



Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure – Biodiversity Impact Assessment

Central Karoo District Municipality, Western Cape

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savannah
environmental

Prepared by:

The Biodiversity Company




Cell: +27 81 319 1225

Fax: +27 86 527 1965

info@thebiodiversitycompany.com

www.thebiodiversitycompany.com



Report Name	Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure – Biodiversity Impact Assessment
Submitted to	
Report Writer	<p>Mahomed Desai </p> <p>Dr. Mahomed Desai is Pr. Nat. Sci. registered (134678) and has extensive experience in assessing estuarine, freshwater, and terrestrial biodiversity. He obtained his M.Sc. in Environmental Engineering and Ph.D. in Ecological Sciences and has over 10 years of experience working with African fauna and flora as a researcher and consultant, through various projects.</p>
Report Writer / Reviewer	<p>Andrew Husted </p> <p>Andrew Husted is Pr Sci Nat registered (400213/11) in the following fields of practice: Ecological Science, Environmental Science and Aquatic Science. Andrew is an Aquatic, Wetland and Biodiversity Specialist with more than 12 years' experience in the environmental consulting field. Andrew has completed numerous wetland training courses, and is an accredited wetland practitioner, recognised by the DWS, and also the Mondi Wetlands programme as a competent wetland consultant.</p>
Declaration	<p>The Biodiversity Company and its associates operate as independent consultants under the auspice of the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions. We declare that we have no affiliation with or vested financial interests in the proponent, other than for work performed under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2017. We have no conflicting interests in the undertaking of this activity and have no interests in secondary developments resulting from the authorisation of this project. We have no vested interest in the project, other than to provide a professional service within the constraints of the project (timing, time and budget) based on the principals of science.</p>

List of Acronyms

ADU	Animal Demography Unit
AOO	Area of Occupancy
BI	Biodiversity Importance
CBA	Critical Biodiversity Area
CI	Conservation Importance
CR	Critically Endangered
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment
EOO	Extent of Occurrence
EN	Endangered
ESA	Ecological Support Area
FI	Functional Integrity
GBIF	Global Biodiversity Information Facility
IAP	Invasive Alien Plant
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LC	Least Concern
MP	Moderately Protected
NBA	National Biodiversity Assessment
NEMBA	National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act
NP	Not Protected
NPAES	National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy
NT	Near Threatened
ONA	Other Natural Area
POSA	Plants of Southern Africa
PP	Poorly Protected
SACAD	South Africa Conservation Areas Database
SAIIAE	South African Inventory of Inland Aquatic Ecosystems
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
SAPAD	South Africa Protected Areas Database
SCC	Species of Conservation
SEI	Site Ecological Importance
SWSA	Strategic Water Source Area
VU	Vulnerable
WP	Well Protected

Executive Summary

The Project (Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure) is part of a cluster known as the Poortjie Wes Cluster (the “Cluster”). The Cluster entails the development of four (4) solar energy facilities. All four (4) renewable energy (“RE”) facilities will connect to the proposed 132 kV Belvedere Collector Switching Station (the “Collector Switching Station”) via 132 kV Overhead Lines (“OHLs”). The proposed Collector Switching Station will connect to the new Poortjie Wes 400/132 kV LILO substation (“Poortjie Wes LILO MTS”) via a 132 kV OHL.

This assessment describes the composition of the floral and faunal (herpetofauna and non-volant mammals) community within the area affected by the proposed development, and the possible impacts on the local biota. In order to achieve this, a review of available desktop information and a field survey for the Project Area of Influence (PAOI) was undertaken. The PAOI comprised of a 300 m corridor around the proposed OHLs and a 500 m buffer around the proposed substations. No fieldwork was undertaken within the proposed grid connection infrastructure PAOI, as these spatial files were not provided to the specialist during the scoping survey. Information was based on the data obtained and observations made within the PAOI within the proposed Wind and Solar Energy Facilities and surrounding landscape

The PAOI was observed to support keystone fauna, even though there are negative impacts from anthropogenic activities within the PAOI and surrounding landscape. These keystone fauna, which comprise of ecosystem engineers such as *Orycteropus afer* (Aardvark), *Geosciurus inauris* (South African Ground Squirrel) and *Messor capensis*, as well as seed dispersers such as *Stigmochelys pardalis* (Leopard Tortoise), are vital in maintaining ecosystem structure and functioning. In addition to supporting keystone fauna, the PAOI is overlaps an Ecological Support Area and Other Natural Areas. The former is important in providing watercourse protection. The PAOI is also traversed by numerous ephemeral drainage systems that are connected to the Sout River and Kariega River. The physiognomy of these systems comprised of both, channelised and drainage flat features. Two of the ephemeral systems traversing the PAOI were assessed as part of the SAI/AE. The unnamed tributary of the Sout River draining in a north-west trajectory is classified as EN and the unnamed tributary of the Kariega River draining in a north-east trajectory is classified as CR.

The Site Ecological Importance (SEI) was determined to be ‘High’ as summarised in the table below.

Area (ha)	Conservation Importance	Functional Integrity	Biodiversity Importance	Receptor Resilience	Site Ecological Importance
297.168	Medium Confirmed or highly likely occurrence of populations of NT species	High Very large (> 100 ha) intact area for any conservation status of ecosystem type. High habitat connectivity serving as functional ecological corridors, limited road network between intact habitat patches.	Medium	Low Habitat that is unlikely to be able to recover fully after a relatively long period: > 15 years required to restore ~ less than 50% of the original species composition and functionality of the receptor functionality.	High

The expected impacts of the proposed development will include the following:

- habitat loss and fragmentation;
- degradation of surrounding habitat;
- disturbance and displacement of fauna caused during the construction and maintenance phases; and
- direct mortality during the construction and operational phase.

In order to reduce the significance of the impacts several mitigation measures can be implemented during the construction and operational phase of the proposed development.

During the construction phase, displacement and disturbance of fauna can be reduced by restricting habitat loss and disturbance to within the footprint of the development area. All personnel should undergo environmental induction with regards to the local fauna and in particular awareness about not harming, collecting or hunting terrestrial species.

Rehabilitation of disturbed areas must occur to mitigate against erosion and the encroachment of invasive plants as this will lead to a negative shift in the wellbeing of the biotic community within the landscape. It is important to ensure that regular monitoring for invasive plant encroachment occurs during the operation phase. This should be undertaken quarterly during the first two years of the operation phase and annually for the life of the project. This is to ensure that the area is not degraded further. Monitoring for signs of erosion must be undertaken in parallel and rectified as soon as possible.

Cumulative impacts of energy developments are a concern and based on the extent of energy developments within the Gamka Karoo vegetation type, it was rated as 'Medium'. As aforementioned, the PAOI possesses a 'High' SEI. The SEI was determined to 'High' based on the high likelihood of occurrence for Near Threatened species, the extent of the area considered and its connectivity to natural areas within the landscape, as well as the low resilience of the vegetation to anthropogenic impacts.

The project area has been designated as a REDZ (Renewable Energy Development Zone) and taking into consideration the that the grid infrastructure is necessary for the proposed energy developments, it is the opinion of the specialist that the authorisation of the proposed project may be favourably considered. It is recommended that should any future developments be proposed for the remaining extent of any 'Very High' or 'High' SEI areas within the associated properties, that offset strategies be required for these authorisations.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Project (Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure) is part of a cluster known as the Poortjie Wes Cluster (the “Cluster”). The Cluster entails the development of four (4) solar energy facilities. All four (4) renewable energy (“RE”) facilities will connect to the proposed 132 kV Belvedere Collector Switching Station (the “Collector Switching Station”) via 132 kV Overhead Lines (“OHLs”). The proposed Collector Switching Station will connect to the new Poortjie Wes 400/132 kV LILO substation (“Poortjie Wes LILO MTS”) via a 132 kV OHL.

The Biodiversity Company (TBC) was appointed to undertake a Biodiversity Impact Assessment for the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure. The approach was informed by the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 (GNR 326, 7 April 2017) of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA). The approach has taken cognisance of the recently published Government Notices 320 (20 March 2020) in terms of NEMA, dated 20 March and 30 October 2020: “*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*” (Reporting Criteria). This is contingent of the PV facility providing electricity output of 20 megawatts (MW) or more. See Appendix A for the Protocol Checklist and where the checklist items are located in the report.

1.2 Project Description

All renewable energy (“RE”) facilities which form part of the Poortjie Wes cluster will connect to the Eskom grid via the following infrastructure (Figure 1-2):

- A 132 kV Belvedere Collector Switching Station (the “Collector Switching Station”) via 132kV Overhead Lines (“OHLs”). The Collector Switching Station will be +/-16ha in extent and will be located on Remaining extent of Portion 2 of the Farm Belvedere Nr. 63, in the Beaufort West Municipality, Division of Murraysburg, Western Cape Province;
- The proposed Collector Switching Station will connect to the new Poortjie Wes 400/132kV LILO MTS (“Poortjie Wes LILO MTS”) via a 132kV OHL (approximately 6 km). This OHL will cross the 400kV Droërvier/Hydra OHL. A corridor of 300 m is being considered in the BA process, within which the 32 m servitude for this power line will be located; and
- The MTS will connect to either of the existing 400 kV Droërvier/Hydra OHL traversing the property via a Loop-in Loop-out (“LILO”) connection. The 2 x 400kV LILO OHLs will be +/- 1km in length. It is unclear at this stage which of the two OHLs will be approved by Eskom. A corridor of 500 m is being considered in the BA process, within which the two 55 m servitudes for these power lines will be located.

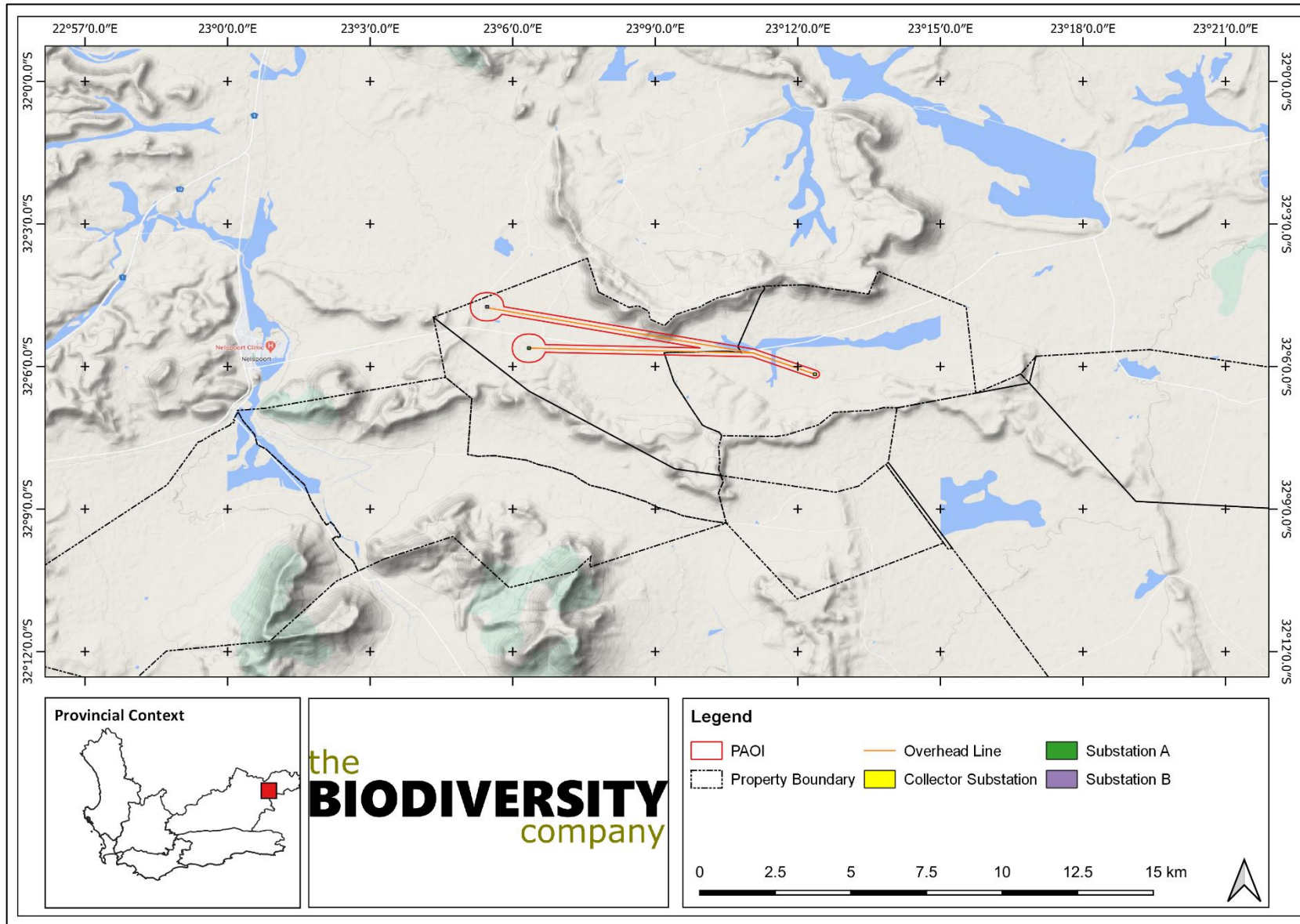


Figure 1-1 Map illustrating the location of the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure, Western Cape

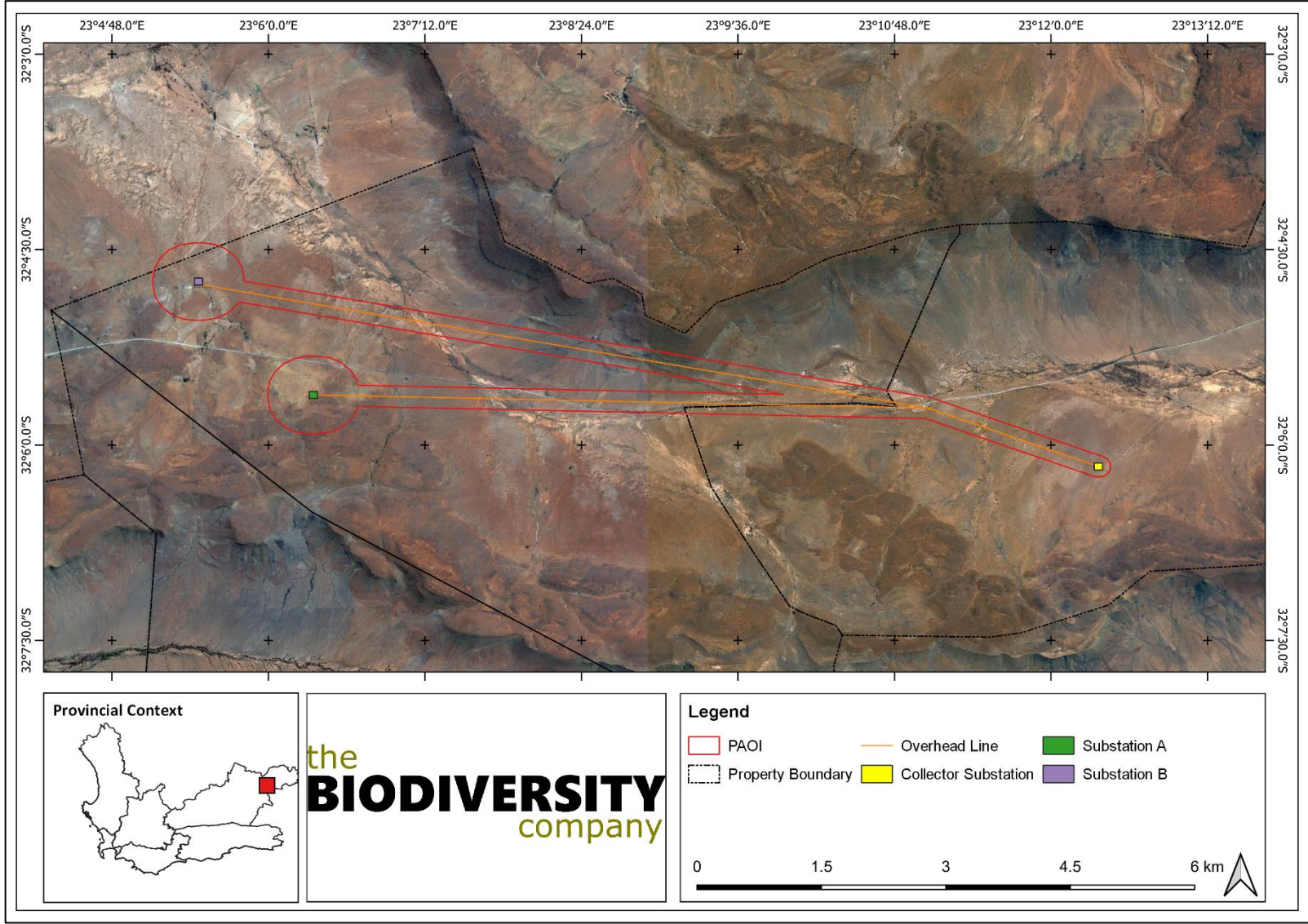


Figure 1-2 Map illustrating the layout of the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Infrastructure

1.3 Scope of Work

The principal aim of the assessment was to provide information to guide the risk of the proposed development to the flora and fauna communities of the ecosystems associated with the project area. The scope of work for the assessment comprises of the following:

- Desktop assessment to identify the relevant ecologically important geographical features within the Project Area of Influence (PAOI) and surrounding landscape;
- Desktop assessment to compile an expected species list and possible flora and fauna Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) (Figure 1-3) that potentially occur within the proposed PAOI;
- Field survey to ascertain the species composition of the present flora and fauna community within the PAOI;
- Delineate the Site Ecological Importance (SEI) within the PAOI;
- Identify the manner that the proposed development impacts the flora and fauna community and evaluate the level of risk of these potential impacts; and
- The prescription of mitigation measures and recommendations for identified risks.

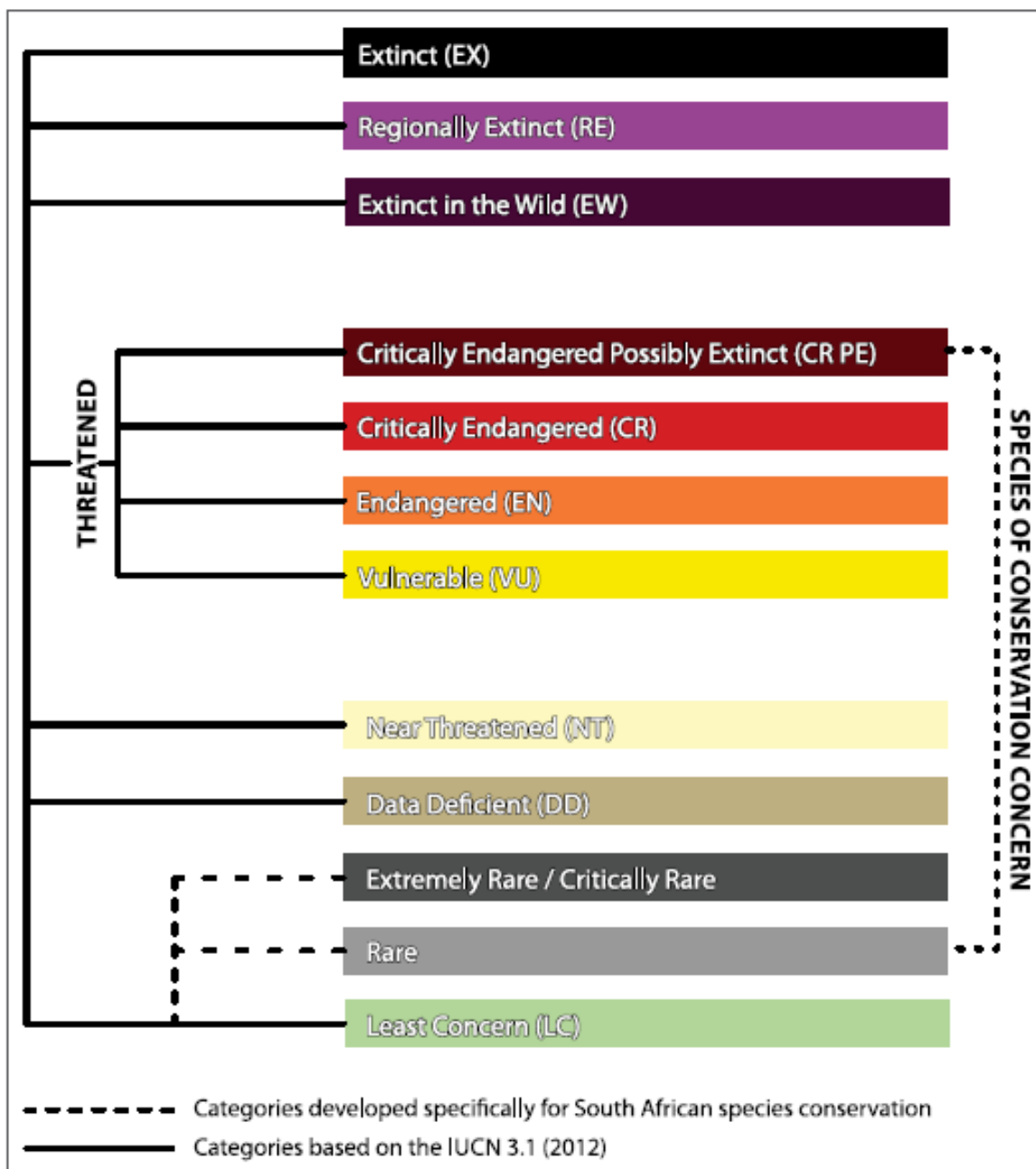


Figure 1-3 The different categories of Species of Conservation Concern modified from the IUCN's extinction risk categories. Source: SANBI (2020)

1.4 Assumptions and Limitations

The following assumptions and limitations are applicable for this assessment:

- The assessment area was based on the Project Area of Influence (PAOI) provided by the client (300 m corridor around the OHLs and a 500 m buffer around the substations) and any alterations to the area and/or missing GIS information pertaining to the development layout would have affected the assessment;
- No fieldwork was undertaken within the proposed grid connection infrastructure PAOI, as these spatial files were not provided to the specialist during the scoping survey. Information was based on the data obtained and observations made within the PAOI within the proposed Wind and Solar Energy Facilities and surrounding landscape;
- With regards to the fauna species assessment, only amphibians, reptiles and non-volant mammal species were considered. The avifauna and volant mammal impact assessment were undertaken by separate specialists;
- No passive sampling techniques for small non-volant mammals were utilised within the due to time constraints;
- Only a single survey was undertaken in November (late Spring) and hence there is a high probability that not all species of flora will be recorded. Due to time constraints no protected flora were geotagged; and
- The GPS used in the assessment has an accuracy of 5 m and consequently any spatial features may be offset by 5 m.

1.5 Key Legislative Requirements

The legislation, policies and guidelines listed below in Table 1-1 are applicable to the current project. The list below, although extensive, may not be complete and other legislation, policies and guidelines may apply in addition to those listed below.

Table 1-1 *A list of key legislative requirements relevant to biodiversity and conservation in the Western Cape*

Region	Legislation
International	Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 1993)
	The Convention on Wetlands (RAMSAR Convention, 1971)
	The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1994)
	The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES 1973)
	The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention, 1979)
	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 2006)
	The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (Act No. 107 of 1998)
	The National Environmental Management Protected Areas Act (Act No. 57 of 2003)
	The National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004)
	The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (Act No. 107 of 1998) Section 24 , No 42946 (January 2020)
	The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (Act No. 107 of 1998) Section 24 , No 43110 (March 2020)
	The National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act 59 of 2008);
	The Environment Conservation Act (Act No. 73 of 1989) and associated EIA Regulations
	National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy (NPAES)
National	Environmental Conservation Act (Act No. 73 of 1983)
	Natural Scientific Professions Act (Act No. 27 of 2003)
	National Biodiversity Framework (NBF, 2009)
	National Forest Act (Act No. 84 of 1998)
	National Veld and Forest Fire Act (101 of 1998)
	National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment (NSBA)
	World Heritage Convention Act (Act No. 49 of 1999)
	National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999)
	Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 32 of 2000)
	Alien and Invasive Species Regulations, 2014
	South Africa's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)
	Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (Act 43 of 1983)
	Sustainable Utilisation of Agricultural Resources (Draft Legislation).
	White Paper on Biodiversity
Provincial	Nature Conservation Ordinance No. 19 of 1974
	Western Cape Nature Conservation Laws Amendment Act, 2000
	Central Karoo District Municipal Spatial Development Framework

2 Methods

This section details the methods used in the assessment and is divided into the desktop and field components.

2.1 Project Area

The project area is located predominantly within plain landscapes, termed 'Die Vlakte', which are comprised of Beaufort Shales or Adelaide Group rock types, with areas of Dolerite outcrops (Figure 2-1).

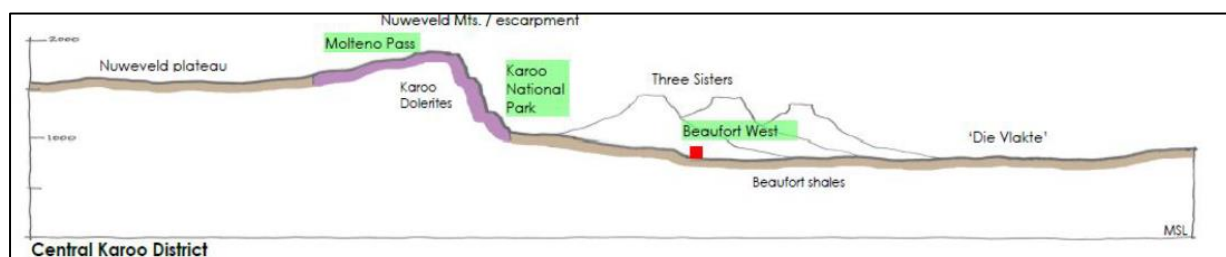


Figure 2-1 Cross-sectional profile of the Central Karoo landscape (Source: Central Karoo SDF)

The project area is located within an arid region, as it is located in the rain shadow of the Cape Fold Mountains, specifically the Groot Swartberg Mountain Range, to the south. Based on the Köppen climate classification, the climate of the project area is classified as Cold desert climate (BWk) and Cold semi-arid climate (BSk). Regions classified as BWk usually feature hot, dry summers, though summers are not typically as hot as hot desert climates. Unlike hot desert climates, cold desert climates tend to feature cold, dry winters. Cold desert climates are typically found at higher altitudes than hot desert climates and are usually drier than hot desert climates. BSk regions tend to be located in elevated portions of temperate zones, typically bordering a humid continental climate or a Mediterranean climate. They are typically found in continental interiors some distance from large bodies of water. Cold semi-arid climates usually feature warm to hot dry summers, though their summers are typically not quite as hot as those of hot semi-arid climates. Unlike hot semi-arid climates, areas with cold semi-arid climates tend to have cold winters. These areas usually see some snowfall during the winter, though snowfall is much lower than at locations at similar latitudes with more humid climates.

