ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING

# REPORT

# ESKOM (PTY) LTD

## VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (VIA)

**REPORT REF: 21-1577**

**PORTION 0 OF THE FARM WELDABA 567 JQ - NORTH WEST PROVINCE.)**

**2022-02-07**

VERSION DD

**Updated- 24/3/2022**

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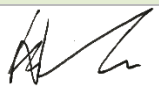
| AA – draft | 2022-01-28 | Neel Breitenbach |  | First draft for review / comments |
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Eskom (Pty) Ltd appointed MuTingati Environmental and Projects (Pty) Ltd to undertake environmental authorisation associated with the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project. The applicant wants to construct an overhead 88kV powerline with a length of ~2.3km comprising of Portion 0 of the farm Weldaba 567 JQ in the North West Province of South Africa.

Eco Elementum (Pty) Ltd is to undertake the Visual Impact Assessment for the Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project.

Safari Rural substation is an 88/11kV substation supplying the South African Nuclear Energy Corporation SOC Limited (NECSA). The substation is supplied through 88kV oil filled cables. The cables sometimes loses pressure and results in loss of supply to the substation.

In order to address the situation on the substation and the environment, Eskom North West Operating Unit initiated a project. The project include replacing the existing 2X 88kV oil cable with 1 x 88kV chickadee power line of approximately 2.3km. Refurbish the Safari Rural Substation by replacing old and redundant equipment. The project falls under Madibeng Local Municipality in the North West Province. The proposed project will require Basic Assessment in terms of National Management Act, 1998 (107 of 1998).

The scope of work for this Visual Impact Assessment will include:

1. Describe the existing visual characteristics of the proposed sites and its environs;
2. Viewshed and viewing distance using GIS analysis up to 5 km from the proposed structures;
3. Visual Exposure Analysis; and
4. Determine the option with the least visual impact.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The construction and operation phase of the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project related activities and its associated infrastructure will have a MODERATE visual impact on the natural scenic resources and the topography. However, with the correct mitigation measures the impact might decrease to a point where the visual impact can be seen as less significant. The moderating factors of the visual impact of the proposed powerline in close range are the following:

- Number of human inhabitants located in the area;
- Natural topography and vegetation;
- Mitigation measures that will be implemented such as the painting of structures;
- The length of the powerline; and
- High absorption capacity of the landscape.

In light of the above mentioned factors that reduce the impact of the powerline, the visual impact is assessed as MODERATE VISUAL IMPACT after mitigation measures have been implemented.

**Table 1: The overall Assessment of the Visual Impact**

| **Nature of impact: The overall Assessment of the Visual Impact of the area.** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Unmitigated** | **Mitigated** |
| **Assessment Criteria** | **Severity** [Insignificant / non-harmful (1); Small / potentially harmful (2); Significant / slightly harmful (3); Great / harmful (4); Disastrous / extremely harmful / within a regulated sensitive area (5)] | **2** | **2** |
| | **Spatial Scale** [Area specific (at impact site) (1); Whole site (entire surface right) (2); Local (within 5km) (3); Regional / neighbouring areas (5 km to 50 km) (4); National (5)] | **4** | **2** |
| | **Duration** [One day to one month (immediate) (1); One month to one year (Short term) (2); One year to 10 years (medium term) (3); Life of the activity (long term) (4); Beyond life of the activity (permanent) (5)] | **4** | **4** |

| **Nature of impact: The overall Assessment of the Visual Impact of the area.** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Frequency of Activity** [Annually or less (1); 6 monthly (2); Monthly (3); Weekly (4); Daily (5)] | **5** | **5** |
| | **Frequency of Incident/Impact** [Almost never / almost impossible / >20% (1); Very seldom / highly unlikely / >40% (2); Infrequent / unlikely / seldom / >60% (3); Often / regularly / likely / possible / >80% (4); Daily / highly likely / definitely / >100% (5) | **4** | **3** |
| | **Legal Issues** [No legislation(1); Fully covered by legislation (5)] | **1** | **1** |
| | **Detection** [Immediately(1); Without much effort (2); Need some effort (3); Remote and difficult to observe (4); Covered (5)] | **3** | **3** |
| **Consequence** | Severity + Spatial Scale + Duration | **10** | **8** |
| **Likelihood** | Frequency of Activity + Frequency of impact + Legal issues + Detection | **13** | **12** |
| **Risk** | Consequence * Likelihood | **MODERATE (130)** | **MODERATE (96)** |
| **Mitigation:** | The visual impact can be minimized by:<br>Building the powerlines and pylons next to existing linear structures as far as possible;<br>Clear vegetation only by cutting and not earth moving equipment; and<br>Use of existing roads for access where possible. | | |
| **Cumulative Impact:** | The construction of the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline structures with its associated infrastructure will increase the cumulative visual impact of powerline infrastructure within the region. | | |

