have to be specifically channelled or storm water adequately controlled to prevent localised rill and gully erosion.
- » Compacted areas should have adequate drainage systems to avoid pooling and surface flow. Heavy machinery should not compact those areas which are not intended to be compacted as this will result in compacted hydrophobic, water repellent soils which increase the erosion potential of the area. Where compaction does occur, the areas should be ripped.
- » All bare areas should be revegetated with appropriate locally occurring species, to bind the soil and limit erosion potential.
- » Silt fences should be used where there is a danger of topsoil or material stockpiles eroding and entering streams and other sensitive areas.
- » Gabions and other stabilisation features must be used on steep slopes and other areas vulnerable to erosion to minimise erosion risk as far as possible.
- » Activity at the project area after large rainfall events when the soils are wet and erosion risk is increased should be reduced. No driving off of hardened roads should occur at any time, and particularly immediately following large rainfall events.

- » Topsoil should be removed and stored in a designated area separately from subsoil and away from construction activities. Topsoil should be reapplied where appropriate as soon as possible in order to encourage and facilitate rapid regeneration of the natural vegetation in cleared areas.
- » Avoid excessively compacting the ground beneath the solar panels.
- » Regular monitoring of the project area for erosion problems during construction (on-going) and operation (at least twice annually) is recommended, particularly after large summer thunderstorms have been experienced. The Environmental Control Officer (ECO) will determine the frequency of monitoring based on the severity of the impacts in the erosion prone areas.

### **3.1.1 Erosion control mechanisms**

The contractor may use the following mechanisms (whichever proves more appropriate/ effective) to combat erosion when necessary:

- » Reno mattresses.
- » Slope attenuation.
- » Hessian material.
- » Shade catch nets.
- » Gabion baskets.
- » Silt fences.
- » Storm water channels and catch pits.
- » Soil bindings.
- » Geofabrics.
- » Hydro-seeding and/or re-vegetating.
- » Mulching over cleared areas.
- » Boulders and size varied rocks.
- » Tilling.

### **3.2 Engineering Specifications**

A detailed engineering specifications Storm water Management Plan describing and illustrating the proposed stormwater control measures must be prepared by the Civil Engineers during the detailed design phase and should be based on the underlying principles of the Storm water Management Plan and this should include erosion control measures. Requirements for project design include:

- » Erosion control measures to be implemented before and during the construction period, including the final storm water control measures (post construction).
- » All temporary and permanent water management structures or stabilisation methods must be indicated within the Storm water Management Plan.
- » An on-site Engineer or EO/ Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Representative to be responsible for ensuring implementation of the erosion control measures on the project area during the construction period. The ECO should monitor the effectiveness of these measures on the interval agreed upon with the Site Manager and EO.
- » The EPC Contractor holds ultimate responsibility for remedial action in the event that the approved Storm water Management Plan is not correctly or appropriately implemented and damage to the environment is caused.

### 3.3 Monitoring

The project area must be monitored continuously during construction and operation in order to determine any indications of erosion. If any erosion features are recorded as a result of the activities on-site the EO/SHE Representative (during construction) or Environmental Manager (during operation) must:

- » Assess the significance of the situation.
- » Take photographs of the soil degradation.
- » Determine the cause of the soil erosion.
- » Inform the contractor/operator that rehabilitation must take place and that the contractor/operator is to implement a rehabilitation method statement and management plan to be approved by the Site/Environmental Manager in conjunction with the ECO.
- » Monitor that the contractor/operator is taking action to stop the erosion and assist them where needed.
- » Report and monitor the progress of rehabilitation weekly and record all the findings in a site register (during construction).
- » All actions with regards to the incidents must be reported on a monthly compliance report which should be kept on file for if/when the Competent Authority requests to see it (during construction) and kept on file for consideration during the annual audits (during construction and operation).

The Contractor (in consultation with an appropriate specialist, e.g., an engineer) must:

- » Select a system/mechanism to treat the erosion.
- » Design and implement the appropriate system/mechanism.
- » Monitor the area to ensure that the system functions like it should. If the system fails, the method must be adapted or adjusted to ensure the accelerated erosion is controlled.
- » Continue monitoring until the area has been stabilised.

### 3 CONCLUSION

The Erosion Management Plan is a document to assist the Proponent/ EPC Contractor with guidelines on how to manage erosion during all phases of the project. The implementation of management measures is not only good practice to ensure minimisation of degradation, but also necessary to ensure compliance with legislative requirements. This document forms part of the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) and is required to be considered and adhered to during the design, construction, operation, and decommissioning phases of the project (if and where applicable). During the construction phase, the contractor must prepare an Erosion Control Method Statement to ensure that all construction methods adopted on the project area do not cause, or precipitate soil erosion and shall take adequate steps to ensure that the requirements of this plan are met before, during and after construction. The designated responsible person on the project area, must be indicated in the Method Statement and shall ensure that relevant erosion control measures are in place throughout the construction phase.

An operation phase Erosion Management Plan should be designed and implemented if not already addressed by the mitigations implemented as part of construction, with a view to preventing the passage of concentrated flows off hardened surfaces and onto natural areas.