Climate data for the project area was obtained from <https://en.climate-data.org/>. No data was available for the specific region and the data provided for the town of Beaufort West was used. January is the hottest month of the year with a mean temperature of 24.0 °C (Figure 2-2). The lowest mean temperature is recorded in July, at 11.1 °C. Most precipitation occurs during March (early Autumn), with an average of 57 mm (Figure 2-2). Precipitation is the lowest in June, with an average of 15 mm.

The latest available landcover dataset indicates that the majority of the landscape within which the project is located, is classified as Nama Karoo shrubland, with patches of open bare ground, natural grassland, open woodland and artificial waterbodies.

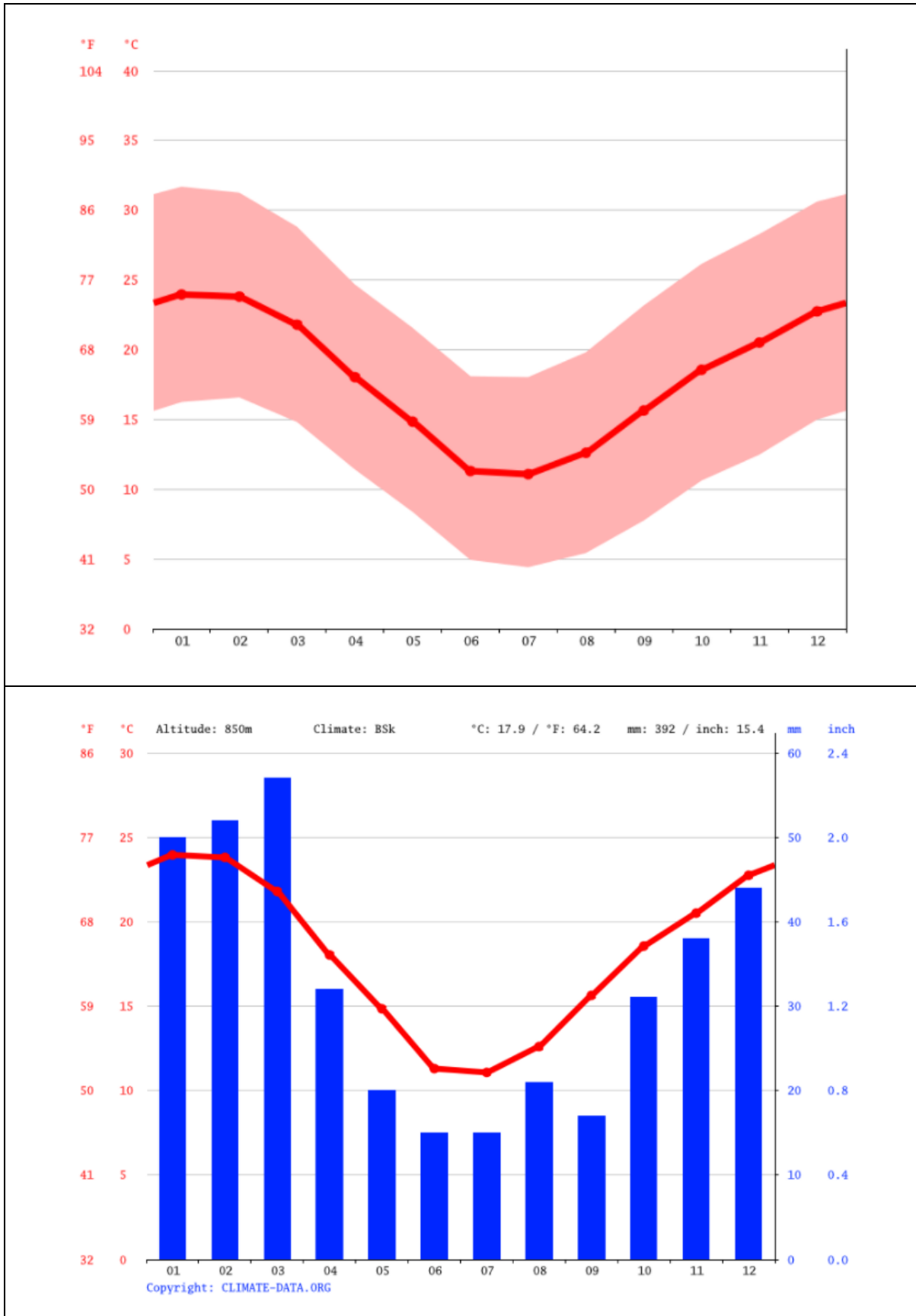


Figure 2-2 Plots illustrating mean monthly temperature (top) and mean monthly precipitation (bottom) for Beaufort West (source: <https://en.climate-data.org/>)

2.2 Desktop Assessment

The desktop assessment was principally undertaken using a Geographic Information System (GIS) to access the latest available spatial datasets in order to develop digital cartographs and species lists. These datasets and their date of publishing are provided below.

2.2.1 Ecologically Important Landscape Features

Existing ecologically relevant data layers were incorporated into a GIS to establish how the proposed development might interact with any ecologically important entities. Emphasis was placed around the following spatial datasets:

- National Biodiversity Assessment 2018 (Skowno *et al*, 2019) - The purpose of the National Biodiversity Assessment (NBA) is to assess the state of South Africa's biodiversity based on best available science, with a view to understanding trends over time and informing policy and decision-making across a range of sectors. The NBA deals with all three components of biodiversity: genes, species and ecosystems; and assesses biodiversity and ecosystems across terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine environments. The two headline indicators assessed in the NBA are:
 - Ecosystem Threat Status – indicator of an ecosystem's wellbeing, based on the level of change in structure, function or composition. Ecosystem types are categorised as Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT) or Least Concern (LC), based on the proportion of the original extent of each ecosystem type that remains in good ecological condition.
 - Ecosystem Protection Level – indicator of the extent to which ecosystems are adequately protected or under-protected. Ecosystem types are categorised as Well Protected (WP), Moderately Protected (MP), Poorly Protected (PP), or Not Protected (NP), based on the proportion of the biodiversity target for each ecosystem type that is included within one or more protected areas. Not Protected, Poorly Protected or Moderately Protected ecosystem types are collectively referred to as under-protected ecosystems.
- Protected areas:
 - South Africa Protected Areas Database (SAPAD) (DFFE, 2021a) – The South African Protected Areas Database (SAPAD) contains spatial data for the conservation of South Africa. It includes spatial and attribute information for both formally protected areas and areas that have less formal protection. SAPAD is updated on a continuous basis and forms the basis for the Register of Protected Areas which is a legislative requirement under the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, Act 57 of 2003.
 - National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy (NPAES) (DFFE, 2021b) – The National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES) provides spatial information on areas that are suitable for terrestrial ecosystem protection. These focus areas are large, intact and unfragmented and are therefore, of high importance for biodiversity, climate resilience and freshwater protection.

- Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (Cape Nature, 2017) – The Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (WCBSP) is a spatial tool that comprises the Biodiversity Spatial Plan Map (BSP Map) of biodiversity priority areas, accompanied by contextual information and land use guidelines that make the most recent and best quality biodiversity information available for land use and development planning, environmental assessment and regulation, and natural resource management. The BSP Map covers both the terrestrial and freshwater realms, as well as major coastal and estuarine habitats. Developed at a relatively fine spatial scale, the BSP can be used for planning at local, district and provincial levels; and
- Hydrological Context
 - South African Inventory of Inland Aquatic Ecosystems (SAIIAE) (Van Deventer *et al.*, 2018) – A South African Inventory of Inland Aquatic Ecosystems (SAIIAE) was established during the National Biodiversity Assessment of 2018. It is a collection of data layers that represent the extent of river and inland wetland ecosystem types as well as pressures on these systems.
 - National Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area (NFEPA) (Nel *et al.*, 2011) – The NFEPA database provides strategic spatial priorities for conserving the country's freshwater ecosystems and associated biodiversity as well as supporting sustainable use of water resources.

2.2.2 Desktop Flora Assessment

The Vegetation of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006) was used in order to identify the vegetation type that would have occurred under natural or pre-anthropogenically altered conditions. Furthermore, the Plants of Southern Africa (POSA) database was accessed to compile a list of expected flora species within the proposed development area and surrounding landscape (Figure 2-3). The Red List of South African Plants (Raimondo *et al.*, 2009; SANBI, 2020) was utilized to provide the most current national conservation status of flora species.

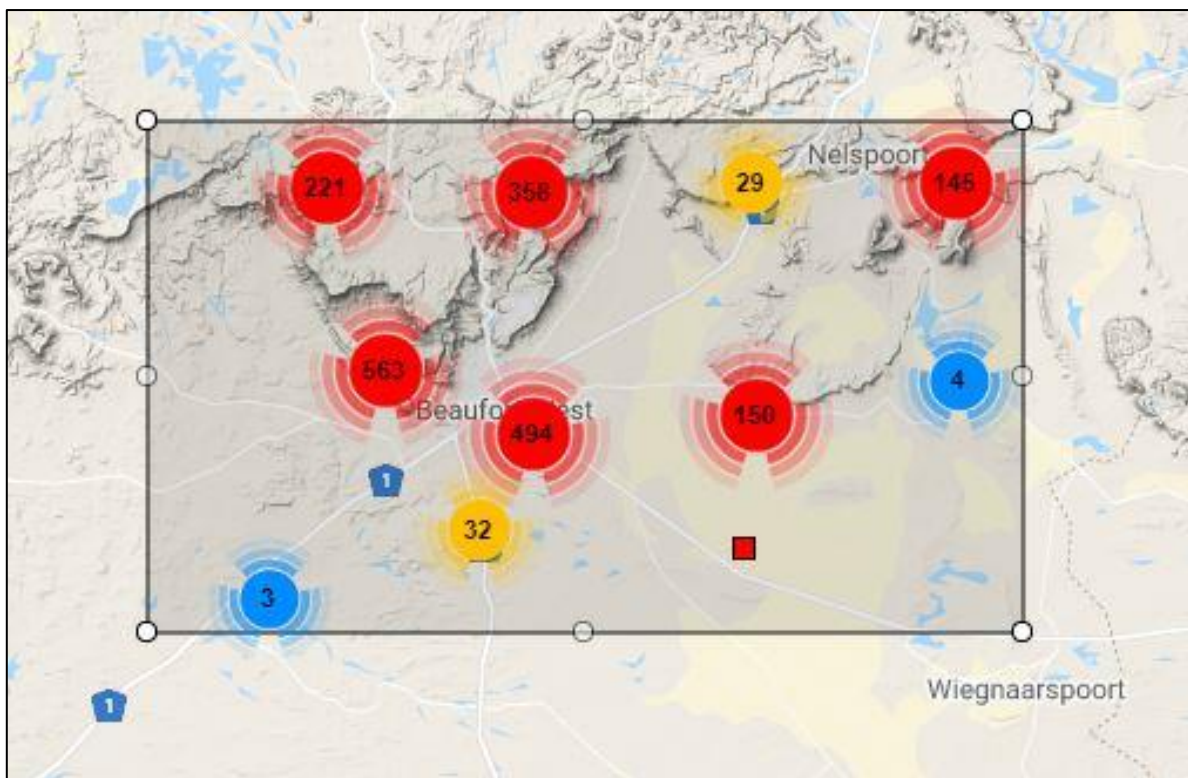


Figure 2-3 Map illustrating extent of area used to obtain the expected flora species list for the Poortjie Wes Renewable Energy Facilities project area from the Plants of South Africa (POSA) database

2.2.3 Desktop Fauna Assessment

The faunal desktop assessment comprised of the following:

- Compiling an expected herpetofauna (amphibians and reptiles) list generated from the IUCN spatial dataset (2017) and the Animal Demography Unit (FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, 2022a; FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, 2022b) using the 3222BB, 3223AA and 3223AB quarter degree squares; and
- Compiling an expected mammal list generated from the IUCN spatial dataset (2017) and the Animal Demography Unit (FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, 2022c) using the 3222BB, 3223AA and 3223AB quarter degree squares.

2.3 Field Assessment

As aforementioned, no field survey was undertaken within the proposed grid connection infrastructure PAOI. The observations recorded during the fieldwork for the Wind and Solar Energy Facilities were used for the purposes of this assessment. Fieldwork was undertaken for the proposed Wind and Solar Energy Facilities from the 1st - 4th of November 2021 (Spring), which constitutes an early wet-season survey, to determine the presence of Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) and to ascertain an overview of the ecological condition of the PAOI. Effort was made to cover the different habitat types within the limits of time and access. The fieldwork was placed within targeted areas perceived as ecologically sensitive based on the preliminary interpretation of satellite imagery (Google Corporation) and GIS analysis (which included the latest applicable biodiversity datasets) available prior to the fieldwork.

2.3.1 Flora Survey

The timed random meander method is a highly efficient method for conducting floristic analysis, specifically in detecting flora SCC and maximising floristic coverage (Goff *et al*, 1982). In addition, the method is time and cost effective and highly suited for compiling flora species lists and therefore gives a rapid indication of flora diversity. Suitable habitat for SCC were identified according to and targeted as part of the timed meanders.

Homogenous vegetation units were subjectively identified using satellite imagery and existing land cover maps. The floristic diversity and search for flora SCC was conducted through meanders within representative habitat units.

During the survey, notes were made regarding current impacts, subjective recording of dominant vegetation species and any sensitive features (e.g., wetlands, outcrops etc.).

Relevant field guides and texts consulted for identification purposes in the field during the survey included the following:

- Identification Guide to Southern African Grasses: An Identification Manual with Keys, Descriptions, and Distributions (Fish *et al*, 2015);
- iNaturalist;
- Flowering Plants of the Southern Kalahari (Van Rooyen and Van Rooyen, 2019);
- Problem Plants and Alien Weeds of South Africa (Bromilow, 2010);
- Field Guide to Succulents in Southern Africa (Smith *et al*, 2017);
- Guide to the Aloes of South Africa (Van Wyk & Smith, 2014);
- Medicinal Plants of South Africa (Van Wyk *et al.*, 2013).

2.3.2 Fauna Survey

The faunal assessment within this report pertains to herpetofauna and non-volant mammals. The faunal field survey comprised of the following active and passive techniques:

- Active hand-searches - are used for species that shelter in or under particular micro-habitats (typically in dense shrubs, under rocks and coarse woody debris) (Figure 2-4A);
- Visual and auditory searches - This typically comprised of traversing the PAOI and using a camera to view species from a distance without them being disturbed as well as listening to species calls. Due to the climatic and habitat characteristics of the project area, the use of signs and tracks was vital in recording species (Figure 2-4B); and
- Camera Traps (Figure 2-4C) – Four camera traps were deployed within the surrounding landscape for 60 hours, accounting for a total of 280 trapping hours. The camera traps were baited with tinned sardines to improve sampling efficacy.

Diagnostic features of the individuals that were captured were photographed at site and released (Figure 2-4D).

Relevant field guides and texts consulted for identification purposes included the following:

- Field Guide to Snakes and other Reptiles of Southern Africa (Branch, 1998);
- A Complete Guide to the Snakes of Southern Africa (Marais, 2004);
- Atlas and Red List of the Reptiles of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland (Bates *et al*, 2014);
- A Complete Guide to the Frogs of Southern Africa (du Preez and Carruthers, 2009);
- Stuarts' Field Guide to Mammals of Southern Africa including Angola, Zambia & Malawi (Stuart and Stuart, 2015); and
- Mammals of Southern Africa and their Tracks & Signs (Gutteridge & Liebenberg, 2021).



Figure 2-4 *Photographs illustrating sampling methods utilised in the biodiversity impact assessment for the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure. A) Active hand sampling at the base on shrubs, B) Recording tracks and other signs such as scat, C) Camera traps placed at burrows which are imperative for recording fauna in arid or semi-arid regions; and D) Photographing diagnostic features of specimens captured*

2.4 Site Ecological Importance

The different habitat types within the assessment area were delineated and identified based on observations during the field assessment as well as available satellite imagery. These habitat types were assigned Site Ecological Importance (SEI) categories based on their ecological integrity, conservation value, the presence of species of conservation concern and their ecosystem processes. The determination of the SEI was in accordance with the method described in the Species Environmental Assessment Guideline (SANBI, 2020).

Site Ecological Importance (SEI) is a function of the Biodiversity Importance (BI) of the receptor (e.g., SCC, the vegetation/fauna community or habitat type present on the site) and Receptor Resilience (RR) (its resilience to impacts).

BI is a function of Conservation Importance (CI) and the Functional Integrity (FI) of the receptor as follows. The criteria for the CI and FI ratings are provided in Table 2-1 and Table 2-2, respectively.

Table 2-1 Summary of Conservation Importance (CI) criteria

Conservation Importance	Fulfilling Criteria
Very High	Confirmed or highly likely occurrence of CR, EN, VU or Extremely Rare or Critically Rare species that have a global extent of occurrence (EOO) of < 10 km ² . Any area of natural habitat of a CR ecosystem type or large area (> 0.1% of the total ecosystem type extent) of natural habitat of an EN ecosystem type. Globally significant populations of congregatory species (> 10% of global population).
High	Confirmed or highly likely occurrence of CR, EN, VU species that have a global EOO of > 10 km ² . IUCN threatened species (CR, EN, VU) must be listed under any criterion other than A. If listed as threatened only under Criterion A, include if there are less than 10 locations or < 10 000 mature individuals remaining. Small area (> 0.01% but < 0.1% of the total ecosystem type extent) of natural habitat of EN ecosystem type or large area (> 0.1%) of natural habitat of VU ecosystem type. Presence of Rare species. Globally significant populations of congregatory species (> 1% but < 10% of global population).
Medium	Confirmed or highly likely occurrence of populations of NT species, threatened species (CR, EN, VU) listed under Criterion A only and which have more than 10 locations or more than 10 000 mature individuals. Any area of natural habitat of threatened ecosystem type with status of VU. Presence of range-restricted species. > 50% of receptor contains natural habitat with potential to support SCC.
Low	No confirmed or highly likely populations of SCC. No confirmed or highly likely populations of range-restricted species. < 50% of receptor contains natural habitat with limited potential to support SCC.
Very Low	No confirmed and highly unlikely populations of SCC. No confirmed and highly unlikely populations of range-restricted species. No natural habitat remaining.

Table 2-2 Summary of Functional Integrity (FI) criteria

Functional Integrity	Fulfilling Criteria
Very High	Very large (> 100 ha) intact area for any conservation status of ecosystem type or > 5 ha for CR ecosystem types. High habitat connectivity serving as functional ecological corridors, limited road network between intact habitat patches. No or minimal current negative ecological impacts with no signs of major past disturbance.
High	Large (> 20 ha but < 100 ha) intact area for any conservation status of ecosystem type or > 10 ha for EN ecosystem types. Good habitat connectivity with potentially functional ecological corridors and a regularly used road network between intact habitat patches. Only minor current negative ecological impacts with no signs of major past disturbance and good rehabilitation potential.

Functional Integrity	Fulfilling Criteria
Medium	Medium (> 5 ha but < 20 ha) semi-intact area for any conservation status of ecosystem type or > 20 ha for VU ecosystem types. Only narrow corridors of good habitat connectivity or larger areas of poor habitat connectivity and a busy used road network between intact habitat patches. Mostly minor current negative ecological impacts with some major impacts and a few signs of minor past disturbance. Moderate rehabilitation potential.
Low	Small (> 1 ha but < 5 ha) area. Almost no habitat connectivity but migrations still possible across some modified or degraded natural habitat and a very busy used road network surrounds the area. Low rehabilitation potential. Several minor and major current negative ecological impacts.
Very Low	Very small (< 1 ha) area. No habitat connectivity except for flying species or flora with wind-dispersed seeds. Several major current negative ecological impacts.

BI can be derived from a simple matrix of CI and FI as provided in Table 2-3

Table 2-3 Matrix used to derive Biodiversity Importance (BI) from Functional Integrity (FI) and Conservation Importance (CI)

Biodiversity Importance (BI)		Conservation Importance (CI)				
		Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low
Functional Integrity (FI)	Very high	Very High	Very High	High	Medium	Low
	High	Very High	High	Medium	Medium	Low
	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Very Low
	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Very Low
	Very low	Medium	Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low

The fulfilling criteria to evaluate RR are based on the estimated recovery time required to restore an appreciable portion of functionality to the receptor as summarised in Table 2-4.

Table 2-4 Summary of Resource Resilience (RR) criteria

Resilience	Fulfilling Criteria
Very High	Habitat that can recover rapidly (~ less than 5 years) to restore > 75% of the original species composition and functionality of the receptor functionality, or species that have a very high likelihood of remaining at a site even when a disturbance or impact is occurring, or species that have a very high likelihood of returning to a site once the disturbance or impact has been removed.
High	Habitat that can recover relatively quickly (~ 5–10 years) to restore > 75% of the original species composition and functionality of the receptor functionality, or species that have a high likelihood of remaining at a site even when a disturbance or impact is occurring, or species that have a high likelihood of returning to a site once the disturbance or impact has been removed.
Medium	Will recover slowly (~ more than 10 years) to restore > 75% of the original species composition and functionality of the receptor functionality, or species that have a moderate likelihood of remaining at a site even when a disturbance or impact is occurring, or species that have a moderate likelihood of returning to a site once the disturbance or impact has been removed.
Low	Habitat that is unlikely to be able to recover fully after a relatively long period: > 15 years required to restore ~ less than 50% of the original species composition and functionality of the receptor functionality, or species that have a low likelihood of remaining at a site even when a disturbance or impact is occurring, or species that have a low likelihood of returning to a site once the disturbance or impact has been removed.
Very Low	Habitat that is unable to recover from major impacts, or species that are unlikely to remain at a site even when a disturbance or impact is occurring, or species that are unlikely to return to a site once the disturbance or impact has been removed.

Subsequent to the determination of the BI and RR, the SEI can be ascertained using the matrix as provided in Table 2-5.

Table 2-5 *Matrix used to derive Site Ecological Importance from Receptor Resilience (RR) and Biodiversity Importance (BI)*

Site Ecological Importance		Biodiversity Importance (BI)				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Receptor Resilience (RR)	Very Low	Very High	Very High	High	Medium	Low
	Low	Very High	Very High	High	Medium	Very Low
	Medium	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
	High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	Very Low
	Very High	Medium	Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low

Interpretation of the SEI in the context of the proposed development activities is provided in Table 2-6.

Table 2-6 *Guidelines for interpreting Site Ecological Importance in the context of the proposed development activities (SANBI, 2020)*

Site Ecological Importance	Interpretation in relation to proposed development activities
Very High	Avoidance mitigation – no destructive development activities should be considered. Offset mitigation not acceptable/not possible (i.e., last remaining populations of species, last remaining good condition patches of ecosystems/unique species assemblages). Destructive impacts for species/ecosystems where persistence target remains.
High	Avoidance mitigation wherever possible. Minimisation mitigation – changes to project infrastructure design to limit the amount of habitat impacted, limited development activities of low impact acceptable. Offset mitigation may be required for high impact activities.
Medium	Minimisation and restoration mitigation – development activities of medium impact acceptable followed by appropriate restoration activities.
Low	Minimisation and restoration mitigation – development activities of medium to high impact acceptable followed by appropriate restoration activities.
Very Low	Minimisation mitigation – development activities of medium to high impact acceptable and restoration activities may not be required.

The SEI evaluated for each taxon can be combined into a single multi-taxon evaluation of SEI for the assessment area. Either a combination of the maximum SEI for each receptor should be applied, or the SEI may be evaluated only once per receptor but for all necessary taxa simultaneously. For the latter, justification of the SEI for each receptor is based on the criteria that conforms to the highest CI and FI, and the lowest RR across all taxa.

3 Results & Discussion

This section provides the results of the assessment and is divided into the desktop and field assessment components.

3.1 Desktop Assessment

3.1.1 Ecologically Important Landscape Features

The GIS analysis pertaining to the relevance of the proposed development to ecologically important landscape features are summarised in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Summary of relevance of the proposed project to ecologically important landscape features.

Ecological Feature	Relevance	Section
Ecosystem Threat Status	Irrelevant – Overlaps with Least Concern ecosystems	3.1.1.1
Ecosystem Protection Level	Relevant – Overlaps with Poorly Protected ecosystems	3.1.1.2
Protected Areas	Irrelevant – Located approximately 40 km north-east from the Steenbokkie Private Nature Reserve	3.1.1.3
National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy	Irrelevant – Does not overlap a NPAES focus area	3.1.1.3
Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan	Relevant – Overlaps Ecological Support Area 1 and marginally overlaps Critical Biodiversity Area 1	Error! Reference source not found.
Hydrological Context	Relevant – Critically Endangered and Endangered ephemeral system traverses the PAOI	3.1.1.5

3.1.1.1 Ecosystem Threat Status

The Ecosystem Threat Status is an indicator of an ecosystem’s wellbeing, based on the level of change in structure, function or composition. Ecosystem types are categorised as Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT) or Least Concern (LC), based on the proportion of the original extent of each ecosystem type that remains in good ecological condition. According to the spatial dataset the PAOI overlaps with LC ecosystems (Figure 3-1).