The Visual Impact due to powerline infrastructure can be seen as having a MODERATE impact on the surrounding environment and inhabitants before mitigation measures are implemented. After mitigation, the visual impact can be seen as MODERATE although lower. If the mitigation measures are not done correctly then the visual impact will remain high moderate and become a concern. However, with correct mitigation, the impact will be low moderate.

## MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation measures may be considered in two categories:

- Primary measures that intrinsically comprise part of the development design through an iterative process. Mitigation measures are more effective if they are implemented from project inception when alternatives are being considered.
- Secondary measures designed to specifically address the remaining negative effects of the final development proposals.

Primary measures to be implemented will mainly be measures that will minimise the visual impact by softening the visibility of the structures by "blending" with the surrounding areas. Such measures will include:

- Rehabilitation of the construction areas by re-vegetation of the sites and surrounding area;
- Building the Powerlines and pylons next to existing linear structures as far as possible;
- Clear vegetation only by cutting and not earth moving equipment; and
- Use of existing roads for access roads where possible.

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## Definition of Terms

| | |
|---|---|
| **Assessment** | A systematic, independent and documented review of operations and practises to ensure that relevant requirements are met. |
| **Construction** | The time period that corresponds to any event, process, or activity that occurs during the Construction phase (e.g., building of site, buildings, and processing units) of the proposed project. This phase terminates when the project goes into full operation or use. |
| **Critical viewpoints** | Important points from where viewers will be able to view the proposed or actual development and from where the development may be significant. |
| **Cumulative Impacts** | The summation of the effects that result from changes caused by a development in conjunction with the other past, present or reasonably foreseen actions (The landscape Institute, Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment. 2002) |
| **Decommissioning** | to remove or retire (a mine, etc.) from active service. |
| **Environmental Component** | An attribute or constituent of the environment (i.e., air quality; marine water; waste management; geology, seismicity, soil, and groundwater; marine ecology; terrestrial ecology, noise, traffic, socio-economic) that may be impacted by the proposed project. |
| **Environmental Impact** | A positive or negative condition that occurs to an environmental component as a result of the activity of a project or facility. This impact can be directly or indirectly caused by the project's different phases (i.e., Construction, Operation, and Decommissioning). |
| **Field of view:** | The field of view is the angular extent of the observable world that is seen at any given moment. Humans have an almost 180º forward-facing field of view. Note that human stereoscopic (binocular) vision only covers 140º of the field of view in humans; the remaining peripheral 40º have no binocular vision due to the lack of overlap of the images of the eyes. The lower the focal length of a lens (see below), the wider the field of view. |
| **Landscape Integrity** | Landscape integrity is visual qualities, which enhance the visual and aesthetic experience of the area |
| **Mitigation (in the context of Visual Impact Assessment):** | Any action taken or not taken in order to avoid, minimise, rectify, reduce, eliminate, or compensate for actual or potential adverse visual impacts. |
| **Operation** | The time period that corresponds to any event, process, or activity that occurs during the Operation (i.e., fully functioning) phase of the proposed project or development. (The Operation phase follows the Construction phase, and then terminates when the project or development goes into the Decommissioning phase.) |
| **Record of Decision** | Is an environmental authorisation issued by a state department. |
| **Scenic value** | Degree of visual quality resulting from the level of variety, harmony and contrast among the basic visual elements. |
| **Sense of place** | the character of a place, whether natural, rural or urban, it is allocated to a place or area through cognitive experience by the user. |
| **Visual absorption capacity (VAC):** | The ability of elements of the landscape to "absorb" or mitigate the visibility of an element in the landscape. Visual absorption capacity is based on factors such as vegetation height (the greater the height of vegetation, the higher the absorption capacity), structures (the larger and higher the intervening structures, the higher the absorption capacity) and topographical variation (rolling topography presents opportunities to hide an element in the landscape and therefore increases the absorption capacity). |
| **Visual character** | the overall impression of a landscape created by the order of the patterns composing it; the visual elements of these patterns are the form, line, colour and texture of the landscape's components. Their interrelationships are described in terms of dominance, scale, diversity and continuity. This characteristic is also associated with land use. |
| **Visual Exposure** | Visual exposure is based on distance from the project to selected viewpoints. Visual exposure or visual impact tends to diminish exponentially with distance. The visibility or visual exposure of any structure or activity is the point of departure for the visual impact assessment. It stands to reason that if the proposed activities and associated infrastructure were not visible, no visual impact would occur. Visual exposure is determined by the Viewshed or the view catchment being the area within which the proposed development will be visible. |
| **Visual Integrity** | Visual integrity can be determined by a number of factors in combination, such as prominent topographic or other scenic features, including high points, steep slopes and axial vistas |
| **Visually sensitive** | Areas in the landscape from where the visual impact is readily or excessively encountered. |

## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **CA:** | Competent Authority |
| **DFFE:** | Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (Former Department of Environmental Affairs) |
| **DMR:** | The Department of Mineral Resources (The former Department of Minerals and Energy) |
| **DWA:** | Department of Water Affairs (Is now referred to the Department of Water and Sanitation – DWS) |
| **EIA:** | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| **EMP:** | Environmental Management Plan |
| **EMPr**: | Environmental Management Programme |
| **I&AP's:** | Interested and Affected Parties |
| **IWUL:** | Integrated Water Use License |
| **IWWMP:** | Integrated Water and Water Management Plan |
| **MPRDA:** | Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 28 of 2002 |
| **NAAQS:** | National Ambient Air Quality Standards |
| **NEMA:** | National Environmental Management Act, 107 of 1998 |
| **NEMAQA:** | National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 39 of 2004 |
| **NEMBA:** | National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 10 of 2004 |
| **NEMWA:** | National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 59 of 2008 |
| **NHRA:** | National Heritage Resources Act, 25 of 1999 |
| **NWA:** | National Water Act, 36 of 1998 |
| **ROD:** | Record of Decision |
| **VAC**: | Visual Absorption Capability |
| **VIA**: | Visual Impact Assessment |
| **WSA:** | Water Services Act, 108 of 1997 |
| **WUL*:*** | Water Use Licence |

## PROJECT INFORMATION

Table 2: Applicant Details

| Name of Applicant: | Eskom Holdings SOC Limited |
|---|---|
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| Postal Address: | 16 Kgwebo Street, Mabe Park, Waterfall East Rustenburg, 0321 |
| Physical Address: | 16 Kgwebo Street, Mabe Park, Waterfall East Rustenburg, 0321 |
| File Reference Number DMR: | |

Table 3: EAP Details

| EAP Company: | MuTingati Environmental and Projects |
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| Postal Address: | 476 Felstead Avenue, 121 Grand Rapids, Northriding, 2169 |
| Contact Person: | Lizette Kloppers |
| Contact Number: | 061 524 2211 |
| Email: | lizette@earthnsky.co.za |
| Website: | |

Table 4: Specialist Details

| Specialist Company: | Eco Elementum (Pty) Ltd |
|---|---|
| Company Reg. No.: | 2012/021578/07 |
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| Postal Address: | Postnet Suite #252, Private Bag X025. Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria, 0040 |
| Contact Person: | Neel Breitenbach |
| Contact Number: | 012 807 0383 |
| Email: | info@ecoe.co.za |
| Website: | www.ecoe.co.za |

## SPECIALIST DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

*In support of an application in terms of the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (GNR983, GNR984 and GNR985, GG38282 of 4 December 2014 ("Listed Activities") that will require an environmental authorisation if triggered. As amended by GNR 327, GNR 325 and GNR 324.*

I, **Neel Breitenbach** as specialist, has been appointed in terms of regulation 12(1) or 12(2), and can confirm that I shall —

a. Be independent;
b. have expertise in undertaking specialist work as required, including knowledge of the Act, these Regulations and any guidelines that have relevance to the proposed activity;
c. ensure compliance with these Regulations;
d. 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 application'
e. take into account, to the extent possible, the matters referred to in regulation 18 when preparing the application and any report, plan or document relating to the application;
f. disclose to the proponent or applicant, registered interested and affected parties to the proponent or applicant, registered interested and affected parties and the competent authority all material information in the possession of the EAP and, where applicable, the specialist, that reasonably has or may have the potential of influencing –
g. any decision to be taken with respect to the application by the competent authority in terms of these Regulations; or
h. the objectivity of any report, plan or document to be prepared by the EAP or specialist, in terms of these Regulations for submission to the competent authority; and
i. Unless access to that information is protected by law, in which case it must be indicated that such protected information exists and is only provided to the competent authority.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Neel Breitenbach** |  |
| Name and Surname | Signature |
| **2022-01-28** | **George** |
| Date | Signed at |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Eskom (Pty) Ltd appointed MuTingati Environmental and Projects (Pty) Ltd to undertake environmental authorisation associated with the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project. The applicant wants to upgrade an existing powerline with a length of ~2.3km comprising of Portion 0 of the farm Weldaba 567 JQ in the North West Province of South Africa.