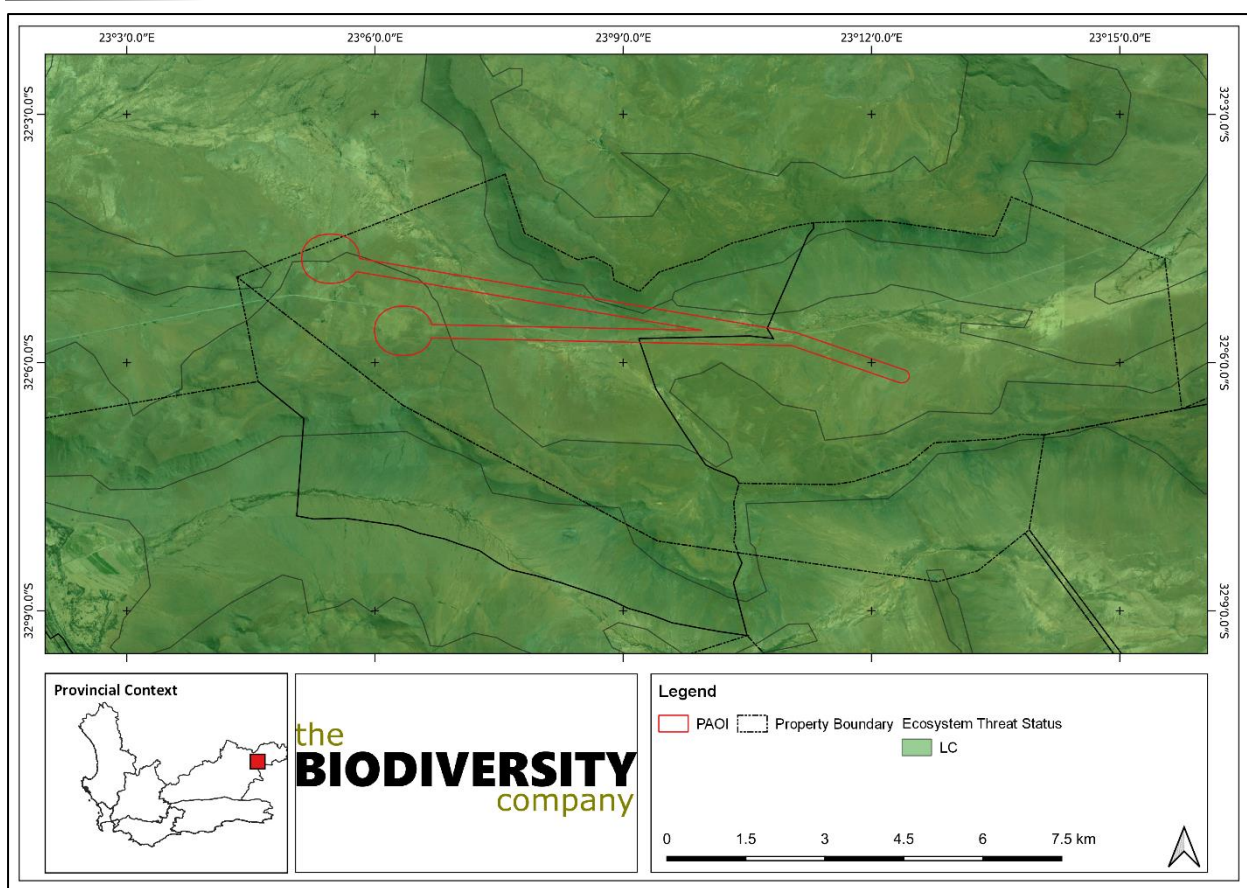


Figure 3-1 Map illustrating the ecosystem threat status associated with the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI

3.1.1.2 Ecosystem Protection Level

Indicator of the extent to which ecosystems are adequately protected or under-protected. Ecosystem types are categorised as Well Protected (WP), Moderately Protected (MP), Poorly Protected (PP), or Not Protected (NP), based on the proportion of the biodiversity target for each ecosystem type that is included within one or more protected areas. Not Protected, Poorly Protected or Moderately Protected ecosystem types are collectively referred to as under-protected ecosystems. The PAOI overlaps with a PP ecosystem (Figure 3-2).

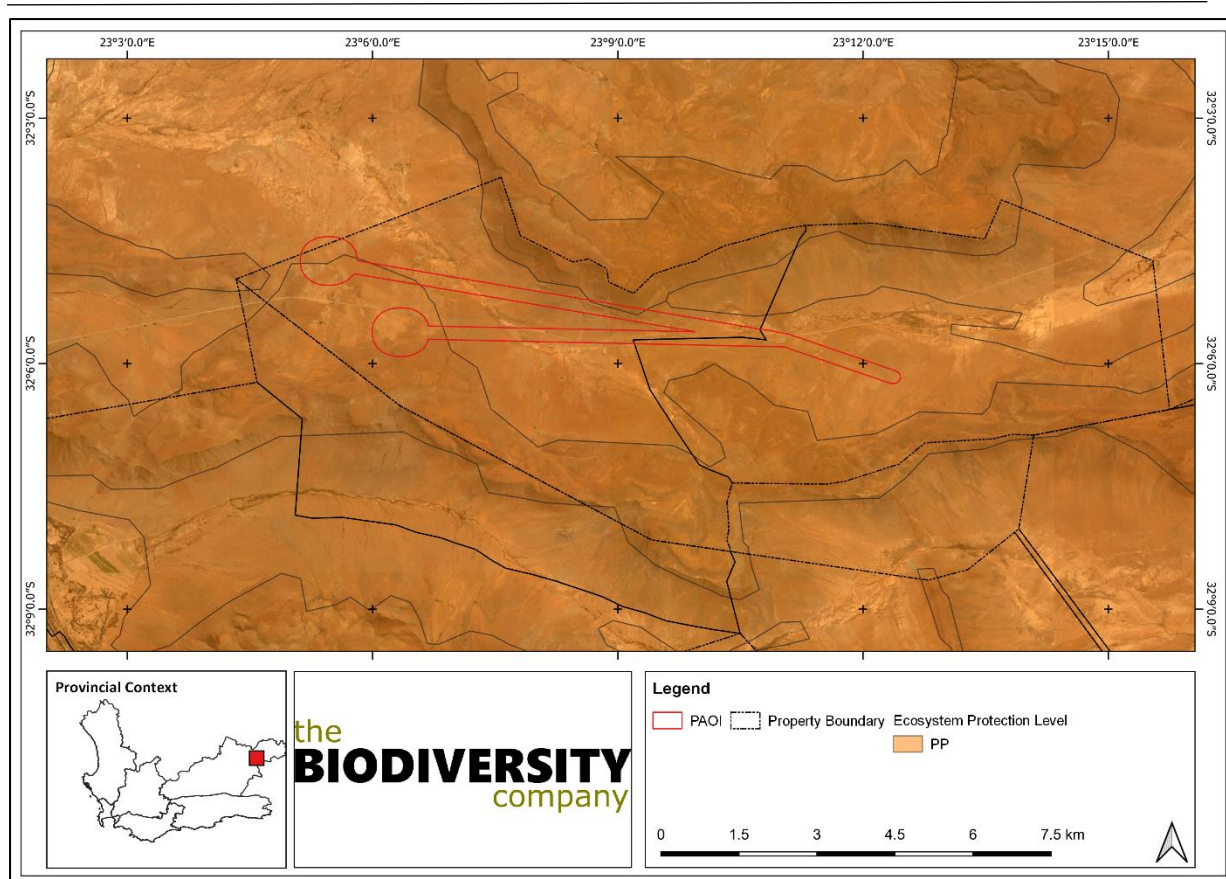


Figure 3-2 Map illustrating the ecosystem protection level associated with the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI

3.1.1.3 Protected Areas

According to the SAPAD dataset, the proposed development area does not occur within any protected area (Figure 3-3). The Steenbokkie Private Nature Reserve is located approximately 40 km to the south-west. The proposed activity is unlikely to influence surrounding protected areas as they are situated outside of the buffer zone required to maintain the functioning of these protected areas. In addition, the PAOI does not overlap an NPAES focus areas nor is there one within the immediate surrounding landscape (Figure 3-3). The Karoo Escarpment Grassland Focus Area is located approximately 23 km to the north and the Upper Karoo Focus Area is located approximately 36 km to the south-west.

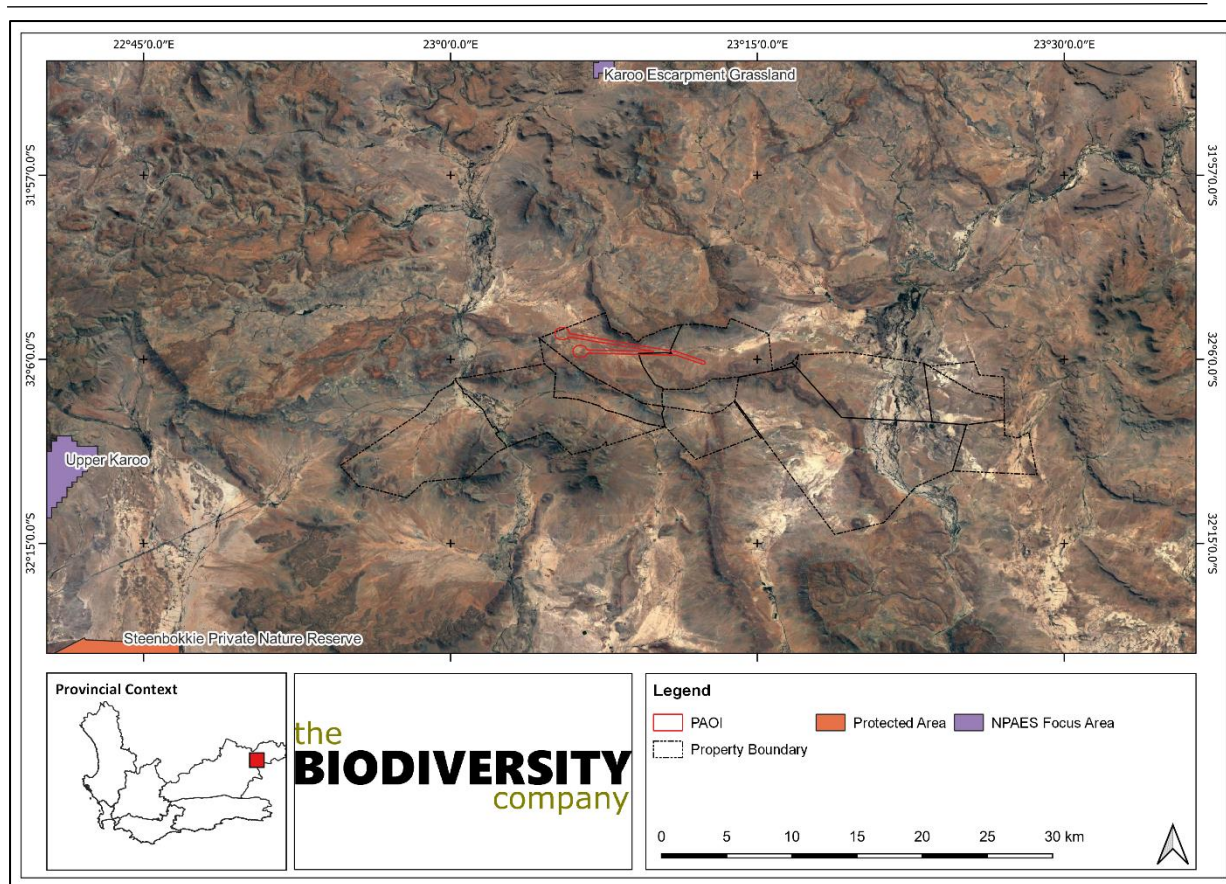


Figure 3-3 Map illustrating the location of protected areas proximal to the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI

3.1.1.4 Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan

Figure 3-4 illustrates that the proposed development overlaps with Ecological Support Areas 1 and 2, Other Natural Area and marginally with a CBA1.

ESA1 features are important in supporting the functioning of Protected Areas or Critical Biodiversity Areas and are often vital for ecosystem services. These ESAs must be maintained in a functional, near-natural state. Some habitat loss is acceptable, provided underlying biodiversity objectives/ecological functioning are not compromised (CapeNature, 2017). The ESA associated with the PAOI was defined as such due to watercourse protection.

ONAs retain most of their natural character and perform biodiversity and ecological infrastructure functions but have not been prioritised in the current Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan.

CBAs are critically required in order to meet biodiversity pattern and process thresholds. CBAs are areas of high biodiversity and ecological value and need to be kept in a natural or near-natural state, with no further loss of habitat or species. Degraded areas should be rehabilitated to natural or near-natural condition. Only low-impact, biodiversity-sensitive land uses are appropriate (CapeNature, 2017).

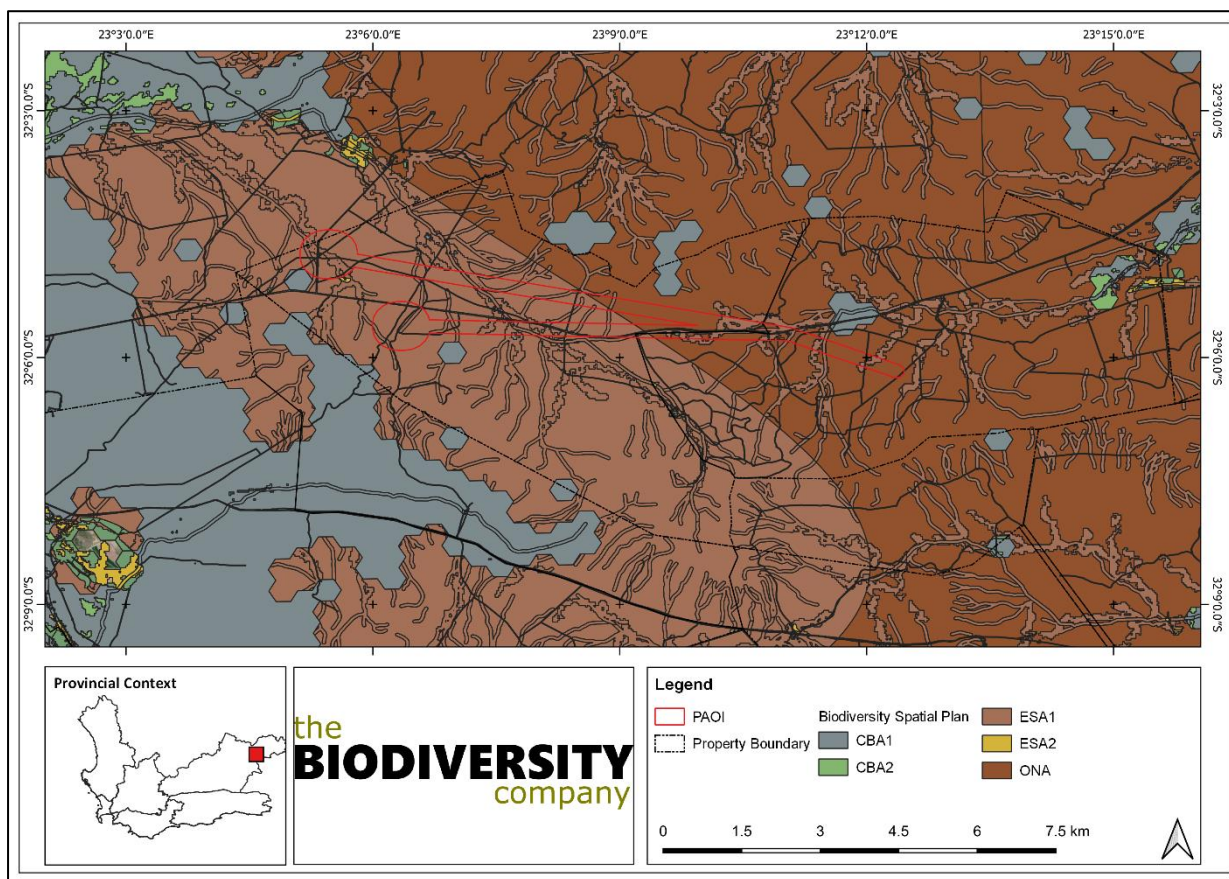


Figure 3-4 Map illustrating the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI overlaid onto the Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan

3.1.1.5 Hydrological Context

The PAOI is located within the Sout River and Kariega River Catchments, specifically quaternary catchment L11C and L22A, respectively (Figure 3-5). Topographical spatial data indicated that there are ephemeral drainage lines traversing the PAOI.

The South African Inventory of Inland Aquatic Ecosystems (SAIIAE) was released with the National Biodiversity Assessment (NBA) 2018. Ecosystem threat status (ETS) of ecosystem types is based on the extent to which each river ecosystem type had been altered from its natural condition. Ecosystem types are categorised as CR, EN, VU or LT. Critically Endangered, EN and VU ecosystem types collectively referred to as ‘threatened’ (Van Deventer *et al.*, 2019; Skowno *et al.*, 2019). Two of the ephemeral systems traversing the PAOI were assessed as part of the SAIIAE. The unnamed tributary of the Sout River draining in a north-west trajectory is classified as EN (Figure 3-5). The unnamed tributary of the Kariega River draining in a north-east trajectory is classified as CR (Figure 3-5).

The National Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas (NFEPAs) (Driver *et al.*, 2011) spatial data has been incorporated in the above mentioned SAIIAE spatial data set. They are included here as the database is intended to be conservation support tools and are envisioned to guide the effective implementation of measures to achieve the National Environment Management Biodiversity Act (NEM:BA) biodiversity goals (Nel *et al.*, 2011). The NFEPAs spatial layer indicates that neither the EN unnamed tributary, nor the Sout River, are regarded as FEPAs.

The unnamed tributary of the Kariega River, as well as the Kariega River itself, are categorised as Upstream Management Areas. Any negative impacts to these systems arising from the proposed development will potentially lead to negative alterations of water provisioning services.

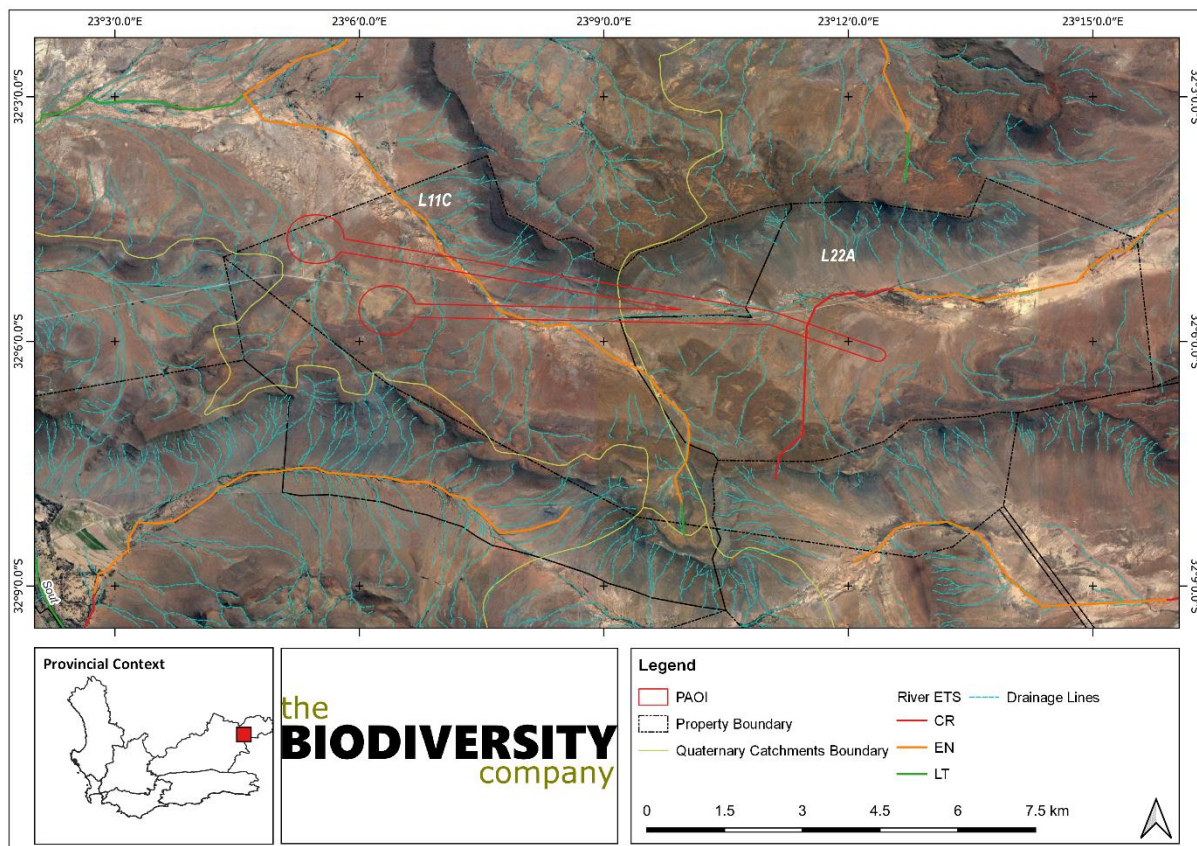


Figure 3-5 Map illustrating the hydrological context of the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI

3.1.2 Flora Assessment

This section is divided into a description of the vegetation type expected under natural conditions and the expected flora species.

3.1.2.1 Vegetation Type

The project area is located within the Nama Karoo Biome, which is a large, landlocked region on the central plateau of the western half of South Africa and extends into south-eastern Namibia. This is an arid biome with majority of the river systems being non-perennial. Apart from the Orange River and the few permanent streams in the southwest that originate in higher-rainfall neighbouring areas, the limited number of perennial streams that originate in the Nama-Karoo are restricted to the more mesic east. The low precipitation is unreliable (coefficient of variation of annual rainfall up to 40%) and droughts are unpredictable and prolonged. The unpredictable rainfall impedes the dominance of leaf succulents and is too dry in summer for dominance by perennial grasses alone, and the soils are generally too shallow, and the rainfall is too low for trees. Unlike other biomes of southern Africa, local endemism is very low and consequently, the Nama-Karoo Biome does not contain any centre of endemism. Despite relatively low floristic diversity, the Nama-Karoo vegetation has a high diversity of

plant life forms. These include co-occurring ephemerals, annuals, geophytes, C3 and C4 grasses, succulents, deciduous and evergreen chamaephytes and trees. This is probably a consequence of an ecotonal and climatically unstable nature of the region.

On a fine-scale vegetation type, the PAOI overlaps two vegetation types, namely the Gamka Karoo and Upper Karoo Hardeveld (Figure 3-6).

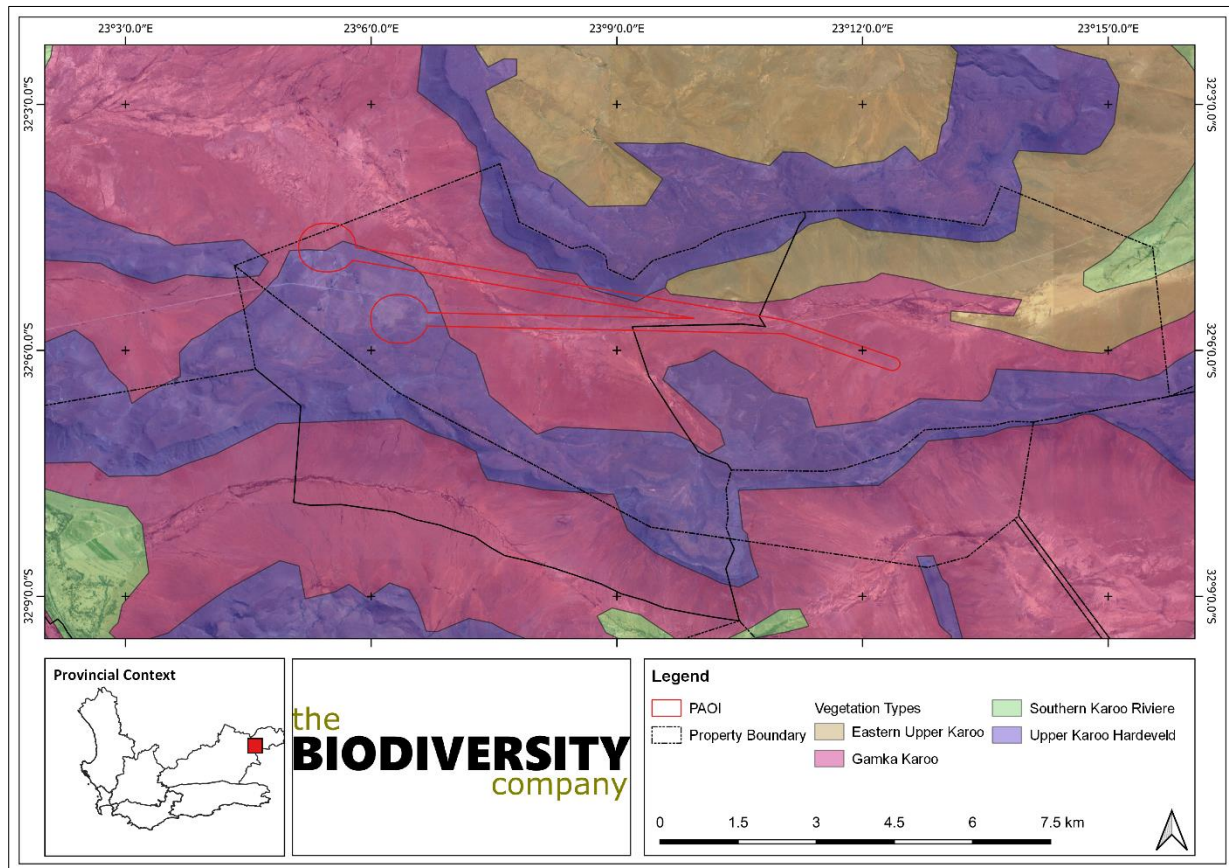


Figure 3-6 Map illustrating the vegetation types within the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI

The Gamka Karoo vegetation type is described as follows:

- I. Topography – Extremely irregular to slightly undulating plains dominated by dwarf spiny shrubs.
- II. Geology & Soils – Mudstones and sandstones of the Beaufort Group (Adelaide Subgroup) with some Ecca (Fort Brown Formation) shales supporting very shallow and stony soils of the Glenrosa and/or Mispah forms.
- III. Important Taxa - Tall Shrubs: *Lycium cinereum*, *L. oxycarpum*, *Rhigozum obovatum*, *Vachellia karroo*, *Cadaba aphylla*, *Lycium schizocalyx*, *Searsia burchellii*, *Sisyndite spartea*. Low Shrubs: *Chrysocoma ciliata*, *Eriocephalus ericoides* subsp. *ericoides*, *E. spinescens*, *Felicia muricata*, *Galenia fruticosa*, *Limeum aethiopicum*, *Pentzia incana*, *Pteronia adenocarpa*, *Rosenia humilis*, *Aptosimum indivisum*, *Asparagus burchellii*, *Blepharis mitrata*, *Eriocephalus microphyllus* var. *pubescens*, *Felicia filifolia* subsp. *filifolia*, *F. muricata* subsp. *cinerascens*, *Galenia secunda*, *Garuleum bipinnatum*, *G. latifolium*, *Gomphocarpus filiformis*, *Helichrysum lucilioides*, *Hermannia desertorum*, *H. grandiflora*, *H. spinosa*, *Melolobium candicans*, *Microlooma armatum*,

Monechma spartioides, *Pentzia pinnatisecta*, *Plinthus karoicus*, *Polygala seminuda*, *Pteronia glauca*, *P. sordida*, *P. viscosa*, *Selago geniculata*, *Sericocoma avolans*, *Zygophyllum microcarpum*, *Z. microphyllum*. Succulent Shrubs: *Ruschia intricata*, *Aridaria noctiflora* subsp. *straminea*, *Crassula muscosa*, *Drosanthemum lique*, *Galenia sarcophylla*, *Kleinia longiflora*, *Ruschia spinosa*, *Salsola tuberculata*, *Sarcocaulon patersonii*, *Trichodiadema barbatum*, *Tripteris sinuata* var. *linearis*. Semi-parasitic Shrub: *Thesium lineatum*. Herbs: *Gazania lichtensteinii*, *Chamaesyce inaequilatera*, *Dicoma capensis*, *Galenia glandulifera*, *Lepidium africanum* subsp. *africanum*, *L. desertorum*, *Lessertia pauciflora* var. *pauciflora*, *Leysera tenella*, *Osteospermum microphyllum*, *Sesamum capense*, *Tetragonia microptera*, *Tribulus terrestris*, *Ursinia nana*. Geophytic Herbs: *Drimia intricata*, *Moraea polystachya*. Graminoids: *Aristida congesta*, *A. diffusa*, *Fingerhuthia africana*, *Stipagrostis ciliata*, *S. obtusa*, *Aristida adscensionis*, *Cenchrus ciliaris*, *Digitaria argyrograpta*, *Enneapogon desvauxii*, *Enneapogon scaber*, *Eragrostis homomalla*, *E. lehmanniana*, *E. obtusa*, *Tragus berteronianus*, *T. koelerioides*.

- IV. Biogeographically Important Taxa – Succulent Shrubs: *Hereroa latipetala*, *H. odorata*, *Pleiospilos compactus*, *Rhinephyllum luteum*, *Stapelia engleriana*. Geophytic Herb: *Tritonia tugwelliae*. Low Shrub: *Felicia lasiocarpa*. Succulent Herbs: *Piранthus comptus*, *Tridentea parvipuncta* subsp. *parvipuncta*. Graminoid: *Oropetium capense*.
- V. Endemic Taxa – Succulent Shrubs: *Chasmatophyllum stanleyi*, *Hereroa incurva*, *Hoodia dregei*, *Ruschia beaufortensis*. Low Shrubs: *Jamesbrittenia tenuifolia*. Herb: *Manulea karrooica*. Succulent Herb: *Piранthus comptus*.
- VI. Conservation – About 2% statutorily conserved in the Karoo National Park and some in private reserves, such as Steenbokkie Private Nature Reserve (near Beaufort West). The alien *Salsola kali* is a serious infestation problem in certain areas. Erosion varies from low to high depending on location.

The Upper Karoo Hardeveld is described as follows:

- I. Topography – Steep slopes of koppies, butts, mesas and parts of the Great Escarpment covered with large boulders and stones.
- II. Geology & Soils – Primitive, skeletal soils in rocky areas developing over sedimentary rocks such as mudstones and arenites of the Adelaide Subgroup of the Karoo Supergroup and to a lesser extent also the Ecca Group (Waterford and Volksrust Formations) as well as Jurassic dolerite sills and dykes and sub-summit positions of mesas and butts with dolerite boulder slopes.
- III. Important Taxa - Tall Shrubs: *Lycium cinereum*, *Rhigozum obovatum*, *Cadaba aphylla*, *Diospyros austro-africana*, *Ehretia rigida* subsp. *rigida*, *Lycium oxycarpum*, *Melianthus comosus*, *Searsia burchellii*. Low Shrubs: *Chrysocoma ciliata*, *Eriocephalus ericoides* subsp. *ericoides*, *Euryops lateriflorus*, *Felicia muricata*, *Limeum aethiopicum*, *Pteronia glauca*, *Amphiglossa triflora*, *Aptosimum elongatum*, *A. spinescens*, *Asparagus mucronatus*, *A. retrofractus*, *A. striatus*, *A. suaveolens*, *Eriocephalus spinescens*, *Euryops annae*, *E. candollei*, *E. empetrifolium*, *E. nodosus*, *Felicia filifolia* subsp. *filifolia*, *Garuleum latifolium*, *Helichrysum lucilioides*, *H. zeyheri*, *Hermannia filifolia* var. *filifolia*, *H. multiflora*, *H. pulchella*, *H. vestita*, *Indigofera sessilifolia*, *Jamesbrittenia atropurpurea*, *Lessertia frutescens*, *Melolobium candicans*, *M. microphyllum*, *Microloma armatum*, *Monechma incanum*, *Nenax microphylla*,

Pegolettia retrofracta, *Pelargonium abrotanifolium*, *P. ramosissimum*, *Pentzia globosa*, *P. spinescens*, *Plinthus karooicus*, *Polygala seminuda*, *Pteronia adenocarpa*, *P. sordida*, *Rosenia humilis*, *Selago albida*, *Solanum capense*, *Sutera halimifolia*, *Tetragonia arbuscula*, *Wahlenbergia tenella*. Succulent Shrubs: *Aloe broomii*, *Drosanthemum lique*, *Faucaria bosscheana*, *Kleinia longiflora*, *Pachypodium succulentum*, *Trichodiadema barbatum*, *Zygophyllum flexuosum*. Semi-parasitic Shrub: *Thesium lineatum*. Herbs: *Troglophyton capillaceum* subsp. *capillaceum*, *Dianthus caespitosus* subsp. *caespitosus*, *Gazania krebsiana*, *Lepidium africanum* subsp. *africanum*, *Leysera tenella*, *Pelargonium minimum*, *Sutera pinnatifida*, *Tribulus terrestris*. Geophytic Herbs: *Albuca setosa*, *Androcymbium albomarginatum*, *Asplenium cordatum*, *Boophone disticha*, *Cheilanthes bergiana*, *Drimia intricata*, *Oxalis depressa*. Graminoids: *Aristida adscensionis*, *A. congesta*, *A. diffusa*, *Cenchrus ciliaris*, *Enneapogon desvauxii*, *Eragrostis lehmanniana*, *E. obtusa*, *Sporobolus fimbriatus*, *Stipagrostis obtusa*, *Cynodon incompletus*, *Digitaria eriantha*, *Ehrharta calycina*, *Enneapogon scaber*, *E. scoparius*, *Eragrostis curvula*, *E. nindensis*, *E. procumbens*, *Fingerhuthia africana*, *Heteropogon contortus*, *Merxmüllera disticha*, *Stipagrostis ciliata*, *Themeda triandra*, *Tragus berteronianus*, *T. koelerioides*.

- IV. Endemic Taxa – Succulent Shrubs: *Aloe chlorantha*, *Crassula barbata* subsp. *broomii*, *Delosperma robustum*, *Sceletium expansum*, *Stomatium suaveolens*. Low Shrubs: *Cineraria polycephala*, *Euryops petraeus*, *Lotononis azureoides*, *Selago magnakarooica*. Tall Shrub: *Anisodonteia malvastroides*. Herbs: *Cineraria arctotidea*, *Vellereophyton niveum*. Succulent Herbs: *Adromischus fallax*, *A. humilis*. Geophytic Herbs: *Gethyllis longistyla*, *Lachenalia auriolae*, *Ornithogalum paucifolium* subsp. *karooparkense*.
- V. Conservation – Only about 3% statutorily conserved in Karoo National Park and Karoo Nature Reserve. Small percentage also protected in private reserves such as Rupert Game Farm. Erosion is moderate and high.

3.1.2.2 Expected Flora Species of Conservation Concern

Based on the POSA database and the Environmental Screening Tool five threatened floral species are expected to occur within the POAI and surrounding landscape (Table 3-2).

Table 3-2 Threatened flora species that are expected to occur within the Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI. VU = Vulnerable

Family	Species Name	Conservation Status	Endemism	Habitat	Likelihood of Occurrence
Aizoaceae	<i>Hereroa concava</i>	VU	Endemic	Plants occur sheltered among shrubs on flats and plateaus with shale outcrops.	Low
Aizoaceae	<i>Peersia frithii</i>	VU	Endemic	Slopes or flats of finely weathered Ecca shales.	Low
Apocynaceae	<i>Tridentea virescens</i>	Rare		Stony ground, or hard loam in floodplains.	Low
Bruniaceae	<i>Audouinia esterhuyseniae</i>	VU	Endemic	Shale soil on south-facing slopes below sandstone cliffs. A rare montane resprouter known from only two locations.	Low
Malvaceae	<i>Anisodonteia malvastroides</i>	Rare	Endemic	It occurs in arid grassland on summit plateaus and escarpments. Locally abundant on cliffs or summit plateaus.	Low

3.1.3 Fauna Assessment

This section provides the list of threatened species expected to occur within the project area. N.B. the likelihood of occurrence that is provided refers to the development footprints and not the surrounding landscape.

3.1.3.1 Expected Amphibian Species of Conservation Concern

Based on the IUCN Red List Spatial Data and the FrogMAP database, six amphibian species are expected to occur within the area with none of these expected species regarded as threatened (Appendix C).

3.1.3.2 Expected Reptile Species of Conservation Concern

Based on the IUCN Red List Spatial Data and the ReptileMAP database, 27 reptile species are expected to occur within the PAOI and surrounding landscape with one of these species regarded as threatened (Appendix D).

Table 3-3 *Reptile species of conservation concern that are expected to occur within the Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI. NT= Near Threatened*

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	Conservation Status		Likelihood of Occurrence
			Regional	Global	
Testudinae	<i>Chersobius boulengeri</i>	Karoo Dwarf Tortoise	EN	EN	Low
Testudinae	<i>Psammobates tentorius tentorius</i>	Tent Tortoise	NT	NT	High

Chersobius boulengeri (Karoo Dwarf Tortoise) is a South African endemic, occurring from Brintjieshoogte in the Eastern Cape to Touwsrivier in the Western Cape; the range in the Northern Cape extends north of Williston in the northwest and beyond Vosburg in the northeast. The species typically occupies dolerite ridges and rocky outcrops of the southern Succulent and Nama Karoo biomes at altitudes between 800 and 1 500 m above sea level (Hofmeyr *et al*, 2018a). They usually take shelter under rocks in vegetated areas or in rock crevices, but few rocky sites over the range offer suitable retreats for the species. *Chersobius boulengeri* is a habitat specialist and population densities are low and are isolated on rocky outcrops with specialized vegetation. There is no estimate of the global population, but surveys have indicated that many populations have disappeared, and population numbers have declined significantly (Hofmeyr *et al*, 2018a). In addition, the total population is severely fragmented. The principal threat is habitat degradation due to agricultural overgrazing and climate change. Shale gas exploration is an emerging serious threat.

Psammobates tentorius (Tent Tortoise) is restricted to South Africa and Namibia and of the three subspecies, *P. tentorius* occurs furthest to the south. The subspecies occurs in regions with winter, summer and all-year rainfall, and dwarf shrubland with succulents, annuals, grasses and geophytes. Although the species is widespread, population density is generally low throughout its range, and populations appear to be declining slowly (Hofmeyr *et al*, 2018b). There is no estimate on the total global population. Threats include road mortality, veld fires, electrocution by livestock/game fences, and overgrazing from domestic livestock. Available information indicates that Pied Crow (*Corvus albus*) predation on this is increasingly severe, with anthropogenic facilitation of Pied Crow range expansion having led to increased predation rates (Hofmeyr *et al*, 2018b).

3.1.3.3 Expected Mammal Species of Conservation Concern

The IUCN Red List Spatial Data and MammalMAP database lists eight non-volant mammal species of conservation concern that could be expected to occur within the PAOI (Table 3-4). This list excludes larger mammal species that are generally restricted to protected areas.

Table 3-4 *Mammal species of conservation concern that are expected to occur within the Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI. CR = Critically Endangered, LC = Least Concern, NT= Near Threatened and VU = Vulnerable*

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	Conservation Status		Likelihood of Occurrence
			Regional	Global	
Felidae	<i>Felis nigripes</i>	Black-footed Cat	VU	VU	Low
Felidae	<i>Leptailurus serval serval</i>	Southern Serval	NT	LC	Low
Felidae	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	Leopard	VU	VU	Low
Gliridae	<i>Graphiurus ocellatus</i>	Spectacled Dormouse	NT	LC	Low
Hyaenidae	<i>Parahyaena brunnea</i>	Brown Hyaena	NT	NT	Low
Leporidae	<i>Bunolagus monticularis</i>	Riverine Rabbit	CR	CR	Low
Muridae	<i>Parotomys littledalei</i>	Littledale's Whistling Rat	NT	LC	High
Mustelidae	<i>Aonyx capensis</i>	Cape Clawless Otter	NT	NT	Low

Aonyx capensis (Cape Clawless Otter) is the most widely distributed otter species in Africa. This species is predominantly aquatic, and it is seldom found far from water. The main threat to the species is the declining state of freshwater ecosystems in Africa (Jacques *et al*, 2015). In parts of their range, they are killed for skins and other body parts, because they are regarded as competitors for food, particularly in rural areas where fishing is an important source of income, or where they are believed to be responsible for poultry losses, and damage to young maize plants.

Bunolagus monticularis (Riverine Rabbit) is endemic to the central Karoo region of South Africa. It is associated with the dense, discontinuous riparian vegetation fringing the seasonal rivers. It is dependent on soft and deep alluvial soils along the river courses for constructing stable breeding stops. The majority of Riverine Rabbit occupancy lies in the Upper Karoo Bioregion (approximately 80%), with about 12% in the Rainshadow Valley Karoo Bioregion, 4% in the Trans-Escarpment Succulent Karoo Bioregion, 3% the in Western Fynbos-Renosterveld Bioregion and 1% in the Lower Karoo Bioregion. Many of the subpopulations are now extinct and the latest estimated Area of Occupancy is only 2 943 km² comprising of 12 sub-populations (Collins *et al*, 2019). The total global population is estimated at 157-207 mature individuals with a continuing decline. Subpopulations are isolated from each other by jackal-proof fencing and severe land transformation through agricultural practices. All these subpopulations are estimated to contain less than 50 mature individuals (8–46 mature individuals, based on independent sightings in each river system). Sub-populations face significant threats from ongoing habitat degradation and fragmentation due to land-use practices, such as livestock farming and new emerging habitat-transforming land uses, such as climate change and energy development (Collins *et al*, 2019). Reduction in streamflow due to the construction of impoundments has presumably also reduced habitat quality. Although the species has been assigned a 'low' likelihood of occurrence for the development footprints,

there are records within the broader landscape, as well as suitable habitat in the surrounding areas.

Felis nigripes (Black-footed cat) is endemic to the arid regions of southern Africa. This species is naturally rare, has cryptic colouring is small in size and is nocturnal. These factors have contributed to a lack of information on this species. The estimated number of mature individuals is 9 707, with the population exhibiting a continuing decline (Sliwa *et al*, 2016). The principle long-term threat for the species is the loss of key resources, such as den sites and prey, from anthropogenic disturbance or habitat degradation (Sliwa *et al*, 2016). An additional threat is indirect persecution, such as accidental poisonings (for example locust spraying, predator control lures/baits) and general predator persecution throughout most of their range. The long-term effects of climate change should not be overlooked and may lead to changes in range, changes in timing of breeding events, increases in severe weather such as flooding and droughts, as well as increased disease patterns or risks of the spread of pathogens from parasites.

Graphiurus ocellatus (Spectacled Dormouse) is endemic to South Africa, where it occurs widely in Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, and Western Cape provinces. The species is associated with the sandstone formations, which have many vertical and horizontal cracks and crevices which provide shelter and nesting sites. The current population size is not known, but the species is not regarded as common densities ranging between 1.8 and 3.1 individuals/ha (Wilson *et al*, 2016). While the reporting frequency has been stable over the 10 years (1.2 ± 0.4 records / year) since 2005, it is 53% lower on average (2.5 ± 1.9 records / year) than the 10-year reporting frequency for the previous national assessment. Threats include ongoing habitat loss and habitat fragmentation, because of plantations and vineyards, that may impact immigration and gene flow between isolated habitats (Wilson *et al*, 2016). In addition, climate change may further shrink its range southwards.

Leptailurus serval serval (Southern Serval) is widely distributed throughout sub-Saharan Africa but has specific habitat requirements and therefore restricted to certain areas. They typically favour savanna long-grass environments in high rainfall areas and are particularly associated with reedbeds and other riparian vegetation types (Thiel, 2019). The global population number is unknown. *L. serval* specializes in preying on small mammals, particularly rodents. The major threat is wetland habitat loss and degradation. Wetlands harbour comparatively high rodent densities compared with other habitat types and form the core areas of *L. serval* home ranges (Thiel, 2019). Degradation of grasslands through annual burning followed by over-grazing by domestic livestock, leading to reduced abundance of small mammals is a further threat. This species is protected by provincial legislation.

Panthera pardus (Leopard) has a wide distributional range across Africa and Asia, but populations have become reduced and isolated, and they are now extirpated from large portions of their historic range (Stein *et al*, 2020). There are few reliable data on changes in the status (distribution or abundance) throughout Africa over the last three generations, although there is compelling evidence that subpopulations have likely declined considerably. Impacts that have contributed to the decline in populations of this species include continued persecution by farmers, habitat fragmentation, increased illegal wildlife trade, excessive harvesting for ceremonial use of skins, prey base declines and poorly managed trophy hunting (Stein *et al*, 2020).

Parotomys littledalei (Littledale's Whistling Rat) is restricted to the arid areas of southern Africa, that is western South Africa and Namibia and has a patchy distribution, linked to the distribution of deep sandy soils. This diurnal species occurs in shrubland and is dependent on ground cover, avoiding open habitats (Schradin *et al*, 2016). It is not known if the species can persist in disturbed or modified habitats, but it does occur in rangelands. The species is dependent on plant leaves and succulents as food and cannot switch to seeds or other resources. Burrows are constructed below bushes and linked together through surface pathways that also link to foraging areas and contain several nest chambers. It is relatively common in suitable habitat but undergoes population irruptions in response to environmental conditions. Prolonged droughts therefore will have a substantial negative affect on population numbers as it will reduce foraging availability. The primary threats are loss of habitat from climate change and overgrazing by livestock (Schradin *et al*, 2016).

Parahyaena brunnea (Brown Hyaena) is endemic to southern Africa. This species occurs in dry areas, generally with annual rainfall less than 100 mm, particularly along the coast, semi-desert, open scrub and open woodland savanna. The total population size has been estimated between 5 000-8 000 individuals with a continuing decline in mature individuals (Wiesel, 2015). Outside protected areas, the Brown Hyaena may come into conflict with humans, and they are often shot, poisoned, trapped, and hunted with dogs in predator eradication or control programmes, or inadvertently killed in non-selective control programs (Wiesel, 2015). The species is regarded as a threat to livestock in some areas, despite the finding that they very seldom prey on livestock. Their body parts are also used in traditional medicine.

3.2 Field Assessment

The following sections provides the results from the field survey for the proposed development that was undertaken November 2021.




3.2.1 Flora Assessment





3.2.1.1 Indigenous Flora





The vegetation recorded within the PAOI was congruent with the Gamka Karoo and Upper Karoo Hardeveld vegetation types. Several species of flora protected under provincial legislation were recorded within the project area during the survey period¹. The list of these protected species is provided in Table 3-5. It is important to note that during the field survey these species were not geotagged due to time constraints. Additional species that although not protected, but that should be relocated due to their scarcity within the landscape and/or their ability to survive relocation are also provided.





¹ Note that not all were necessarily recorded within the PAOI footprint but also within the adjacent landscape. However, there is a high likelihood that these species occur within the footprint.




Table 3-5 Protected flora recorded within the Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI and surrounding landscape during the survey period

Family	Scientific Name	Photograph
Aizoaceae	<i>Drosanthemum hispidum</i>	
Aizoaceae	<i>Psilocalon coriarium</i>	
Aizoaceae	<i>Ruschia intricata</i>	
Aizoaceae	<i>Ruschia spinosa</i>	

Family	Scientific Name	Photograph
Aizoaceae	<i>Trichodiadema</i> sp.	
Amaryllidaceae	<i>Ammocharis coranica</i>	
Amaryllidaceae	<i>Boophone disticha</i>	
Anacampserotaceae	<i>Anacampseros albidiflora</i>	

Family	Scientific Name	Photograph
Apocynaceae	<i>Pachypodium succulentum</i>	
Asparagaceae	<i>Albuca crispa</i>	
Asparagaceae	<i>Albuca</i> sp.	
Asphodelaceae	<i>Aloe claviflora</i>	

Family	Scientific Name	Photograph
Asphodelaceae	<i>Haworthiopsis tessellata</i>	
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Euphorbia ferox</i>	
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Euphorbia decepta</i>	
Hyacinthaceae	<i>Dipcadi</i> sp. A	

Family	Scientific Name	Photograph
Hyacinthaceae	<i>Dipcadi</i> sp. B	
Hyacinthaceae	<i>Ledebouria apertiflora</i>	
Ruscaceae	<i>Eriospermum</i> sp.	

Notably, there are likely more protected flora species within the PAOI, but these were not recorded as the ideal survey period would have been during March as indicated by the Species Environmental Assessment Guideline (SANBI, 2020) (Figure 3-7). This would have ensured that flora species are correctly identified, and a true representative sample of the species community structure is obtained. Therefore, it is imperative that a Search and Rescue effort be undertaken for protected plant species, and these species be relocated to proximal areas that will not be developed. A permit from the relevant authority, Cape Nature, must be obtained in order to achieve this.

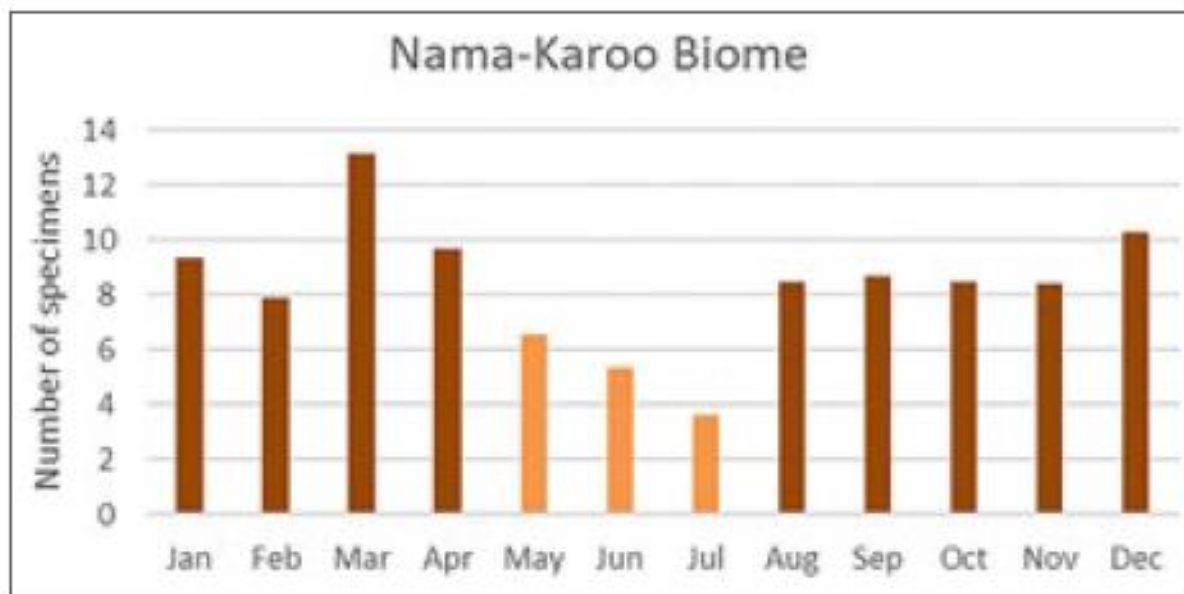


Figure 3-7 Plant collection month summary of the Nama Karoo Biome to indicate optimal survey periods. Source: SANBI (2020)

3.2.1.2 Invasive Alien Plants

Invasive Alien Plants (IAPs) tend to dominate or replace indigenous flora, thereby transforming the structure, composition and functioning of ecosystems. Therefore, it is important that these plants are controlled by means of an eradication and monitoring programme. Some invader plants may also degrade ecosystems through superior competitive capabilities to exclude native plant species.

NEMBA is the most recent legislation pertaining to alien invasive plant species. In August 2014, the list of Alien Invasive Species was published in terms of the NEMBA. The Alien and Invasive Species Regulations were published in the Government Gazette No. 44182, 24th of February 2021. The legislation calls for the removal and / or control of IAP species. In addition, unless authorised thereto in terms of the NWA, no land user shall allow Category 2 plants to occur within 30 meters of the 1:50 year flood line of a river, stream, spring, natural channel in which water flows regularly or intermittently, lake, dam or wetland. Category 3 plants are also prohibited from occurring within proximity to a watercourse. Below is a brief explanation of the three categories in terms of the NEMBA:

- Category 1a: Invasive species requiring compulsory control. Remove and destroy. Any specimens of Category 1a listed species need, by law, to be eradicated from the environment. No permits will be issued.
- Category 1b: Invasive species requiring compulsory control as part of an invasive species control programme. Remove and destroy. These plants are deemed to have such a high invasive potential that infestations can qualify to be placed under a government sponsored invasive species management programme. No permits will be issued.
- Category 2: Invasive species regulated by area. A demarcation permit is required to import, possess, grow, breed, move, sell, buy or accept as a gift any plants listed as

Category 2 plants. No permits will be issued for Category 2 plants to exist in riparian zones.

- Category 3: Invasive species regulated by activity. An individual plant permit is required to undertake any of the following restricted activities (import, possess, grow, breed, move, sell, buy or accept as a gift) involving a Category 3 species. No permits will be issued for Category 3 plants to exist in riparian zones.

Note that according to the regulations, a person who has under his or her control a category 1b listed invasive species must immediately:

- Notify the competent authority in writing
- Take steps to manage the listed invasive species in compliance with:
 - Section 75 of the Act;
 - The relevant invasive species management programme developed in terms of regulation 4; and
 - Any directive issued in terms of section 73(3) of the Act.

Notably, no IAP species were recorded within the PAOI. However, invasive species tend to encroach into disturbed areas and should be considered a possible risk.

3.2.2 Fauna Assessment

3.2.2.1 Amphibians

No amphibian species were recorded within the PAOI during the survey period due to the lack of a night survey, albeit it is unlikely to support a diverse assemblage due to the lack of suitable habitat diversity. It is postulated that when surface water is present, opportunistic species such *Vandijkophrynus gariepensis gariepensis* (Karoo Toad) and *Poyntonophrynus vertebralis* (Southern Pygmy Toad) will be active.

3.2.2.2 Reptiles

Five (5) species of reptile were recorded within the assessment area during the survey period, accounting for approximately 18% of the expected species (Table 3-6, Figure 3-8). None of the species recorded are regarded as SCC, albeit a portion are protected under provincial legislation. The lack of species diversity recorded within the PAOI is due to the secretive behaviour of many reptile species and therefore, extensive survey periods are required to obtain an accurate representative sample. Considering the heterogenous structure of the PAOI in terms of habitat diversity, it is likely to support a highly diverse species assemblage.

Table 3-6 Summary of reptile species recorded within the proposed Poortjie Wes project area during the survey period. LC = Least Concern

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	Conservation Status		Protection Status
			Regional	Global	
Lacertidae	<i>Pedioplanis lineocellata pulchella</i>	Spotted Sand Lizard	LC	LC	Schedule 2
Lamprophiidae	<i>Psammophis notostictus</i>	Karoo Sand Snake	LC	LC	Schedule 2
Scincidae	<i>Trachylepis variegata</i>	Variegated Skink	LC	LC	Schedule 2
Testudinidae	<i>Stigmochelys pardalis</i>	Leopard Tortoise	LC	LC	Schedule 2
Varanidae	<i>Varanus albigularis albigularis</i>	White-throated Monitor	LC	LC	

Notably, *Stigmochelys pardalis* (Leopard Tortoise), is regarded as a keystone species within the Nama Karoo biome. The species possesses a relatively large home range between 40.53 and 258.52 ha and therefore, are vital seed dispersers. Moreover, *S. pardalis* was ubiquitous within the landscape and numerous males were seen combatting for females, thereby denoting that the area supports an important breeding ground for the species.



Figure 3-8 Photograph illustrating individuals of the reptile species recorded within the proposed Poortjie Wes project area during the survey period. A) *Pedioplanis lineocellata pulchella* (Spotted Sand Lizard), B) *Trachylepis variegata* (Variegated Skink) and C) *Stigmochelys pardalis* (Leopard Tortoise)

3.2.2.3 Mammals

Eleven (11) mammal species were recorded during the survey based on either direct observation, capture of specimens by passive sampling techniques or the presence of visual tracks and signs (Table 3-7, Figure 3-9). This accounts for approximately 19% of the expected species. None of the species recorded are regarded as SCC, either on a regional or global scale. Although none of the species are regarded as threatened, many are considered important in maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem functioning. Species such as *Orycteropus afer* (Aardvark) and *Geosciurus inauris* (South African Ground Squirrel) are regarded as ecosystem engineers and the burrows they create are also utilised as shelter by an array of faunal species, which is pertinent in the thermally variable and arid environment of the PAOI and surrounding landscape. In addition, the foraging behaviour of the former species plays a role in vegetation dynamics. *Orycteropus afer* feed on the Formicidae species, *Messor capensis*, which is a major seed predator within the Karoo bioregion. During foraging the nests are damaged but usually not destroyed, and the seed stores are frequently distributed with the mound soils over a larger area. The seeds are usually buried within the mound soil and germinate during favourable conditions. A portion of the seeds may also be ingested by *O. afer* while feeding and these are distributed with the faeces. Consequently, the species inadvertently also plays a role in seed dispersal and germination.

While it is acknowledged that *O. afer* is regarded as keystone species within the landscape, *G. inauris* could also be regarded as such, as herbivorous mammal burrows are usually associated with higher levels of soil nutrients and greater degree of water infiltration and can result in elevated foliar nutrient concentrations and greater plant biomass surrounding their burrows (Davidson *et al*, 2012). Therefore, the areas around the burrows are utilised by many species and can result in a highly diverse arthropod community, which consequently drives a higher diversity in higher trophic levels. The PAOI and surrounding landscape also supports an assemblage of mesocarnivores. Mesocarnivores have strong effects on their prey species, and this especially so in simple ecological communities or in regions where apex predators are lacking (Roemer *et al*, 2009). Consequently, shifts in the population or diversity of the mesocarnivore community may lead to trophic cascade effects.

Table 3-7 Summary of mammal species recorded within the proposed Poortjie Wes project area during the survey period. LC = Least Concern

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	Conservation Status		Protection Status
			Regional	Global	
Bathyergidae	<i>Cryptomys hottentotus</i>	Common Molerat	LC	LC	
Bovidae	<i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>	Springbok	LC	LC	Schedule 2
Bovidae	<i>Raphicerus campestris campestris</i>	Southern Steenbok	LC	LC	Schedule 2
Canidae	<i>Vulpes chama</i>	Cape Fox	LC	LC	
Herpestidae	<i>Cynictis penicillata penicillata</i>	Southern Yellow Mongoose	LC	LC	
Hyaenidae	<i>Proteles cristata cristata</i>	Southern Aardwolf	LC	LC	Schedule 2
Hystriidae	<i>Hystrix africaeaeaustralis africaeaeaustralis</i>	Southern Porcupine	LC	LC	
Leporidae	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>	Scrub Hare	LC	LC	
Mustelidae	<i>Ictonyx striatus shortridgei</i>	Cape Striped Polecat	LC	LC	
Orycteropodidae	<i>Orycteropus afer</i>	Aardvark	LC	LC	Schedule 2
Sciuridae	<i>Geosciurus inauris</i>	South African Ground Squirrel	LC	LC	

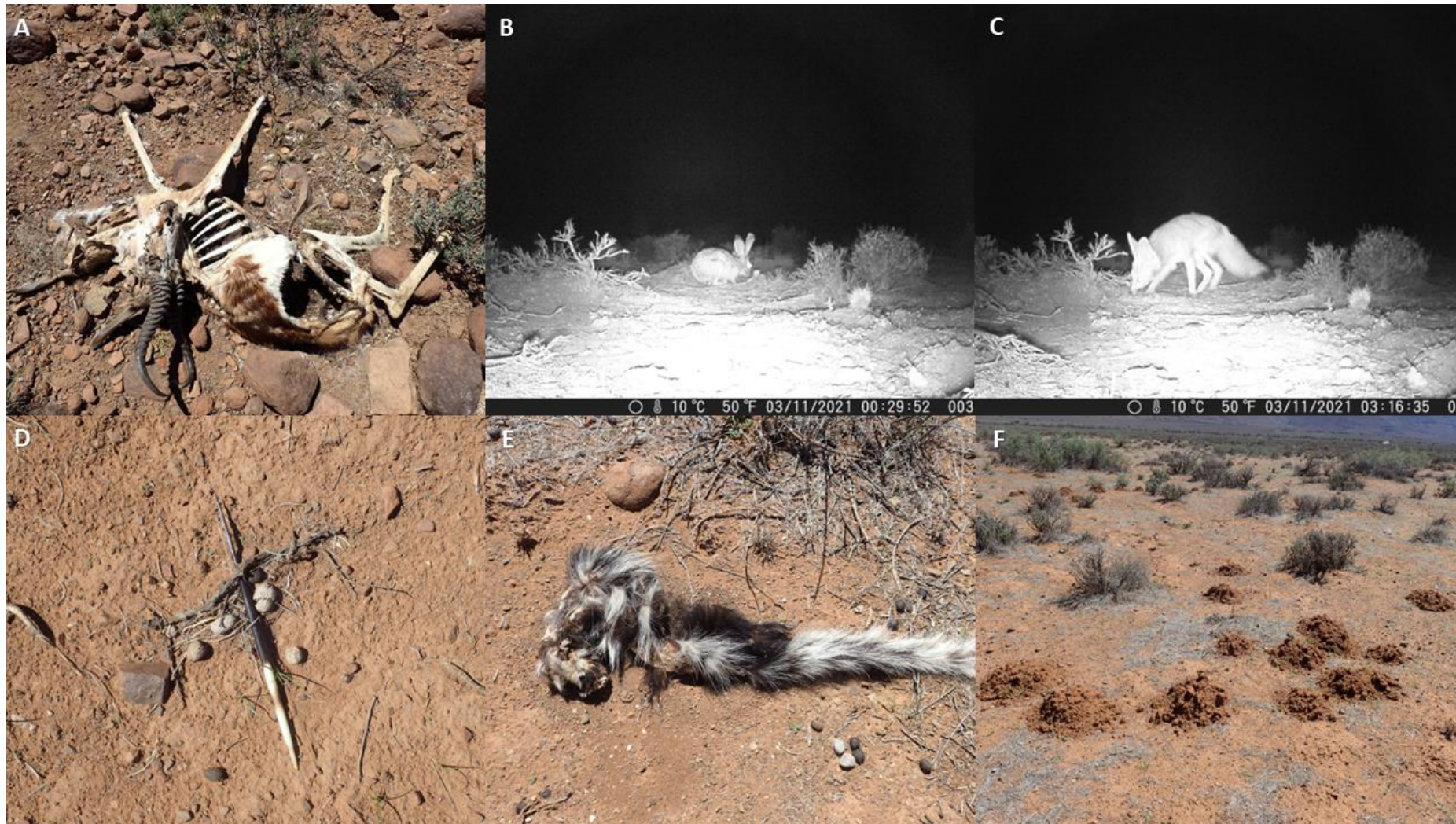


Figure 3-9 Photographs illustrating a portion of the mammal species recorded within the proposed Poortjie Wes project area during the survey period. A) *Antidorcas marsupialis* (Springbok), B) *Lepus saxatilis* (Scrub Hare), C) *Vulpes chama* (Cape Fox), D) *Hystrix africaeaustralis africaeaustralis* (Southern Porcupine), E) *Ictonyx striatus striatus* (Southern Striped Polecat) and F) *Cryptomys hottentotus* (Common Molerat)

3.2.3 Hydrology

As aforementioned, based on the topographical spatial data for the region, there are ephemeral drainage lines traversing the PAOI. However, as aforementioned no field survey was undertaken for the grid PAOI. The lateral extent of the drainage systems was based on the characteristics of the soil patterns and growth of *Vachellia karoo* visible in satellite imagery.

The following Zones of Regulation (ZoR) are applicable to the drainage lines identified within the PAOI:

- A 32 m Zone of Regulation in accordance with the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) should be assigned to the drainage lines; and
- A 100 m ZoR in accordance with the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998) should be assigned to the drainage lines.

Accordingly, a 50 m buffer was applied to these drainage systems (Macfarlane *et al*, 2009) as they are regarded as Ecological Support Areas (see Figure 4-2 in section 4 of this report).

3.2.3.1 Risk Assessment

Due to the presence of watercourses (non-perennial) within the 100 m regulatory area, a risk assessment was conducted in line with Section 21 (c) and (i) of the National Water Act, 1998, (Act 36 of 1998).

This assessment has been completed in accordance with the requirements of the published General Notice (GN) 509 by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS). This notice was published in the Government Gazette (no. 40229) under Section 39 of the National Water Act (Act no. 36 of 1998) in August 2016, for a Water Use Licence (WUL) in terms of Section 21(c) & (i) water uses. The GN 509 process provides an allowance to apply for a WUL for Section 21(c) & (i) under a General Authorisation (GA), as opposed to a full Water Use Licence Application (WULA). A water use (or potential) qualifies for a GA under GN 509 when the proposed water use/activity is subjected to analysis using the DWS Risk Assessment Matrix (RAM). This assessment will implement the RAM and provide a specialist opinion on the appropriate water use authorisation.

The findings of the risk assessment are presented in Table 3-8 and Table 3-9. The risks associated with the proposed development area range from low to moderate, with moderate risks associated with the drainage lines in proximity to the development area. The construction of infrastructure within the drainage areas (and buffers) is considered to pose a moderate risk without mitigation, however, should recommended buffers be adhered to, the risks are considered low. During the operational phase, the increase in hardened surfaces due to solar panels and roads is considered a moderate risk due to the potential of erosion and sedimentation of downstream reaches. A comprehensive and site-specific stormwater management plan is critical to negate these potential impacts during higher rainfall period.

Table 3-8 Impacts assessed for the proposed development area

Aspect	Activity	Impacts to Watercourses
Construction		
Habitat integrity & Sediment balance	Clearing associated with construction of roads and laydown yards	Increased runoff and sediment input into the water courses
		Smothering and subsequent loss of instream habitat due to sediment inputs
		Flow path modification
		Input of toxicants
Flow dynamics	Construction of stormwater management infrastructure around PV Area	Alteration to flow patterns and velocities Erosion of exposed surfaces
Water quality	Contamination due to improper storage of chemicals, construction materials, fuel and machinery leaks	Physical changes (e.g. turbidity)
		Chemical changes (e.g. pH, salinity toxicants and heavy metals)
Rehabilitation	Final landscaping and post-construction rehabilitation	Indiscriminate dumping of rubble and construction material
		Improper re-establishment of flow paths
		Increased sedimentation Increased erosion from exposed surfaces
Operation		
Flow dynamics & Stormwater management	Increased hard surfaces due to solar panels and roads and stormwater infrastructure	Flow alteration/concentrations during heavy precipitation events
		Flow concentration leading to increased erosion and scouring downstream systems
	Reduced vegetation on ground due to loss of light penetration	Increased runoff and flow velocities entering the watercourse
		Increased flow concentration Increased erosion and scouring of bed and banks, especially in discharge areas Increased sedimentation and turbidity
Anthropogenic disturbance	Increased traffic and human disturbance	Watercourse and water quality impairment Increased exposed and hardened surfaces
	Establishment of alien plants on disturbed areas	Degradation of watercourse flora and fauna through the spread of alien and invasive species
Water quality	Contamination, dumping of solid wastes and input associated with surface runoff from roads	Increased litter and refuse within the channel Input of toxicants Nutrient loading
Compiled by	Andrew Husted Pr Sci Nat 400213/11	

Table 3-9 DWS Risk Impact Matrix for the proposed project

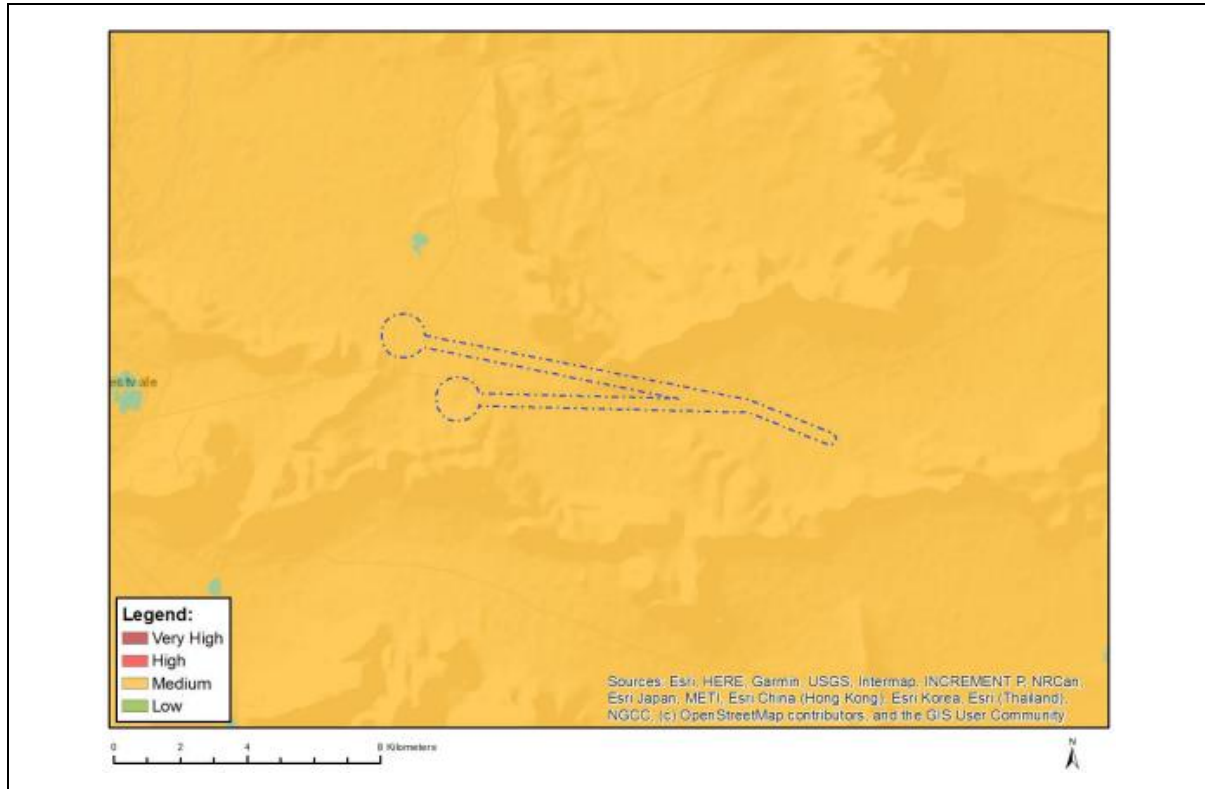
Activity	Mitigation	Flow Regime	Physico & Chemical	Habitat	Biota	Severity	Spatial scale	Duration	Consequence	Frequency of activity	Frequency of impact	Legal Issues	Detection	Likelihood	Significance	Risk Rating	Control Measures
Construction Phase																	
Clearing associated with construction of roads and laydown yards	Without	2	2	3	2	2.3	2	2	6.3	2	4	1	2	9	56.3	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly demarcate the construction footprint and restrict all construction activities to within the proposed infrastructure area. Minimize the disturbance footprint and the unnecessary clearing of vegetation outside of this area. Educate staff and relevant contractors on the location and importance of the identified water resources through toolbox talks and by including them in site inductions as well as the overall master plan. All activities (including driving) must remain at least 50 m outside of the edge of drainage lines that will be conserved. Promptly remove / control all alien and invasive plant species that may emerge during construction (i.e. weedy annuals and other alien forbs) must be removed. Landscape and re-vegetate all denuded areas as soon as possible.
	With	1	1	2	1	1.3	2	2	5.3	2	2	1	2	7	36.8	Low	
	Without	1	1	2	1	1.3	1	2	4.3	2	3	1	2	8	34.0	Low	
Final landscaping and post-construction rehabilitation	With	1	1	1	1	1.0	1	2	4.0	1	2	1	2	6	24.0	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All activities (including driving) must remain at least 50 m outside of the edge of drainage lines that will be conserved. Promptly remove / control all alien and invasive plant species that may emerge during construction (i.e. weedy annuals and other alien forbs) must be removed. Landscape and re-vegetate all denuded areas as soon as possible.
	Without	3	2	3	2	2.5	3	2	7.5	2	3	1	3	9	67.5	Moderate	
Stormwater Management Infrastructure	With	1	1	2	1	1.3	3	2	6.3	2	2	1	2	7	43.8	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit construction activities to winter (as much as possible) when rain is least likely to wash concrete and sand into the systems. This limitation must be prioritised for activities near drainage lines. Ensure soil stockpiles and concrete / building sand are sufficiently safeguarded against rain wash. Do not situate any of the construction material laydown areas within buffer areas. No machinery should be allowed to park in any water resources or buffer areas, cleaning of vehicles in these systems is also prohibited. Landscape and re-vegetate all unnecessarily denuded areas as soon as possible.
	Without	3	2	3	2	2.5	2	3	7.5	2	2	1	3	8	60.0	Moderate	
	With	1	1	2	1	1.3	2	2	5.3	1	1		2	4	21.0	Low	
Erosion and sedimentation control measures	Without	1	1	2	1	1.3	1	2	4.3	1	1	1	3	6	25.5	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure all excess consumables and building materials / rubble is removed from site and deposited at an appropriate waste facility. Appropriately stockpile topsoil cleared from the development area. Appropriately contain any generator diesel storage tanks, machinery spills (e.g. accidental spills of hydrocarbons oils, diesel
	With	1	1	1	1	1.0	1	2	4.0	1	1	1	2	5	20.0	Low	
Pollution Control	Without	1	1	2	1	1.3	1	2	4.3	1	1	1	3	6	25.5	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure all excess consumables and building materials / rubble is removed from site and deposited at an appropriate waste facility. Appropriately stockpile topsoil cleared from the development area. Appropriately contain any generator diesel storage tanks, machinery spills (e.g. accidental spills of hydrocarbons oils, diesel
	With	1	1	1	1	1.0	1	2	4.0	1	1	1	2	5	20.0	Low	
Staff ablutions	Without	1	3	1	2	1.8	2	2	5.8	1	2	1	3	7	40.3	Low	

Activity	Mitigation	Flow Regime	Physico & Chemical	Habitat	Biota	Severity	Spatial scale	Duration	Consequence	Frequency of activity	Frequency of impact	Legal Issues	Detection	Likelihood	Significance	Risk Rating	Control Measures
Operation of machinery & equipment	With	1	1	1	1	1.0	2	2	5.0	1	2	1	2	6	30.0	Low	etc.) or construction materials on site (e.g. concrete) in such a way as to prevent them leaking and entering the drainage lines. • Do not store any construction materials or equipment within any of the identified drainage lines or their buffers. • Mixing of concrete must under no circumstances take place within any wetland. • Clearly demarcate the construction footprint and restrict all construction activities to within the proposed infrastructure area.
	Without	1	2	3	2	2.0	2	3	7.0	2	2	1	2	7	49.0	Low	
	With	1	1	2	1	1.3	2	2	5.3	1	1	1	2	5	26.3	Low	
Temporary infrastructure	Without	1	2	3	2	2.0	2	2	6.0	2	2	1	2	7	42.0	Low	• No servicing of vehicles, machinery or equipment that may cause spillages within the development area. All servicing to be undertaken in a designated workshop or bay. • All vehicles, machinery or equipment to be inspected and monitored for leaks where applicable. No leaking vehicles, machinery or equipment may be permitted for operation within the development area.
	With	1	1	1	1	1.0	2	2	5.0	1	2		2	5	25.0	Low	
Operation Phase																	
Increased hard surfaces due to solar panels and roads and stormwater infrastructure	Without	3	2	3	2	2.5	3	4	9.5	2	3	1	3	2	85.5	Moderate	• Design and Implement an effective stormwater management plan. • Promote water infiltration into the ground beneath the solar panels. • Release only clean water into the environment. • Stormwater leaving the site should not be concentrated in a single exit drain but spread across multiple drains around the site each fitted with energy dissipaters (e.g. slabs of concrete with rocks cemented in). • Re-vegetate denuded areas as soon as possible. • Regularly clear drains. • Minimise the extent of concreted / paved / gravel areas. • A covering of soil and grass (regularly cut and maintained) below the solar panels is ideal for infiltration. If not feasible then gravel is preferable over concrete or paving. • Avoid excessively compacting the ground beneath the solar panels.
	With	2	1	2	1		2	4	6.0	2	2	1	2	7	42.0	Low	
Increased traffic and human disturbance (maintenance)	Without	1	2	3	2	2.0	3	4	9.0	2	1	1	1	5	45.0	Low	• Where possible minimise the use surfactants to clean solar panels and herbicides to control vegetation beneath the panels. If surfactants and herbicides must be used do so well prior to any significant predicted rainfall events.
	With	1	1	2	1		2	4	6.0	1	1	1	1	4	24.0	Low	
Alien invasive plants	Without	2	1	3	2	2.0	2	4	8.0	1	1	1	1	4	32.0	Low	

Activity	Mitigation	Flow Regime	Physico & Chemical	Habitat	Biota	Severity	Spatial scale	Duration	Consequence	Frequency of activity	Frequency of impact	Legal Issues	Detection	Likelihood	Significance	Risk Rating	Control Measures
	With	1	1	2	1	1.3	2	4	7.3	1	1	1	1	4	29.0	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promptly remove / control all alien and invasive plant species that may emerge during construction (i.e. weedy annuals and other alien forbs) must be removed.
Decommissioning Phase																	
Decommissioning of the solar facility.	Without	1	1	3	1	1.5	2	2	5.5	2	4	1	2	9	49.5	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a rehabilitation and closure plan. Appropriately rehabilitate the development area by ripping, landscaping and re-vegetating with locally indigenous species.
	With	1	1	2	1	1.3	2	2	5.3	2	2	1	2	7	36.8	Low	

4 Site Ecological Importance (SEI)

The National Web based Environmental Screening Tool provides the environmental sensitivity of the PAOI at a desktop level. The Plant Species Theme Sensitivity as indicated in the screening report was derived to be 'Medium' (Figure 4-1) and the Animal Species Theme Sensitivity was derived to be 'Medium' to 'High' (Figure 4-1). The screening tool report can be downloaded at <https://screening.environment.gov.za/screeningtool/#/pages/welcome>.



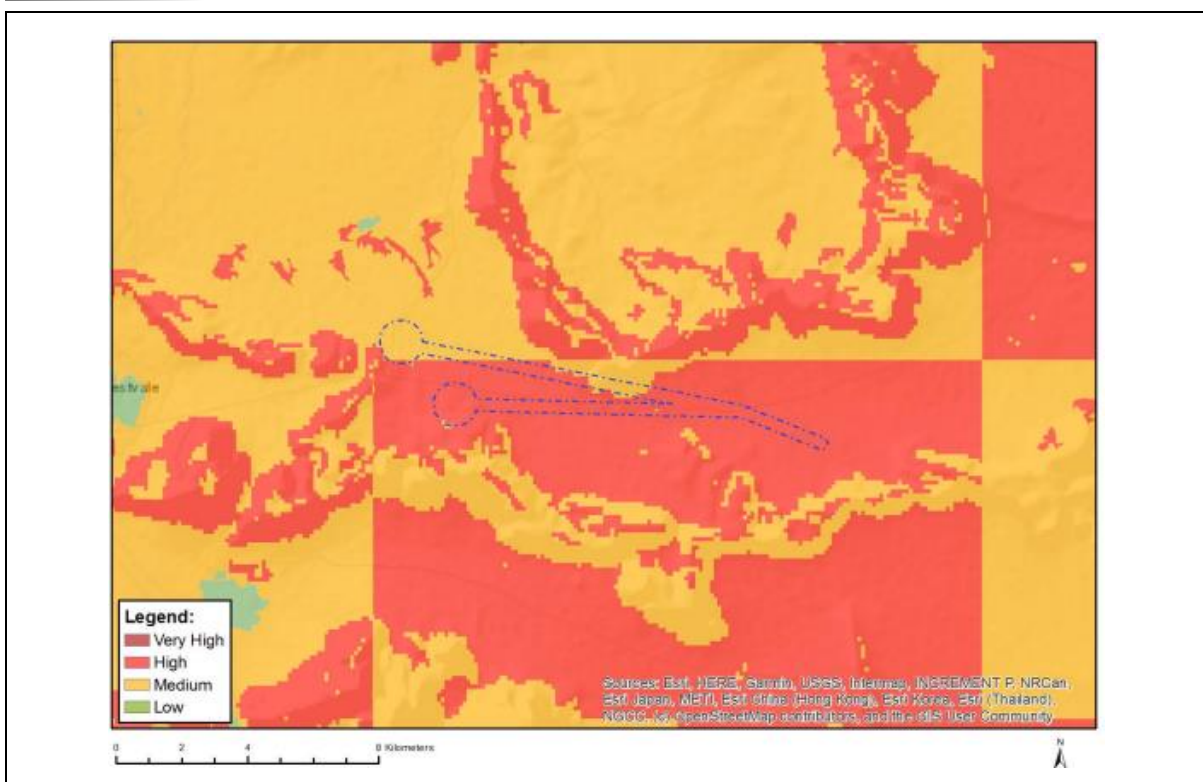


Figure 4-1 Plant Species Theme Sensitivity (top) and Animal Species Theme Sensitivity (bottom) for the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI

Based on the criteria provided in Section 0 of this report, all habitats within the PAOI were assigned a sensitivity category, i.e., a SEI category. The PAOI was categorised as possessing a ‘High’ SEI (Table 4-1). This indicates that the findings of this assessment are congruent with the Screening Tool for the Animal Theme Sensitivity. The SEI of the PAOI is illustrated in Error! Reference source not found.. As aforementioned, the guidelines for interpreting the SEI category are provided in

Table 4-2.

Table 4-1 Summary of the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI Site Ecological Importance

Area (ha)	Conservation Importance	Functional Integrity	Biodiversity Importance	Receptor Resilience	Site Ecological Importance
297.168	Medium Confirmed or highly likely occurrence of populations of NT species	High Very large (> 100 ha) intact area for any conservation status of ecosystem type. High habitat connectivity serving as functional ecological corridors, limited road network between intact habitat patches.	Medium	Low Habitat that is unlikely to be able to recover fully after a relatively long period: > 15 years required to restore ~ less than 50% of the original species composition and functionality of the receptor functionality.	High

Table 4-2 Guidelines for interpreting Site Ecological Importance in the context of the proposed development activities

Site Ecological Importance (SEI)	Interpretation in relation to proposed development activities
High	Avoidance mitigation wherever possible. Minimisation mitigation – changes to project infrastructure design to limit the amount of habitat impacted, limited development activities of low impact acceptable. Offset mitigation may be required for high impact activities.

During meandering the PAOI, the species richness of the Formicidae was recorded. Formicidae are reliable indicators of habitat condition because each species or group differ in their tolerance to anthropogenic drivers (Andersen et al, 2002; Gollan et al, 2011). In addition to being reliable bio-indicators, they are important in maintaining ecosystem functioning as they predate on other invertebrate species, turnover soil, control plant pathogens and distribute of myrmecochorous seeds. It is also important to consider that Formicidae are regarded as keystone taxa within the Nama Karoo Biome. A standardized method was not utilised as that was beyond the scope of this assessment, but species were recorded while meandering through the PAOI. Due to the arid environment of the project area, a diverse assemblage is not expected under natural conditions. However, the community was not dominated by a single species or generalist species, with arid specialists comprising the community. The species assemblage included *Ocymyrmex barbiger*, which is an active predator of other arthropods, thereby controlling species abundances, including potential pest species. Furthermore, the species was observed to be scavenging on carcasses, alluding to a role in nutrient recycling.



The species *Messor capensis* influences soil characteristics and plant growth via its tunnelling activity. The major physical change to the soils is the drier mound than inter-mound spaces, as although they permit greater water infiltration, they dry out faster due to less compaction and higher organic content. The chemical properties between mounds and inter-mound spaces also differ significantly, with mounds containing approximately 50% more phosphorous, potassium and nitrogen. This spatial discrepancy in soil physico-chemical properties therefore influences vegetation heterogeneity. Mounds are also not static, with new mounds being developed around replacement entrances after disturbance by rainfall or feeding *O. afer*, thereby affecting wide areas. As aforementioned, the foraging activity of *O. afer* inadvertently distributes the nest seed stores with mound soil and considering that the mound soil possesses elevated nutrient content, it is likely to provide an improved germination material.



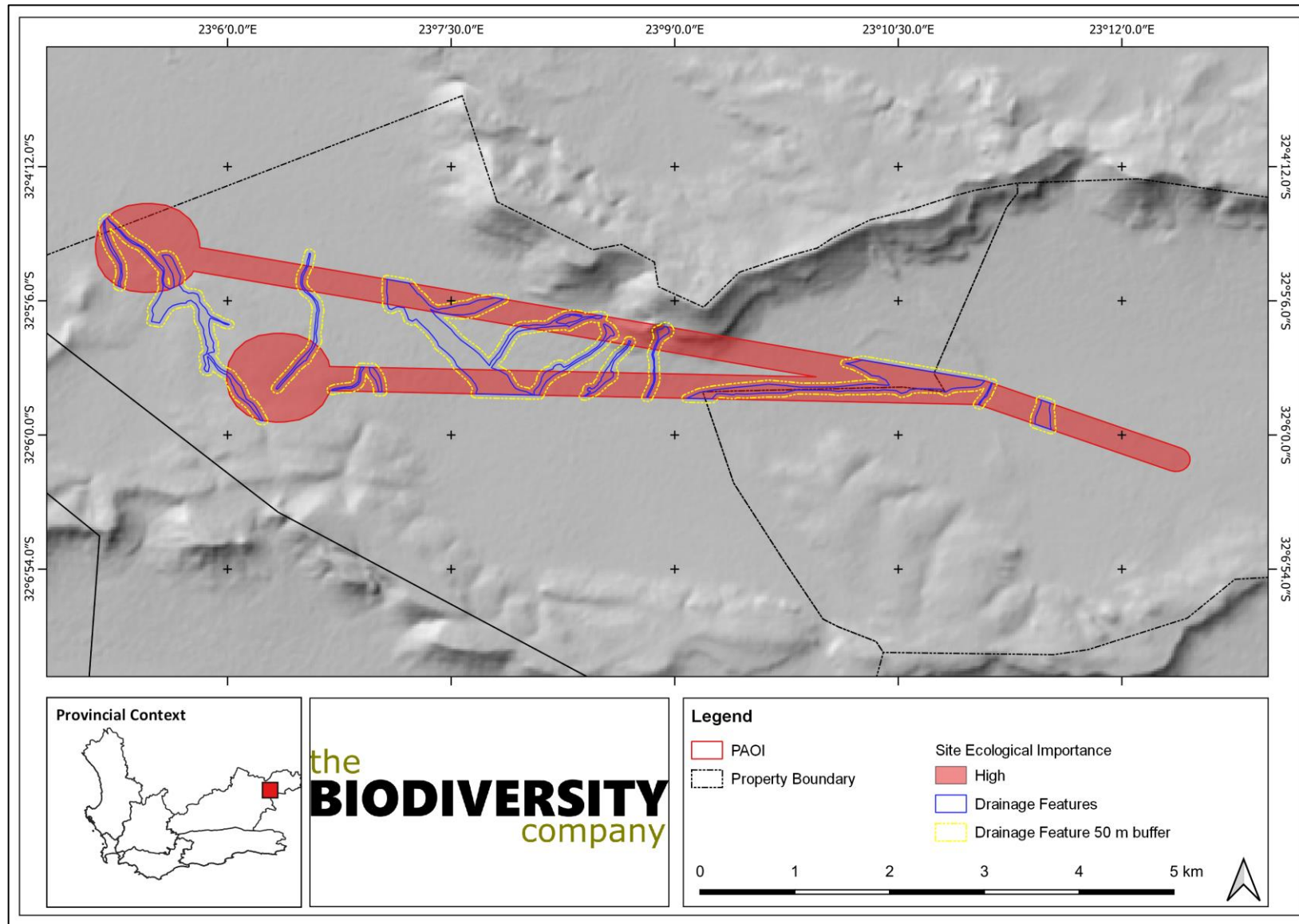


Figure 4-2 Map illustrating the Site Ecological Importance of the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI



Figure 4-3 Photographs illustrating an overview of the habitat physiognomy within the proposed Poortjie Wes project area

5 Impact Assessment

Anthropogenic activities drive habitat destruction causing displacement of fauna and flora and possibly direct mortality. Land clearing destroys local wildlife habitat and can lead to the loss of local breeding grounds, nesting sites and wildlife movement corridors such as rivers, streams and drainage lines, or other locally important features. The removal of natural vegetation may reduce the habitat available for fauna species and may reduce animal populations and species compositions within the area.

This section provides the impact assessment of the proposed development, which is the Grid Connection Infrastructure for the proposed Poortjie Wes Solar Energy Facilities (“the Cluster”).

5.1 Present Impacts to Biodiversity

Considering the anthropogenic activities and influences within the landscape, several negative impacts to biodiversity were observed within the PAOI and the surrounding landscape. These include:

- Existing energy distribution pylons and overhead lines;
- Livestock grazing land-use;
- Persecution and trapping;
- Roads and associated vehicle traffic and road kills; and
- Jackal-proof fences.



Figure 5-1 *Photographs illustrating impacts to biodiversity within the surrounding area of the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure PAOI. A) Roads and overhead powerlines, B-C) Carnivore persecution and trapping and E) Carnivore-proof fencing*

5.2 Alternatives considered

No alternatives were considered.

5.3 Irreplaceable Loss

The current proposed layout of the development will possibly result in the irreplaceable loss of an Ecological Support Area 1.

5.4 Identification of Additional Potential Impacts

Bennun *et al* (2021) describes three broad types of impacts associated with solar energy development:

- Direct impacts – Impacts that result from project activities or operational decisions that can be predicted based on planned activities and knowledge of local biodiversity, such as habitat loss under the project footprint, habitat fragmentation as a result of project infrastructure and species disturbance or mortality as a result of project operations;
- Indirect impacts – Impacts induced by, or ‘by-products’ of, project activities within a project’s area of influence; and
- Cumulative impacts – Impacts that result from the successive, incremental and/or combined effects of existing, planned and/or reasonably anticipated future human activities in combination with project development impacts.

The biotic components influencing vegetation heterogeneity and wellbeing have been described in sections 3.2.2.3 and 4 of this report. The proposed development will lead to a loss in habitat for these biotic components and therefore, cause a negative shift in the wellbeing of the vegetation within the development footprint. However, the proposed development in isolation is unlikely to affect the dynamics of the surrounding vegetation, only if it is not fragmented or forms a barrier for species movement.

Within southern Africa, a proportion of biomes, and the associated vegetation types, are dependent on the dynamics of fire to maintain ecosystem functioning and wellbeing. In contrast, fire in the western arid region of the Nama Karoo is extremely rare. Occasional fires may occur after successive years of good rainfall in combination with light grazing, resulting in an increased fuel load. Fire is potentially more common in the east along the southwestern edge of the Grassland Biome including the interface with this biome on the eastern mountains. However, fires within the regional context of the project should be avoided as post-fire recovery is extremely slow. Therefore, any accidental fires are likely to cause long-term negative impacts to the functioning of surrounding ecosystems.

The potential impacts during the life of operation of the proposed development are presented in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1 Potential impacts to biodiversity associated with the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure

Main Impact	Project activities that can cause loss of habitat	Secondary impacts anticipated
Habitat Destruction	Physical removal of vegetation and surface grading for construction of infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displacement/loss of flora & fauna Increased potential for soil erosion Habitat fragmentation Increased potential for establishment of alien & invasive vegetation
Main Impact	Project activities that can cause the spread and/or establishment of alien and/or invasive species	Secondary impacts anticipated
Spread and/or establishment of alien and/or invasive species into disturbed areas	Vegetation removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat loss for indigenous flora & fauna Spreading of potentially dangerous diseases due to invasive and pest species Increased potential for soil erosion Alteration of fauna assemblages due to habitat modification
	Vehicles potentially spreading seed	
	Unsanitary conditions surrounding infrastructure promoting the establishment of pest rodents	
Main Impact	Project activities that can cause the direct mortality of fauna	Secondary impacts anticipated
	Roadkill due to vehicle collision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of ecosystem services
	Intentional killing of fauna for food (hunting and persecution)	
Main Impact	Project activities that can cause reduced dispersal/migration of fauna	Secondary impacts anticipated
Reduced dispersal/migration of fauna	Loss of landscape used as corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of ecosystem services Reduced plant seed dispersal Reduced gene flow
	Removal of vegetation	
Main Impact	Project activities that can cause emigration of fauna	Secondary impacts anticipated
Emigration of fauna	Operation of machinery (Large earth moving machinery, generators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of ecosystem services
	Reflection of solar panel arrays	
	Heavy vehicle use	
	Outside lighting	

5.5 Assessment of Impact Significance

The assessment of impact significance was undertaken in consideration of the following:

- Extent of impact;
- Duration of impact;
- Magnitude of impact;
- Probability of impact; and
- Reversibility.

The assessment of impact significance considers pre-mitigation as well as implemented post-mitigation scenarios. Three phases were considered for the impact assessment:

- Construction Phase;

- Operational Phase; and
- Closure/Rehabilitation Phase.

5.5.1 Construction Phase

Impact Nature: Loss of habitat within development footprint		
There will be a loss of natural vegetation and habitat due to construction of the required infrastructure, particularly with regards to the proposed substations and access roads. This impact was considered for both the construction and operational phases.		
	Without mitigation	With mitigation
Extent	Low (2)	Low (2)
Duration	Long term (4)	Long term (4)
Magnitude	High (8)	Low (4)
Probability	Definite (5)	Definite (5)
Significance	High	Medium
Status (positive or negative)	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	Yes	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes, albeit to a limited extent.	
Mitigation:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction areas must be clearly demarcated to avoid intrusion into surrounding habitats. • Vegetation clearing to commence only after the necessary permits have been obtained. • Environmental Officer (EO) to provide supervision and oversight of vegetation clearing activities. • No pylons are to be placed within drainage features and buffer zones. • Riparian buffer zones must be avoided and not used as laydown and/or storage areas. • All denuded areas to be rehabilitated during the closure phase. 		
Residual Impacts:		
The loss of indigenous vegetation is an unavoidable consequence of the development and cannot be entirely mitigated. The residual impact would be moderate.		

Impact Nature: Degradation and loss of surrounding natural habitat		
Degradation and loss of surrounding natural vegetation arising from construction activities if these are allowed to penetrate into the surrounding area.		
	Without mitigation	With mitigation
Extent	Moderate (3)	Low (2)
Duration	Long term (4)	Very short term (1)
Magnitude	Moderate (6)	None (0)
Probability	Highly probable (4)	Improbable (2)
Significance	Medium	Low
Status (positive or negative)	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes	
Mitigation:		

Impact Nature: Degradation and loss of surrounding natural habitat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-construction environmental induction for all construction staff on site to ensure that basic environmental principles are adhered to. This includes awareness of no littering, appropriate handling of pollution and chemical spills, avoiding fire hazards, remaining within demarcated construction areas etc. • All construction activity and roads to be within the clearly defined and demarcated areas. • Temporary laydown areas should be clearly demarcated and rehabilitated subsequent to end of use. • Appropriate dust control measures to be implemented. • Suitable sanitary facilities to be provided for construction staff as per the guidelines in Health and Safety Act. • All hazardous materials, if any, should be stored in the appropriate manner to prevent contamination of the site. Any accidental chemical, fuel and oil spills that occur at the site should be cleaned up in the appropriate manner.
Residual Impacts:
It is unlikely that residual impacts are expected if the appropriate mitigation measures are implemented. However, there may still be minimal degradation due to dust precipitation.

Impact Nature: Direct mortality of fauna		
Construction activity will likely lead to direct mortality of fauna due to earthworks, vehicle collisions, accidental hazardous chemical spills and persecution.		
	Without mitigation	With mitigation
Extent	Moderate (3)	Low (2)
Duration	Short term (2)	Short term (2)
Magnitude	Low (4)	Minor (2)
Probability	Highly probable (4)	Improbable (2)
Significance	Medium	Low
Status (positive or negative)	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	Moderate	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes, vehicle collisions, poaching, and persecution can be mitigated.	
Mitigation:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All personnel should undergo environmental induction with regards to fauna and awareness about not harming or collecting species. • Prior to commencing work each day, two individuals should traverse the working area in order to disturb any fauna and so they have a chance to vacate. • Any fauna threatened by the construction activities should be removed safely by an appropriately qualified environmental officer or removal specialist. • All construction vehicles should adhere to a speed limit of maximum 40 km/h to avoid collisions. Appropriate speed control measures and signs must be erected. • All hazardous materials, if any, should be stored in the appropriate manner to prevent contamination of the site. Any accidental chemical, fuel and oil spills that occur at the site should be cleaned up in the appropriate manner. • Any excavations should not be left open for extended periods of time as fauna may fall in and become trapped in them. Excavations should only be dug when they are required and should be used and filled shortly thereafter. 		
Residual Impacts:		
It is probable that some individuals of susceptible species will be lost to construction-related activities despite mitigation. However, this is not likely to impact the viability of the local population of any fauna species.		

Impact Nature: Emigration of fauna due to noise pollution		
Construction activity will likely lead to the emigration of fauna due to noise pollution.		
	Without mitigation	With mitigation
Extent	Moderate (3)	Moderate (3)
Duration	Short term (2)	Short term (2)

Magnitude	Moderate (6)	Low (4)
Probability	Highly probable (4)	Highly probable (4)
Significance	Medium	Medium
Status (positive or negative)	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	Moderate	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes, but only to a limited extent. The mitigation of noise pollution during construction is difficult to mitigate against	
Mitigation:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering that many of the mammal fauna recorded within the project area are nocturnal, no construction activity is to occur at night. 		
Residual Impacts:		
It is probable that some individuals of susceptible species will emigrate due to the noise generated from the construction activity. However, this is not likely to impact the viability of the local population of any fauna species.		

5.5.2 Operational Phase

Impact Nature: Loss of habitat within development footprint		
There will be a loss of natural vegetation and habitat due to construction of the required infrastructure, particularly with regards to the proposed substations and access roads. This impact was considered for both the construction and operational phases.		
	Without mitigation	With mitigation
Extent	Low (2)	Low (2)
Duration	Long term (4)	Long term (4)
Magnitude	High (8)	Low (4)
Probability	Definite (5)	Definite (5)
Significance	High	Medium
Status (positive or negative)	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	Yes	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes, albeit to a limited extent.	
Mitigation:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development areas must be clearly demarcated during construction to avoid intrusion into surrounding habitats. Vegetation clearing to commence only after the necessary permits have been obtained. Environmental Officer (EO) to provide supervision and oversight of vegetation clearing activities. No pylons are to be placed within drainage features and buffer zones. Riparian buffer zones must be avoided and not used as laydown and/or storage areas. All denuded areas to be rehabilitated during the closure phase. 		
Residual Impacts:		
The loss of indigenous vegetation is an unavoidable consequence of the development and cannot be entirely mitigated. The residual impact would be moderate.		

Impact Nature: Encroachment of Invasive Alien Plants into disturbed areas		
Invasive Alien Plants (IAPs) tend to encroach into disturbed areas and can outcompete/displace indigenous vegetation.		
	Without mitigation	With mitigation
Extent	Moderate (3)	Moderate (3)

Impact Nature: Encroachment of Invasive Alien Plants into disturbed areas		
Duration	Permanent (5)	Very short term (1)
Magnitude	High (8)	Minor (2)
Probability	Highly probable (4)	Improbable (2)
Significance	High	Low
Status (positive or negative)	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes	
Mitigation:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An IAP Management Plan must be written for the development. • Regular monitoring for IAP encroachment during the operation phase to ensure that no alien invasion problems have developed as result of the disturbance. This should be every 3 months during the first two years of the operation phase and every six months for the life of the project. • All IAP species must be removed/controlled using the appropriate techniques as indicated in the IAP management plan. 		
Residual Impacts:		
Based on the lack of IAPs within the development area and the implementation of an IAP Management Plan there are unlikely to be residual impacts		

Impact Nature: Soil erosion and continued habitat degradation		
Disturbance created during the construction phase will leave the development area vulnerable to erosion		
	Without mitigation	With mitigation
Extent	Moderate (3)	Moderate (3)
Duration	Permanent (5)	Very short term (1)
Magnitude	High (8)	Minor (2)
Probability	Highly probable (4)	Improbable (2)
Significance	High	Low
Status (positive or negative)	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes	
Mitigation:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Rehabilitation Plan must be written for the development area and ensured that it be adhered to. • Access roads should have run-off control features which redirect water flow and dissipate any energy in the water which may pose an erosion risk. • All erosion observed should be rectified as soon as possible, using the appropriate erosion control structures and revegetation techniques. • There should be follow-up rehabilitation and re-vegetation of any remaining denuded areas with local indigenous perennial shrubs and succulents from the area. 		
Residual Impacts:		
There is still the potential for erosion but would have a low impact.		

Impact Nature: Direct mortality of fauna during maintenance procedures		
Disturbance or persecution of fauna may occur from personnel or staff that are involved in infrastructure maintenance. In addition, there is the possibility of roadkill within the access roads.		
	Without Mitigation	With Mitigation
Extent	Low (2)	Low (2)
Duration	Long term (4)	Very short term (1)
Magnitude	Low (4)	Minor (2)
Probability	Probable (3)	Very improbable (1)
Significance	Medium	Low
Status	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	Moderate	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources	No	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes	
Mitigation:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff are to be educated on the importance of local fauna and must be made aware that no poaching or persecution is allowed. Any fauna threatened by the maintenance and operational activities should be removed to a safe location by an appropriate individual. All vehicles accessing the site should adhere to a max 40 km/h max to avoid collisions. Appropriate signs must be erected. If any excavations are to be dug these must not be left open for more than a few hours without ramps for trapped fauna to leave and must be filled at night. 		
Residual Impacts:		
Disturbance from maintenance activities will occur albeit at a low and infrequent level.		

5.5.3 Decommissioning/Rehabilitation Phase

Impact Nature: Direct mortality of fauna		
Decommissioning activity will likely lead to direct mortality of fauna due to earthworks, vehicle collisions and persecution.		
	Without mitigation	With mitigation
Extent	Moderate (3)	Low (2)
Duration	Short term (2)	Short term (2)
Magnitude	Low (4)	Minor (2)
Probability	Probable (3)	Improbable (2)
Significance	Low	Low
Status (positive or negative)	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	Moderate	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources?	No	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes, vehicle collisions, poaching, and persecution can be mitigated.	
Mitigation:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All personnel should undergo environmental induction with regards to fauna and awareness about not harming or collecting species. Prior to commencing work each day, two individuals should traverse the working area in order to disturb any fauna and so they have a chance to vacate. Any fauna threatened by the construction activities should be removed safely by an appropriately qualified environmental officer or removal specialist. 		

Impact Nature: Direct mortality of fauna
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All construction vehicles should adhere to a speed limit of maximum 40 km/h to avoid collisions. Appropriate speed control measures and signs must be erected. All hazardous materials, if any, should be stored in the appropriate manner to prevent contamination of the site. Any accidental chemical, fuel and oil spills that occur at the site should be cleaned up in the appropriate manner. Any excavations should not be left open for extended periods of time as fauna may fall in and become trapped in them. Excavations should only be dug when they are required and should be used and filled shortly thereafter.
Residual Impacts:
It is probable that some individuals of susceptible species will be lost to construction-related activities despite mitigation. However, this is not likely to impact the viability of the local population of any fauna species.

Impact Nature: Continued habitat degradation		
Disturbance created during decommissioning will leave the development area vulnerable to erosion and alien plant invasion for several years.		
	Without Mitigation	With Mitigation
Extent	Low (2)	Low (2)
Duration	Long-term (4)	Long-term (3)
Magnitude	Medium (3)	Minor (2)
Probability	Probable (3)	Improbable (2)
Significance	Medium	Low
Status	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	Low	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources	Yes	No
Can impacts be mitigated?	Yes, with proper management and avoidance, this impact can be mitigated to a low level.	
Mitigation:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rehabilitation in accordance with the Rehabilitation Plan for the development must be undertaken in areas disturbed during the decommissioning phase. Monitoring of the rehabilitated area must be undertaken at quarterly intervals for 3 years after the decommissioning phase. All erosion problems observed should be rectified as soon as possible, using the appropriate erosion control structures and revegetation techniques. There should be follow-up rehabilitation and revegetation of any remaining bare areas with indigenous flora. 		
Residual Impacts:		
No significant residual risks are expected, although IAP encroachment and erosion might still occur but would have a negligible impact if effectively managed.		

5.6 Cumulative Impacts

The impacts of projects are often assessed by comparing the post-project situation to a pre-existing baseline. Where projects can be considered in isolation this provides a good method of assessing a project's impact. However, in areas where baselines have already been affected, or where future development will continue to add to the impacts in an area or region, it is appropriate to consider the cumulative effects of development. This is similar to the concept of shifting baselines, which describes how the environmental baseline at a point in time may represent a significant change from the original state of the system.

This section describes the cumulative potential impacts of the project on biodiversity. Cumulative impacts are assessed in context of the extent of the proposed development area,

other developments in the area, as well as general habitat loss and transformation resulting from other activities in the area.

Presently, the surrounding immediate and broader landscape consists of natural vegetation used for supporting livestock and to a lesser extent game. The Phase 1 and Phase 2 REDZs spatial files and the South African Renewable Energy EIA Application Database (DFFEb, 2021) was overlaid onto the Gamka Karoo and Upper Karoo Hardevelremnants layer. The remnants layer was released as part of the NBA (Skowno *et al*, 2019) and provides the present spatial extent of vegetation. The South African Renewable Energy EIA Application Database contains spatial data for renewable energy applications for environmental authorisation. It includes spatial and attribute information for both active (in process and with valid authorisations) and non-active (lapsed or replaced by amendments) applications. Data is captured and managed on a parcels level as well as aggregated to the project level at the boundary level. Considering the limited extent of approved and in process developments within the Gamka Karoo and (Figure 5-2), the expected cumulative impact is expected to be of a 'Medium' significance.

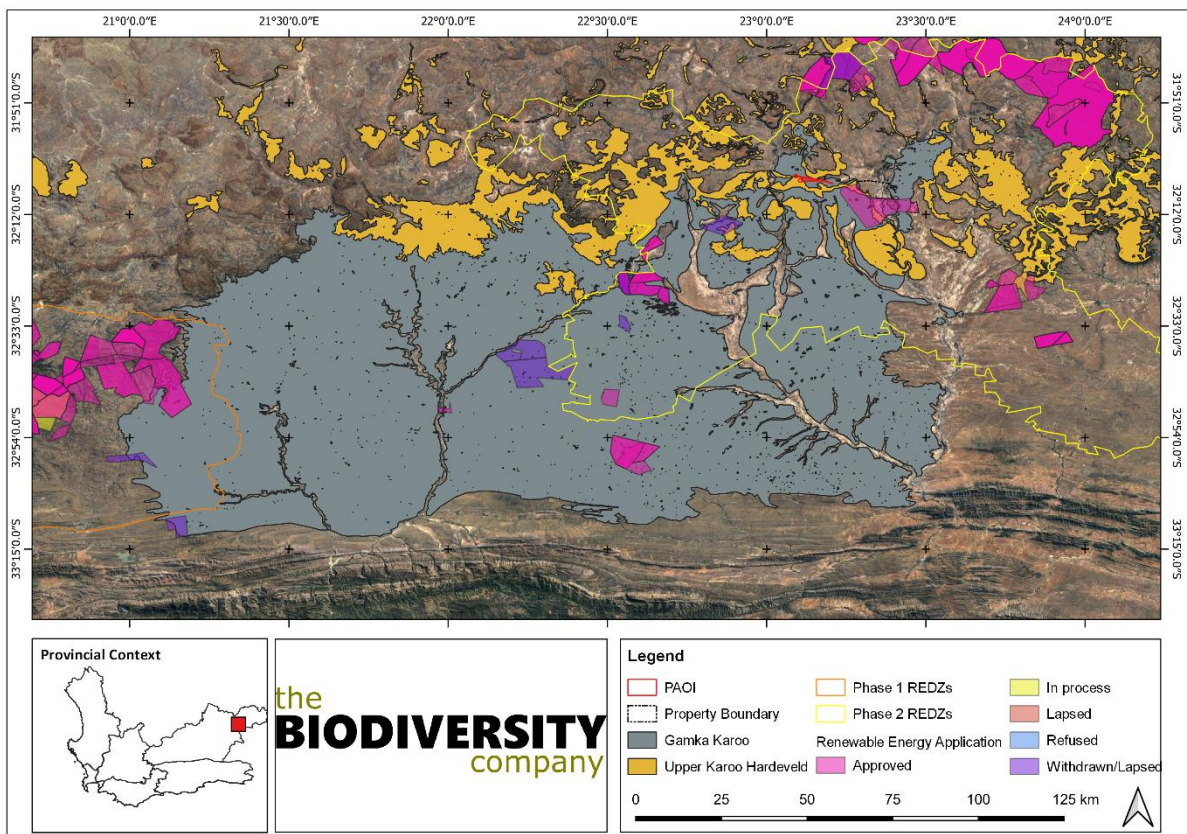


Figure 5-2 Map illustrating additional renewable energy developments within the Gamka Karoo and Upper Karoo Hardeveld vegetation types

Impact Nature: Cumulative habitat loss within the region		
The development of the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure will contribute to cumulative habitat loss within the Gamka Karoo, Upper Karoo Hardeveld and Ecological Support Areas		
	Overall impact of the proposed development considered in isolation	Cumulative impact of the project and other projects in the area
Extent	Very low (1)	Low (2)
Duration	Long term (4)	Long term (4)

Impact Nature: Cumulative habitat loss within the region		
The development of the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure will contribute to cumulative habitat loss within the Gamka Karoo, Upper Karoo Hardeveld and Ecological Support Areas		
Magnitude	Minor (2)	Low (4)
Probability	Highly Probable (4)	Highly Probable (4)
Significance	Low	Medium
Status	Negative	Negative
Reversibility	High	High
Irreplaceable loss of resources	No	Yes, in certain cases
Can impacts be mitigated	Yes, to some degree. However, should the entirety of the REDZ areas be developed, the cumulative impacts on the receiving environment will be regarded as 'High'.	
Mitigation: Ensure that a rehabilitation plan and IAP management plan be compiled for each development and are effectively implemented. Set-aside areas (Avoidance areas) should be established in order to conserve natural habitats where possible.		

5.7 Unplanned Events

The planned activities will have known impacts as discussed above; however, unplanned events may occur on any project and may have potential impacts which will need mitigation and management.

Table 5-2 is a summary of the findings of an unplanned event assessment from a terrestrial ecology perspective. Note, not all potential unplanned events may be captured herein, and this must therefore be managed throughout all phases according to recorded events.

Table 5-2 Summary of unplanned events for terrestrial biodiversity

Unplanned Event	Potential Impact	Mitigation
Hydrocarbon spills into the surrounding environment from heavy machinery during the construction phase	Contamination of soil leading to mortality of flora and fauna.	A spill response kit must always be available. The incident must be reported on and if necessary, a biodiversity specialist must investigate the extent of the impact and provide rehabilitation recommendations.
Fire	Uncontrolled/unmanaged fire that spreads to surrounding natural habitats that result in habitat destruction and fauna mortality.	Appropriate/Adequate fire management plan needs to be implemented.

5.8 Biodiversity Impact Management Actions

The purpose of the Biodiversity Impact Management Actions to inform on the mitigations required to lower the risk of the impacts associated with the proposed activity, provide measures for improving the conservation value of the property and to be able to be inserted into the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr). The mitigation actions required to reduce the significance of the impacts associated with the development are provided in Table 5-3.

Table 5-3 The Biodiversity Impact Management Actions for the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure

Impact Management Actions	Implementation		Monitoring	
	Phase	Responsible Party	Aspect	Frequency
Management Outcome: Vegetation and Habitats				
The areas to be developed must be specifically demarcated to prevent movement into surrounding environments.	Life of operation	Project Manager Environmental Officer	Development footprint	Ongoing
Areas of indigenous vegetation, even secondary communities outside of the direct project footprint, should under no circumstances be fragmented or disturbed further.	Life of operation	Project Manager Environmental Officer	Areas of indigenous vegetation	Ongoing
Areas that are denuded during construction need to be re-vegetated with indigenous vegetation to prevent erosion. This will also reduce the likelihood of encroachment by alien invasive plant species. Topsoil must also be utilised, and any disturbed area must be re-vegetated with plant and grass species which are indigenous to this vegetation type.	Decommissioning /Rehabilitation	Project Manager Environmental Officer	Assess the state of rehabilitation and encroachment of alien vegetation	Quarterly for up to three years after the closure
A hydrocarbon spill management plan must be put in place to ensure that should there be any chemical spill out or over that it does not run into the surrounding areas. The Contractor shall be in possession of an emergency spill kit that must always be complete and available on site. Drip trays or any form of oil absorbent material must be placed underneath vehicles/machinery and equipment when not in use. No servicing of equipment on site unless necessary. All contaminated soil / yard stone shall be treated in situ or removed and be placed in containers. Appropriately contain any generator diesel storage tanks, machinery spills (e.g., accidental spills of hydrocarbons oils, diesel etc.) in such a way as to prevent them leaking and entering the environment.	Life of operation	Environmental Officer Contractor	Spill events, Vehicles dripping.	Ongoing
Leaking equipment and vehicles must be repaired immediately or be removed from project area to facilitate repair.	Life of operation	Environmental Officer Contractor	Leaks and spills	Ongoing
A fire management plan needs to be compiled to restrict the impact of fire. This is especially concerning stochastic fire events such as discarding of lit cigarette butts and/or glowing embers from cooking fires.	Life of operation	Environmental Officer Contractor	Fire Management	During Phase
Management Outcome: Fauna				
Impact Management Actions	Implementation		Monitoring	
	Phase	Responsible Party	Aspect	Frequency
Noise must be kept to an absolute minimum during the evenings and at night to minimize all possible disturbances to nocturnal mammals	Construction	Environmental Officer	Noise levels	Ongoing
No trapping, killing, or poisoning of any wildlife is to be allowed	Life of operation	Environmental Officer	Evidence of trapping, dead animals, etc.	Ongoing

Impact Management Actions	Implementation		Monitoring	
	Phase	Responsible Party	Aspect	Frequency
Signs must be put up to enforce this and must be made a punishable offence				
The duration of the construction should be minimized to as short term as possible, to reduce the period of disturbance on fauna	Construction/Operational	Project Manager Environmental Officer	Construction/Closure Phase	Ongoing
Outside lighting should be designed and limited to minimize impacts on fauna. Fluorescent and mercury vapor lighting should be avoided, and sodium vapor (yellow) lights should be used wherever possible.	Construction/Operational	Project Manager Environmental Officer	Light pollution and period of light.	Ongoing
Wildlife friendly fences must be incorporated into the design. A tunnel underpass of a height of 500 mm will be acceptable for small mammals. Pre-fabricated concrete elements are appropriate for rectangular tunnels. Metal pipes must be avoided. This will also ensure fences are not damaged by burrowing activity.	Operational	Project Manager Environmental Officer Design Engineer	Fauna movement	Ongoing

Management Outcome: Invasive Alien Species

Impact Management Actions	Implementation		Monitoring	
	Phase	Responsible Party	Aspect	Frequency
Compilation of and implementation of an Invasive Alien Plant Management Plan	Life of operation	Project Manager Environmental Officer	Assess presence and encroachment of alien vegetation	Quarterly monitoring
A pest control plan must be put in place and implemented; it is imperative that poisons not be used due to the presence of indigenous fauna.	Life of operation	Environmental Officer Health and Safety Officer	Evidence or presence of pests	Ongoing

Management Outcome: Dust

Impact Management Actions	Implementation		Monitoring	
	Phase	Responsible Party	Aspect	Frequency
Reducing the dust generated by construction activities, especially the earth moving machinery, through wetting the soil surface (with “dirty water”) and putting up signs to enforce speed limit as well as speed. If feasible, it is recommended that a wind fence be constructed to prevent excessive dust pollution, especially due the sandy nature of the soil.	Life of operation	Project Manager Environmental Officer	Dust pollution levels	Ongoing

Management Outcome: Waste Management

Impact Management Actions	Implementation		Monitoring	
	Phase	Responsible Party	Aspect	Frequency
Waste management must be a priority and all waste must be collected and stored adequately.	Life of operation	Environmental Officer Health and Safety Officer	Presence of waste	Life of operation

Impact Management Actions	Implementation		Monitoring	
	Phase	Responsible Party	Aspect	Frequency
Refuse bins must be secured. Temporary storage of domestic waste shall be in covered waste skips. The ratio of toilets to staff must be provided as per the requirements in the Health and Safety Act. Portable toilets must be pumped dry to ensure the system does not degrade over time and spill into the surrounding area.	Life of operation	Environmental Officer Health and Safety Officer	Number of toilets per staff member. Waste levels	Daily
Refuse bins must be secured. Temporary storage of domestic waste shall be in covered waste skips. Maximum domestic waste storage period will be 10 days.	Life of operation	Environmental Officer Contractor Health and Safety Officer	Management of bins and collection of waste	Ongoing, every 10 days
All solid waste collected shall be disposed of at a licensed disposal facility. Under no circumstances may domestic waste be burned on site	Life of operation	Environmental Officer Health and Safety Officer	Availability of bins and the collection of the waste.	Ongoing

Management Outcome: Environmental Awareness Training

Impact Management Actions	Implementation		Monitoring	
	Phase	Responsible Party	Aspect	Frequency
All personnel and contractors to undergo Environmental Awareness Training. A signed register of attendance must be kept for proof. Discussions are required on sensitive environmental receptors within the project area to inform contractors and site staff on the importance, biology, habitat requirements and management requirements of the Environmental Authorisation.	Life of operation	Health and Safety Officer	Compliance to the training.	Ongoing

Management Outcome: Erosion

Impact Management Actions	Implementation		Monitoring	
	Phase	Responsible Party	Aspect	Frequency
Appropriate drainage must be constructed along the access roads in order to slow the flow of water run-off from the road surface.	Operational	Project Manager Design Engineer	Water runoff from road surfaces	Ongoing
Areas that are denuded during construction that do not have infrastructure during the operational phase must be re-vegetated with indigenous vegetation to prevent erosion.	Operational	Project Manager Environmental Officer	Re-establishment of indigenous vegetation	Quarterly for the first 2 years. Thereafter, annually for the life of the project
All areas affected by the development must be re-vegetated with indigenous vegetation to prevent erosion on an extensive temporal scale.	Rehabilitation	Project Manager Environmental Officer	Re-establishment of indigenous vegetation	Quarterly for 3 years after decommissioning

6 Conclusion and Impact Statement

6.1 Conclusion

The aim of this Biodiversity Impact Assessment was to provide information to guide the risk of the proposed Poortjie Wes Grid Connection Infrastructure to the ecosystems affected by its development and their inherent fauna and flora.

Based on the latest available ecologically relevant spatial data the following information is pertinent to the project area:

- It is recognised as an Ecological Support Area and an Other Natural Area as per the Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan;
- The Combined Animal Species Theme Sensitivity was rated as 'Medium' to 'High' according to the Environmental Screening Tool; and
- The Ecosystem Protection Level for the vegetation types associated with the development footprint is regarded as Poorly Protected.

Based on the fauna components recorded within the PAOI and proximal landscape, the area provides important ecosystem services, particularly with regards to the maintenance of dynamic soil properties and nutrient cycling. The SEI of the PAOI was determined to 'High' based on the high likelihood of occurrence for NT species, the extent of the area considered and its connectivity to natural areas within the landscape, and the low resilience of the vegetation type.

6.2 Impact Statement

The main expected impacts of the proposed development will be the loss of habitat and emigration of fauna. Based on the outcomes of the SEI determination, the project possesses a 'High' SEI. This denotes that avoidance mitigation wherever possible must be implemented. This includes changes to project infrastructure design to limit the amount of habitat impacted. Moreover, the avoidance and minimisation mitigation measures are the most important with respect to the mitigation hierarchy (Figure 6-1). Therefore, the infrastructure footprint must be minimised to reduce the risk of impacts to the receiving environment.

The project area has been designated as a REDZ (Renewable Energy Development Zone) and taking into consideration that the grid infrastructure is necessary for the proposed energy developments, it is the opinion of the specialist that the authorisation of the proposed project may be favourably considered. It is recommended that should any future developments be proposed for the remaining extent of any 'Very High' or 'High' SEI areas within the associated properties, that offset strategies be required for these authorisations.

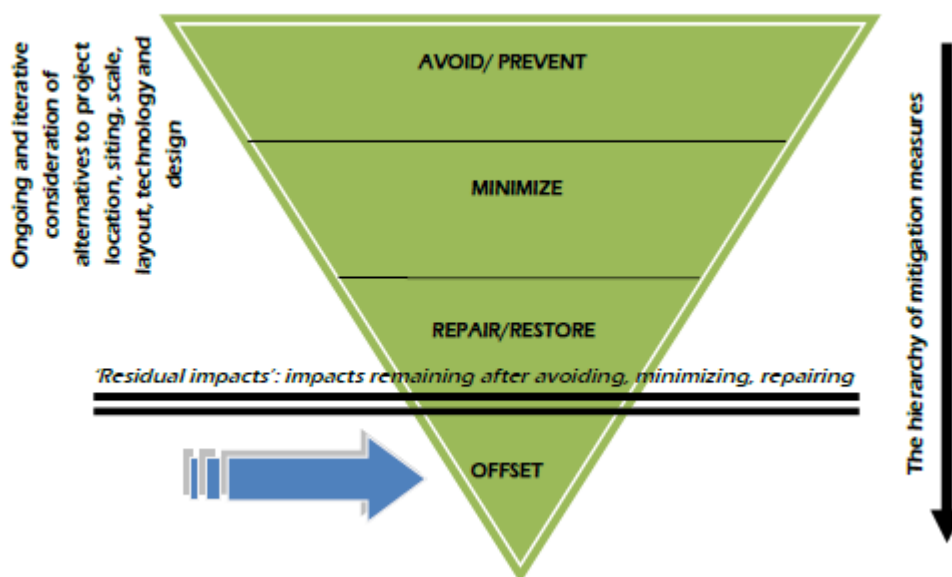


Figure 6-1 Schematic diagram illustrating the mitigation hierarchy indicating where residual impacts are considered. Source: (DFFE, 2021c)

The proposed solar facility is expected to pose a low residual risk to the delineated drainage lines, with key mitigation being the avoidance and adherence to the recommended buffer widths. Due to the low residual risk, a General Authorisation is required for the required water use authorisation.

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8 Appendix Items

8.1 Appendix A – Protocol Checklist

“Protocol for the Specialist Assessment and Minimum Report Content Requirements for Environmental Impacts on Terrestrial Biodiversity” gazetted 20 March 2020, published in Government Notice No. 320

Paragraph	Item	Pages	Comment
2.1	The assessment must be prepared by a specialist registered with the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professionals (SACNASP) with expertise in the field of terrestrial biodiversity.	i	
2.2	The assessment must be undertaken on the preferred site and within the proposed development footprint.	6, 12	
2.3.1	A description of the ecological drivers or processes of the system and how the proposed development will impact these.	39-41, 50, 55	
2.3.2	Ecological functioning and ecological processes (e.g., fire, migration, pollination, etc.) that operate within the preferred site	39-41, 50	
2.3.3	The ecological corridors that the proposed development would impede including migration and movement of flora and fauna.	22	
2.3.4	The description of any significant terrestrial landscape features (including rare or important flora-faunal associations, presence of strategic water source areas (SWSAs) or freshwater ecosystem priority area (FEPA) sub catchments.	23-24	
2.3.5	A description of terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems on the preferred site, including: (a) main vegetation types; (b) threatened ecosystems, including listed ecosystems as well as locally important habitat types identified.	19-20, 24-26	
2.3.6	The assessment must identify any alternative development footprints within the preferred site which would be of a “low” sensitivity as identified by the screening tool and verified through the site sensitivity verification.	-	No “low” sensitivity areas were identified due to the ecological condition of the site.
2.3.7.1	Terrestrial Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs), including: (a) the reasons why an area has been identified as a CBA; (b) an indication of whether or not the proposed development is consistent with maintaining the CBA in a natural or near natural state or in achieving the goal of rehabilitation; (c) the impact on species composition and structure of vegetation with an indication of the extent of clearing activities in proportion to the remaining extent of the ecosystem type(s); (d) the impact on ecosystem threat status; (e) the impact on explicit subtypes in the vegetation; (f) the impact on overall species and ecosystem diversity of the site; and (g) the impact on any changes to threat status of populations of species of conservation concern in the CBA.	-	No CBAs recorded within the assessment area
2.3.7.2	Terrestrial ecological support areas (ESAs), including: (a) the impact on the ecological processes that operate within or across the site; (b) the extent the proposed development will impact on the functionality of the ESA; and (c) loss of ecological connectivity (on site, and in relation to the broader landscape) due to the degradation and severing of ecological corridors or introducing barriers that impede migration and movement of flora and fauna.	22-23	
2.3.7.3	Protected areas as defined by the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2004 including- (a) an opinion on whether the proposed development aligns with the objectives or purpose of the protected area and the zoning as per the protected area management plan.	21-22	

2.3.7.4	Priority areas for protected area expansion, including- (a) the way in which in which the proposed development will compromise or contribute to the expansion of the protected area network.	-	Does not overlap NPAES areas
2.3.7.5	SWSAs including: (a) the impact(s) on the terrestrial habitat of a SWSA; and (b) the impacts of the proposed development on the SWSA water quality and quantity (e.g. describing potential increased runoff leading to increased sediment load in water courses)	-	Does not overlap a SWSA
2.3.7.6	FEPA sub catchments, including- (a) the impacts of the proposed development on habitat condition and species in the FEPA sub catchment	23-24	
2.3.7.7	indigenous forests, including: (a) impact on the ecological integrity of the forest; and (b) percentage of natural or near natural indigenous forest area lost and a statement on the implications in relation to the remaining areas.	-	No forest habitats within the area
3.1.1.	Contact details of the specialist, their SACNASP registration number, their field of expertise and a curriculum vitae.	Cover page i	
3.1.2	A signed statement of independence by the specialist.	92	
3.1.3	A statement on the duration, date and season of the site inspection and the relevance of the season to the outcome of the assessment.	6, 12	
3.1.4	A description of the methodology used to undertake the site verification and impact assessment and site inspection, including equipment and modelling used, where relevant.	12-15	
3.1.5	A description of the assumptions made and any uncertainties or gaps in knowledge or data as well as a statement of the timing and intensity of site inspection observations.	6	
3.1.6	A location of the areas not suitable for development, which are to be avoided during construction and operation (where relevant).	51	
3.1.7	Additional environmental impacts expected from the proposed development.	55-56	
3.1.8	Any direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of the proposed development.	56-64	
3.1.9	The degree to which impacts and risks can be mitigated.	56-64	
3.1.10	The degree to which the impacts and risks can be reversed.	56-64	
3.1.11	The degree to which the impacts and risks can cause loss of irreplaceable resources.	56-64	
3.1.12	Proposed impact management actions and impact management outcomes proposed by the specialist for inclusion in the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr).	65-67	
3.1.13	A motivation must be provided if there were development footprints identified as per paragraph 2.3.6 above that were identified as having a "low" terrestrial biodiversity sensitivity and that were not considered appropriate.	-	N/A
3.1.14	A substantiated statement, based on the findings of the specialist assessment, regarding the acceptability, or not, of the proposed development, if it should receive approval or not;	68-69	
3.1.15	any conditions to which this statement is subjected	68-69	

8.2 Appendix B – Flora species expected to occur in the project area

Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Endemism
<i>Adromischus filicaulis</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Adromischus hemisphaericus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Agrostis lachnantha</i>	LC	
<i>Aizoon glinoides</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Albuca exuviata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Albuca namaquensis</i>	LC	
<i>Albuca setosa</i>	LC	
<i>Albuca unifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Aloe broomii</i>	LC	
<i>Aloe claviflora</i>	LC	
<i>Aloe humilis</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Aloinopsis rosulata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Anacampseros albidiflora</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Anacampseros arachnoides</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Anacampseros filamentosa</i>		Endemic
<i>Anchusa riparia</i>	LC	
<i>Anisodontea anomala</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Anisodontea malvastroides</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Anisodontea sp.</i>		
<i>Anisodontea triloba</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Anthospermum dregei</i>	LC	
<i>Anthospermum sp.</i>		
<i>Anthospermum spathulatum</i>	LC	
<i>Antimima sp.</i>		
<i>Aptosimum indivisum</i>	LC	
<i>Aptosimum marlothii</i>	LC	
<i>Aptosimum procumbens</i>	LC	
<i>Aptosimum spinescens</i>	LC	
<i>Arctotis dregei</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Arctotis leiocarpa</i>	LC	
<i>Arctotis microcephala</i>	LC	
<i>Arctotis subacaulis</i>	LC	
<i>Argyrobium argenteum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Argyrobium sp.</i>		
<i>Aristida adscensionis</i>	LC	
<i>Aristida congesta</i>	LC	
<i>Aristida diffusa</i>	LC	
<i>Aristida engleri</i>	LC	
<i>Aristida junciformis</i>	LC	
<i>Aristida sp.</i>		
<i>Aspalathus aciphylla</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Aspalathus fusca</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Asparagus aethiopicus</i>	LC	
<i>Asparagus burchellii</i>	LC	Endemic

Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Endemism
<i>Asparagus capensis</i>	LC	
<i>Asparagus exuvialis</i>	LC	
<i>Asparagus laricinus</i>	LC	
<i>Asparagus lignosus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Asparagus mucronatus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>	LC	
<i>Asparagus retrofractus</i>	LC	
<i>Asparagus sp.</i>		
<i>Asparagus striatus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Asparagus suaveolens</i>	LC	
<i>Asplenium adiantum-nigrum</i>	LC	
<i>Asplenium cordatum</i>	LC	
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	LC	
<i>Astroloba congesta</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Astroloba foliolosa</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Athanasia microcephala</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Audouinia esterhuyseniae</i>	VU	Endemic
<i>Barleria stimulans</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Berkheya carlinifolia</i>		
<i>Berkheya glabrata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Berula thunbergii</i>	LC	
<i>Blepharis capensis</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Blepharis mitrata</i>	LC	
<i>Brachystelma circinatum</i>	LC	
<i>Buddleja glomerata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Buddleja salviifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Bulbine abyssinica</i>	LC	
<i>Bulbine frutescens</i>	LC	
<i>Bulbine lagopus</i>	LC	
<i>Bulbine narcissifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Bulbine sp.</i>		
<i>Bulbine triebneri</i>	LC	
<i>Bulbostylis humilis</i>	LC	
<i>Cadaba aphylla</i>	LC	
<i>Capeochloa arundinacea</i>	LC	
<i>Caputia tomentosa</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Carissa bispinosa</i>	LC	
<i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i>	LC	
<i>Cerastium capense</i>	LC	
<i>Ceropegia stapeliiformis</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Chaenostoma halimifolium</i>	LC	
<i>Chaenostoma macrosiphon</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Chaenostoma pauciflorum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Chaenostoma rotundifolium</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Chaenostoma sp.</i>		

Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Endemism
<i>Chascanum pumilum</i>	LC	
<i>Chasmatophyllum musculinum</i>	LC	
<i>Cheilanthes eckloniana</i>	LC	
<i>Cheilanthes hirta</i>		
<i>Cheilanthes induta</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Chironia palustris</i>	LC	
<i>Chloris virgata</i>	LC	
<i>Chrysocoma ciliata</i>	LC	
<i>Chrysocoma sp.</i>		
<i>Cineraria aspera</i>	LC	
<i>Clematis brachiata</i>	LC	
<i>Clutia sp.</i>		
<i>Clutia thunbergii</i>	LC	
<i>Colchicum melanthioides</i>		
<i>Colchicum striatum</i>	LC	
<i>Convolvulus sagittatus</i>	LC	
<i>Conyza scabrida</i>		
<i>Cotula microglossa</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Cotyledon cuneata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Cotyledon orbiculata</i>	LC	
<i>Cotyledon papillaris</i>	LC	
<i>Cotyledon sp.</i>		
<i>Crassula barbata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Crassula capitella</i>	LC	
<i>Crassula corallina</i>	LC	
<i>Crassula expansa</i>	LC	
<i>Crassula montana</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Crassula pubescens</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Crassula rupestris</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Crassula socialis</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Crassula tomentosa</i>	LC	
<i>Cromidon decumbens</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Cucumis africanus</i>	LC	
<i>Cucumis zeyheri</i>	LC	
<i>Curio articulatus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Curio radicans</i>	LC	
<i>Cussonia paniculata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Cymbopogon dieterlenii</i>	LC	
<i>Cymbopogon prolixus</i>	LC	
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	LC	
<i>Cynodon incompletus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Cyperus longus</i>	NE	
<i>Cyperus marginatus</i>	LC	
<i>Cyperus textilis</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Cyperus usitatus</i>	LC	

Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Endemism
<i>Delosperma</i> sp.		
<i>Dianthus micropetalus</i>	LC	
<i>Dianthus thunbergii</i>	NE	Endemic
<i>Diascia alonsooides</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Diascia capsularis</i>	LC	
<i>Dicerotheramnus rhinocerotis</i>		Endemic
<i>Dichilus gracilis</i>	LC	
<i>Dicoma picta</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Digitaria argyrograpta</i>	LC	
<i>Digitaria eriantha</i>	LC	
<i>Dimorphotheca cuneata</i>	LC	
<i>Dimorphotheca</i> sp.		
<i>Diospyros austroafricana</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Diospyros lycioides</i>	LC	
<i>Dipcadi viride</i>	LC	
<i>Drimia intricata</i>	LC	
<i>Drimia</i> sp.		
<i>Drosanthemum hispidum</i>	LC	
<i>Drosanthemum karrooense</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Drosanthemum lique</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Drosanthemum</i> sp.		
<i>Drosanthemum vespertinum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Duvalia maculata</i>	LC	
<i>Dysphania schraderiana</i>		
<i>Ehretia rigida</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Ehrharta calycina</i>	LC	
<i>Ehrharta erecta</i>	LC	
<i>Empodium flexile</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Empodium gloriosum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Enneapogon cenchroides</i>	LC	
<i>Enneapogon desvauxii</i>	LC	
<i>Enneapogon scaber</i>	LC	
<i>Enneapogon scoparius</i>	LC	
<i>Eragrostis bergiana</i>	LC	
<i>Eragrostis bicolor</i>	LC	
<i>Eragrostis chloromelas</i>	LC	
<i>Eragrostis cilianensis</i>	LC	
<i>Eragrostis curvula</i>	LC	
<i>Eragrostis homomalla</i>	LC	
<i>Eragrostis lehmanniana</i>	LC	
<i>Eragrostis obtusa</i>	LC	
<i>Eragrostis procumbens</i>	LC	
<i>Eragrostis truncata</i>	LC	
<i>Eriocephalus africanus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Eriocephalus ericoides</i>	LC	

Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Endemism
<i>Eriosephalus eximius</i>	LC	
<i>Eriosephalus microcephalus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Eriosephalus spinescens</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Eriosephalus tenuifolius</i>	LC	
<i>Eulophia hians</i>	LC	
<i>Eumorphia corymbosa</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Euphorbia braunsii</i>	LC	
<i>Euphorbia clavarioides</i>	LC	
<i>Euphorbia decepta</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Euphorbia hypogaea</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Euphorbia inaequilatera</i>	LC	
<i>Euphorbia mauritanica</i>	LC	
<i>Euphorbia patula</i>		Endemic
<i>Euphorbia pentagona</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Euphorbia rhombifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Euphorbia spartaria</i>	LC	
<i>Euphorbia stellispina</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Euphorbia stolonifera</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Euryops anthemoides</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Euryops cuneatus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Euryops empetrifolius</i>	LC	
<i>Euryops imbricatus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Euryops lateriflorus</i>	LC	
<i>Euryops oligoglossus</i>	LC	
<i>Euryops subcarnosus</i>	LC	
<i>Faurea recondita</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Felicia fascicularis</i>	LC	
<i>Felicia filifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Felicia hirsuta</i>	LC	
<i>Felicia hyssopifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Felicia muricata</i>	LC	
<i>Felicia namaquana</i>	LC	
<i>Felicia ovata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Felicia sp.</i>		
<i>Festuca scabra</i>	LC	
<i>Fingerhuthia africana</i>	LC	
<i>Fingerhuthia sesleriiformis</i>	LC	
<i>Forsskaolea candida</i>	LC	
<i>Frankenia pulverulenta</i>	LC	
<i>Fuirena coerulescens</i>	LC	
<i>Galenia africana</i>	LC	
<i>Galenia glandulifera</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Galenia papulosa</i>	LC	
<i>Galenia procumbens</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Galenia sarcophylla</i>	LC	

Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Endemism
<i>Galium capense</i>	LC	
<i>Galium tomentosum</i>	LC	
<i>Garuleum bipinnatum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Gasteria disticha</i>		
<i>Gasteria sp.</i>		
<i>Gazania heterochaeta</i>	LC	
<i>Gazania krebsiana</i>		
<i>Gazania lichtensteinii</i>	LC	
<i>Gazania sp.</i>		
<i>Geigeria filifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Geigeria ornativa</i>	LC	
<i>Geranium dregei</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Geranium harveyi</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Gerbera piloselloides</i>	LC	
<i>Gethyllis longistyla</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Gisekia pharnaceoides</i>		
<i>Gladiolus permeabilis</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Gnaphalium capense</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Gnidia meyeri</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Gomphocarpus filiformis</i>	LC	
<i>Gomphocarpus fruticosus</i>	LC	
<i>Gomphocarpus tomentosus</i>	LC	
<i>Gorteria alienata</i>		Endemic
<i>Grewia robusta</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Guthriea capensis</i>	LC	
<i>Haemanthus humilis</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Haworthia marumiana</i>	NE	Endemic
<i>Haworthia semiviva</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Haworthiopsis fasciata</i>		Endemic
<i>Haworthiopsis nigra</i>		Endemic
<i>Haworthiopsis tessellata</i>		
<i>Hebenstretia parviflora</i>	LC	
<i>Hebenstretia robusta</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Hebenstretia sp.</i>		
<i>Helichrysum asperum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Helichrysum caespititium</i>	LC	
<i>Helichrysum dregeanum</i>	LC	
<i>Helichrysum hamulosum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Helichrysum lineare</i>	LC	
<i>Helichrysum lucilioides</i>	LC	
<i>Helichrysum pumilio</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Helichrysum rugulosum</i>	LC	
<i>Helichrysum scitulum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Helichrysum sp.</i>		
<i>Helichrysum trilineatum</i>	LC	

Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Endemism
<i>Helichrysum zeyheri</i>	LC	
<i>Heliophila carnosia</i>	LC	
<i>Heliophila crithmifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Heliophila minima</i>	LC	
<i>Heliophila</i> sp.		
<i>Hermannia althaeifolia</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Hermannia burkei</i>	LC	
<i>Hermannia cernua</i>	LC	
<i>Hermannia coccocarpa</i>	LC	
<i>Hermannia comosa</i>	LC	
<i>Hermannia cuneifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Hermannia desertorum</i>	LC	
<i>Hermannia filifolia</i>	NE	Endemic
<i>Hermannia grandiflora</i>	LC	
<i>Hermannia pulchella</i>	LC	
<i>Hermannia</i> sp.		
<i>Hermannia spinosa</i>	LC	
<i>Hermannia stricta</i>	LC	
<i>Hermannia vestita</i>	LC	
<i>Hertia ciliata</i>	LC	
<i>Heteromorpha arborescens</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Heteropogon contortus</i>	LC	
<i>Hibiscus pusillus</i>	LC	
<i>Holothrix villosa</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Huernia barbata</i>	LC	
<i>Huernia thuretii</i>	LC	
<i>Hyparrhenia hirta</i>	LC	
<i>Indigofera alternans</i>		
<i>Indigofera heterophylla</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Indigofera meyeriana</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Indigofera sessilifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Indigofera</i> sp.		
<i>Isolepis angelica</i>	LC	
<i>Isolepis cernua</i>	LC	
<i>Isolepis setacea</i>	LC	
<i>Ixia marginifolia</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Jamesbrittenia atropurpurea</i>	LC	
<i>Jamesbrittenia filicaulis</i>	LC	
<i>Jamesbrittenia</i> sp.		
<i>Jamesbrittenia tysonii</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Juncus acutus</i>	LC	
<i>Juncus exsertus</i>	LC	
<i>Juncus inflexus</i>	LC	
<i>Juncus scabriusculus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Justicia incana</i>		

Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Endemism
<i>Justicia spartioides</i>		
<i>Kewa salsoloides</i>	LC	
<i>Kiggelaria africana</i>	LC	
<i>Lachenalia aurioliae</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Lacomucinaea lineata</i>		
<i>Lactuca inermis</i>	LC	
<i>Lantana rugosa</i>	LC	
<i>Lasiosiphon deserticola</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Lasiosiphon polycephalus</i>	LC	
<i>Lasiosiphon sp.</i>		
<i>Leonotis ocyimifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Leptochloa fusca</i>	LC	
<i>Lessertia annularis</i>	LC	
<i>Lessertia frutescens</i>	LC	
<i>Lessertia inflata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Lessertia pauciflora</i>		
<i>Lessertia sp.</i>		
<i>Leysera gnaphalodes</i>	LC	
<i>Leysera tenella</i>	LC	
<i>Limeum aethiopicum</i>	NE	Endemic
<i>Limosella grandiflora</i>	LC	
<i>Limosella vesiculosa</i>	LC	
<i>Lithospermum scabrum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Lobelia dregeana</i>	LC	
<i>Lobelia thermalis</i>	LC	
<i>Lobostemon stachydeus</i>	LC	
<i>Lotononis azureoides</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Lotononis caeruleascens</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Lotononis fruticoides</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Lycium cinereum</i>	LC	
<i>Lycium hirsutum</i>	LC	
<i>Lycium horridum</i>	LC	
<i>Lycium pumilum</i>	LC	
<i>Lycium schizocalyx</i>	LC	
<i>Malephora thunbergii</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Marsilea burchellii</i>	LC	
<i>Massonia echinata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Melianthus comosus</i>	LC	
<i>Melica decumbens</i>	LC	
<i>Melica racemosa</i>	LC	
<i>Melinis repens</i>	LC	
<i>Melolobium candicans</i>	LC	
<i>Melolobium canescens</i>	LC	
<i>Melolobium microphyllum</i>	LC	
<i>Melolobium sp.</i>		

Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Endemism
<i>Mentha longifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Mesembryanthemum articulatum</i>		
<i>Mesembryanthemum coriarium</i>		
<i>Mesembryanthemum crystallinum</i>	LC	
<i>Mesembryanthemum emarcidum</i>		Endemic
<i>Mesembryanthemum excavatum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Mesembryanthemum geniculiflorum</i>		
<i>Mesembryanthemum grossum</i>		Endemic
<i>Mesembryanthemum guerichianum</i>	LC	
<i>Mesembryanthemum inachabense</i>	LC	
<i>Mesembryanthemum noctiflorum</i>		
<i>Mesembryanthemum stenandrum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Mesembryanthemum tetragonum</i>		
<i>Mestoklema arboriforme</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Mestoklema tuberosum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Microloma armatum</i>	LC	
<i>Monsonia salmoniflora</i>	LC	
<i>Moquiella rubra</i>	LC	
<i>Moraea ciliata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Moraea cookii</i>	LC	
<i>Moraea crispa</i>	LC	
<i>Moraea polystachya</i>	LC	
<i>Moraea speciosa</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Moraea unguiculata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Muraltia macrocarpa</i>	LC	
<i>Nemesia cynanchifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Nemesia fruticans</i>	LC	
<i>Nemesia linearis</i>	LC	
<i>Nemesia sp.</i>		
<i>Nenax microphylla</i>	LC	
<i>Nesaea anagalloides</i>	LC	
<i>Notobubon laevigatum</i>	LC	
<i>Oedera glandulosa</i>		Endemic
<i>Oedera humilis</i>		
<i>Oedera oppositifolia</i>		Endemic
<i>Oedera spinescens</i>		Endemic
<i>Ophioglossum polyphyllum</i>	LC	
<i>Ornithogalum flexuosum</i>	LC	
<i>Ornithogalum hispidum</i>	LC	
<i>Ornithoglossum vulgare</i>	LC	
<i>Oropetium capense</i>	LC	
<i>Osteospermum calendulaceum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Osteospermum muricatum</i>	LC	
<i>Osteospermum scariosum</i>	NE	Endemic
<i>Osteospermum sinuatum</i>	LC	

Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Endemism
<i>Othonna eriocarpa</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Othonna furcata</i>	LC	
<i>Othonna pavonia</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Othonna</i> sp.		
<i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i>	LC	
<i>Oxalis psilopoda</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Panicum maximum</i>	LC	
<i>Passerina corymbosa</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pegolettia retrofracta</i>	LC	
<i>Pelargonium abrotanifolium</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pelargonium aridum</i>	LC	
<i>Pelargonium glutinosum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pelargonium griseum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pelargonium grossularioides</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pelargonium laxum</i>		Endemic
<i>Pelargonium malacoides</i>		
<i>Pelargonium multicaule</i>	LC	
<i>Pelargonium ramosissimum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pelargonium ribifolium</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pelargonium senecioides</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pelargonium sessiliflorum</i>		Endemic
<i>Pelargonium sidoides</i>	LC	
<i>Pelargonium tetragonum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pelargonium tragacanthoides</i>	LC	
<i>Peliostomum leucorrhizum</i>	LC	
<i>Pellaea calomelanos</i>	LC	
<i>Pennisetum sphacelatum</i>	LC	
<i>Pentameris airoides</i>	LC	
<i>Pentzia calcarea</i>	LC	
<i>Pentzia incana</i>	LC	
<i>Pentzia lanata</i>	LC	
<i>Pentzia quinquefida</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	LC	
<i>Phylica purpurea</i>		
<i>Phymaspermum parvifolium</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Piранthus comptus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Piранthus geminatus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pleiospilos compactus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Plinthus karoocicus</i>	LC	
<i>Polygala ephedroides</i>	LC	
<i>Polygala leptophylla</i>	LC	
<i>Polygala</i> sp.		
<i>Polypogon</i> sp.		
<i>Pseudognaphalium undulatum</i>	LC	
<i>Pseudoschoenus inanis</i>	LC	

Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Endemism
<i>Pteronia adenocarpa</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pteronia bolusii</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pteronia hutchinsoniana</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pteronia membranacea</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Pteronia staezelinoides</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Radyera urens</i>	LC	
<i>Ranunculus multifidus</i>	LC	
<i>Ranunculus trichophyllus</i>	LC	
<i>Relhania</i> sp.		
<i>Rhamnus prinoides</i>	LC	
<i>Rhigozum obovatum</i>	LC	
<i>Rhigozum trichotomum</i>	LC	
<i>Rhynchosia capensis</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Roepera incrustata</i>		
<i>Roepera lichtensteiniana</i>		
<i>Romulea atrandra</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Romulea macowanii</i>	LC	
<i>Rubus ludwigii</i>	LC	
<i>Ruschia intricata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Ruschia</i> sp.		
<i>Ruschia spinosa</i>	LC	
<i>Salsola aphylla</i>	LC	
<i>Salsola atrata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Salsola dealata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Salsola minutifolia</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Salsola rabieana</i>	LC	
<i>Salsola seminuda</i>	LC	
<i>Salsola tuberculata</i>	LC	
<i>Salvia disermas</i>	LC	
<i>Salvia stenophylla</i>		
<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	LC	
<i>Schismus barbatus</i>	LC	
<i>Schlechteranthus spinescens</i>		Endemic
<i>Schoenoxiphium</i> sp.		
<i>Scleranthus</i> sp.		
<i>Searsia burchellii</i>	LC	
<i>Searsia lancea</i>	LC	
<i>Searsia pallens</i>	LC	
<i>Searsia pyroides</i>	LC	
<i>Searsia undulata</i>	LC	
<i>Sebaea</i> sp.		
<i>Selago albida</i>	LC	
<i>Selago centralis</i>	LC	
<i>Selago geniculata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Selago magnakarooica</i>	LC	Endemic

Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Endemism
<i>Selago saxatilis</i>	LC	
<i>Selago sp.</i>		
<i>Senecio achilleifolius</i>	LC	
<i>Senecio angustifolius</i>	LC	
<i>Senecio asperulus</i>	LC	
<i>Senecio burchellii</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Senecio cordifolius</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Senecio cotyledonis</i>	LC	
<i>Senecio hastatus</i>	LC	
<i>Senecio inaequidens</i>	LC	
<i>Senecio niveus</i>	LC	
<i>Senecio pinnulatus</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Sericocoma avolans</i>	LC	
<i>Setaria sphacelata</i>	LC	
<i>Setaria verticillata</i>	LC	
<i>Silene burchellii</i>		
<i>Silene undulata</i>		
<i>Solanum capense</i>	LC	
<i>Solanum retroflexum</i>	LC	
<i>Solanum tomentosum</i>		
<i>Sonchus dregeanus</i>	LC	
<i>Sporobolus fimbriatus</i>	LC	
<i>Sporobolus ioclados</i>	LC	
<i>Sporobolus tenellus</i>	LC	
<i>Stachys cuneata</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Stachys dregeana</i>	LC	
<i>Stachys linearis</i>	LC	
<i>Stachys rugosa</i>	LC	
<i>Stapelia grandiflora</i>	LC	
<i>Stipagrostis anomala</i>	LC	
<i>Stipagrostis ciliata</i>	LC	
<i>Stipagrostis namaquensis</i>	LC	
<i>Stipagrostis obtusa</i>	LC	
<i>Stipagrostis uniplumis</i>	LC	
<i>Stomatium sp.</i>		
<i>Syringodea concolor</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Talinum caffrum</i>	LC	
<i>Tamarix usneoides</i>	LC	
<i>Tarchonanthus minor</i>	LC	
<i>Tenaxia disticha</i>		
<i>Tetraena chrysopteron</i>		
<i>Tetraena microcarpa</i>		
<i>Tetragonia arbuscula</i>	LC	
<i>Tetragonia spicata</i>	LC	
<i>Teucrium africanum</i>	LC	Endemic

Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Endemism
<i>Teucrium trifidum</i>	LC	
<i>Themeda triandra</i>	LC	
<i>Thesium hystrix</i>	LC	
<i>Thesium sonderianum</i>	DD	Endemic
<i>Trachyandra acocksii</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Trachyandra jacquiniana</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Tragus berteronianus</i>	LC	
<i>Tragus koelerioides</i>	LC	
<i>Tragus racemosus</i>	LC	
<i>Trianthera parvifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Tribolium purpureum</i>	LC	
<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>	LC	
<i>Trichodesma africanum</i>	LC	
<i>Trichodiadema barbatum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Trichodiadema intonsum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Trichodiadema setuliferum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Trichodiadema sp.</i>		
<i>Tridentea jucunda</i>	LC	
<i>Trisetopsis hirtula</i>		
<i>Tritonia laxifolia</i>	LC	
<i>Troglophyton capillaceum</i>	LC	
<i>Tylecodon reticulatus</i>	LC	
<i>Tylecodon wallichii</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Typha capensis</i>	LC	
<i>Urochloa panicoides</i>	LC	
<i>Ursinia nana</i>	LC	
<i>Urtica lobulata</i>	LC	
<i>Vachellia karroo</i>	LC	
<i>Veltheimia capensis</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Veronica anagallis-aquatica</i>	LC	
<i>Viscum continuum</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Viscum rotundifolium</i>	LC	
<i>Wahlenbergia cernua</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Wahlenbergia nodosa</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Wahlenbergia sp.</i>		
<i>Wahlenbergia tenella</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Wahlenbergia undulata</i>	LC	
<i>Xysmalobium gomphocarpoides</i>	LC	Endemic
<i>Zaluzianskya venusta</i>	LC	Endemic

8.3 Appendix C – Amphibian species expected to occur in the project area

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	Conservation Status
Bufonidae	<i>Poyntonophrynus vertebralis</i>	Southern Pygmy Toad	LC
Bufonidae	<i>Vandijkophrynus gariepensis gariepensis</i>	Karoo Toad (subsp. gariepensis)	LC
Pipidae	<i>Xenopus laevis</i>	Common Platanna	LC
Pyxicephalidae	<i>Amietia fuscigula</i>	Cape River Frog	LC
Pyxicephalidae	<i>Amietia poyntoni</i>	Poynton's River Frog	LC
Pyxicephalidae	<i>Cacosternum boettgeri</i>	Common Caco	LC

8.4 Appendix D – Reptile species expected to occur in the project area

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	Conservation Status
Agamidae	<i>Agama aculeata aculeata</i>	Common Ground Agama	LC
Agamidae	<i>Agama atra</i>	Southern Rock Agama	LC
Chamaeleonidae	<i>Bradypodion ventrale</i>	Eastern Cape Dwarf Chameleon	LC
Cordylidae	<i>Cordylus cordylus</i>	Cape Girdled Lizard	LC
Cordylidae	<i>Cordylus minor</i>	Western Dwarf Girdled Lizard	LC
Cordylidae	<i>Karusasaurus polyzonus</i>	Karoo Girdled Lizard	LC
Cordylidae	<i>Pseudocordylus microlepidotus namaquensis</i>	Nuweveldberg Crag Lizard	LC
Elapidae	<i>Naja nivea</i>	Cape Cobra	LC
Gekkonidae	<i>Afroedura karroica</i>	Karoo Flat Gecko	LC
Gekkonidae	<i>Chondrodactylus bibronii</i>	Bibron's Gecko	LC
Gekkonidae	<i>Pachydactylus capensis</i>	Cape Gecko	LC
Gekkonidae	<i>Pachydactylus maculatus</i>	Spotted Gecko	LC
Lacertidae	<i>Pedioplanis burchelli</i>	Burchell's Sand Lizard	LC
Lacertidae	<i>Pedioplanis lineocellata pulchella</i>	Common Sand Lizard	LC
Lacertidae	<i>Pedioplanis namaquensis</i>	Namaqua Sand Lizard	LC
Lamprophiidae	<i>Psammophis notostictus</i>	Karoo Sand Snake	LC
Lamprophiidae	<i>Pseudaspis cana</i>	Mole Snake	LC
Scincidae	<i>Acontias meleagris</i>	Cape Legless Skink	LC
Scincidae	<i>Trachylepis homalocephala</i>	Red-sided Skink	LC
Scincidae	<i>Trachylepis sulcata sulcata</i>	Western Rock Skink	LC
Scincidae	<i>Trachylepis variegata</i>	Variiegated Skink	LC
Testudinidae	<i>Homopus femoralis</i>	Greater Padloper	LC
Testudinidae	<i>Psammobates tentorius tentorius</i>	Karoo Tent Tortoise	NT
Testudinidae	<i>Stigmochelys pardalis</i>	Leopard Tortoise	LC
Varanidae	<i>Varanus albigularis albigularis</i>	Rock Monitor	LC
Viperidae	<i>Bitis arietans arietans</i>	Puff Adder	LC

8.5 Appendix E – Mammal species expected to occur within the project area

Family	Scientific Name	Conservation Status
Bathyergidae	<i>Cryptomys hottentotus</i>	LC
Bovidae	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>	LC
Bovidae	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>	LC
Bovidae	<i>Pelea capreolus</i>	LC
Bovidae	<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus</i>	LC
Bovidae	<i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>	LC
Bovidae	<i>Tragelaphus oryx</i>	LC
Bovidae	<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>	LC
Canidae	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>	LC
Canidae	<i>Vulpes chama</i>	LC
Canidae	<i>Otocyon megalotis</i>	LC
Cercopithecidae	<i>Papio ursinus</i>	LC
Chrysochloridae	<i>Chlorotalpa sclateri</i>	LC
Felidae	<i>Felis nigripes</i>	VU
Felidae	<i>Leptailurus serval</i>	LC
Felidae	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	VU
Felidae	<i>Caracal caracal</i>	LC
Felidae	<i>Felis silvestris</i>	LC
Gliridae	<i>Graphiurus ocellaris</i>	LC
Herpestidae	<i>Cynictis penicillata</i>	LC
Herpestidae	<i>Herpestes pulverulentus</i>	LC
Herpestidae	<i>Suricata suricatta</i>	LC
Hyaenidae	<i>Parahyaena brunnea</i>	NT
Hyaenidae	<i>Proteles cristata</i>	LC
Hystricidae	<i>Hystrix africaeaustralis</i>	LC
Leporidae	<i>Lepus capensis</i>	LC
Leporidae	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>	LC
Leporidae	<i>Pronolagus saundersiae</i>	LC
Macroscelididae	<i>Macroscelides proboscideus</i>	LC
Macroscelididae	<i>Elephantulus rupestris</i>	LC
Macroscelididae	<i>Elephantulus edwardii</i>	LC
Muridae	<i>Aethomys granti</i>	LC
Muridae	<i>Aethomys namaquensis</i>	LC
Muridae	<i>Desmodillus auricularis</i>	LC
Muridae	<i>Gerbillurus paebe</i>	LC
Muridae	<i>Otomys unisulcatus</i>	LC
Muridae	<i>Parotomys brantsii</i>	LC
Muridae	<i>Parotomys littledalei</i>	LC
Muridae	<i>Mus musculus</i>	LC
Muridae	<i>Mastomys coucha</i>	LC
Muridae	<i>Rhabdomys pumilio</i>	LC
Mustelidae	<i>Aonyx capensis</i>	NT
Mustelidae	<i>Ictonyx striatus</i>	LC
Mustelidae	<i>Mellivora capensis</i>	LC

Mustelidae	<i>Poecilogale albinucha</i>	LC
Nesomyidae	<i>Malacothrix typica</i>	LC
Orycteropodidae	<i>Orycteropus afer</i>	LC
Procaviidae	<i>Procavia capensis</i>	LC
Pteropodidae	<i>Rousettus aegyptiacus</i>	LC
Sciuridae	<i>Xerus inauris</i>	LC
Soricidae	<i>Suncus varilla</i>	LC
Soricidae	<i>Crocidura cyanea</i>	LC
Viverridae	<i>Genetta genetta</i>	LC

8.6 Appendix G – Specialists Declarations

I, Mahomed Desai, declare that:

- I act as the independent specialist in this application;
- I will perform the work relating to the application in an objective manner, even if this results in views and findings that are not favourable to the applicant;
- I declare that there are no circumstances that may compromise my objectivity in performing such work;
- I have expertise in conducting the specialist report relevant to this application, including knowledge of the Act, regulations and any guidelines that have relevance to the proposed activity;
- I will comply with the Act, regulations and all other applicable legislation;
- I have no, and will not engage in, conflicting interests in the undertaking of the activity;
- I undertake to disclose to the applicant and the competent authority all material information in my possession that reasonably has or may have the potential of influencing any decision to be taken with respect to the application by the competent authority; and the objectivity of any report, plan or document to be prepared by myself for submission to the competent authority;
- All the particulars furnished by me in this form are true and correct; and
- I realise that a false declaration is an offence in terms of Regulation 71 and is punishable in terms of Section 24F of the Act.



Mahomed Desai

Biodiversity Specialist

The Biodiversity Company

May 2022