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**Table 5: Project Locality**

| **Farm Name:** | **Portion 0 of the farm Weldaba 567 JQ – North West Province - South Africa** |
|---|---|
| **Application Area:** | 2.3 km in length |
| **Magisterial District:** | Bojanala District Municipality,<br>North West Province<br>South Africa |
| **Distance and direction from nearest town:** | The Project Area is ~ 9.5km south-east of Schoemansville. See Figure 1. |

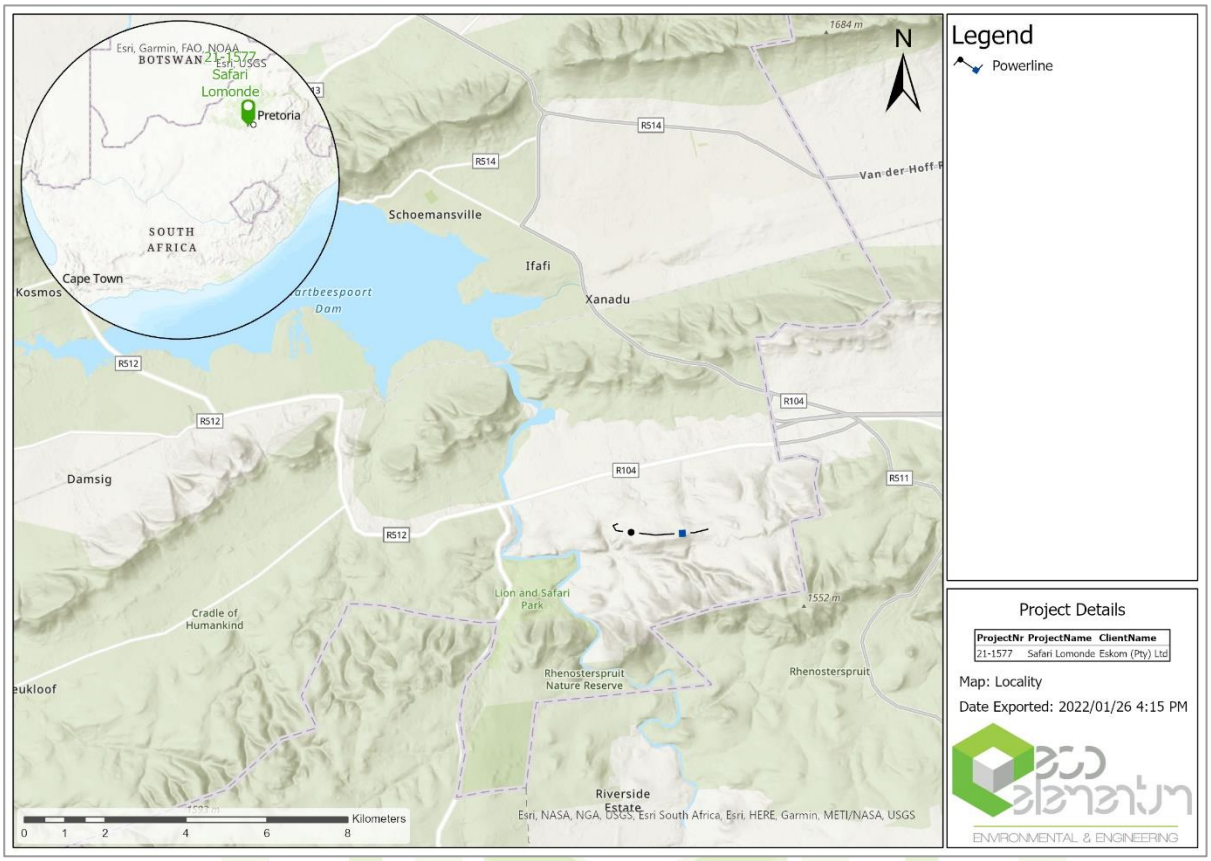


**Figure 1: Locality map of the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project.**

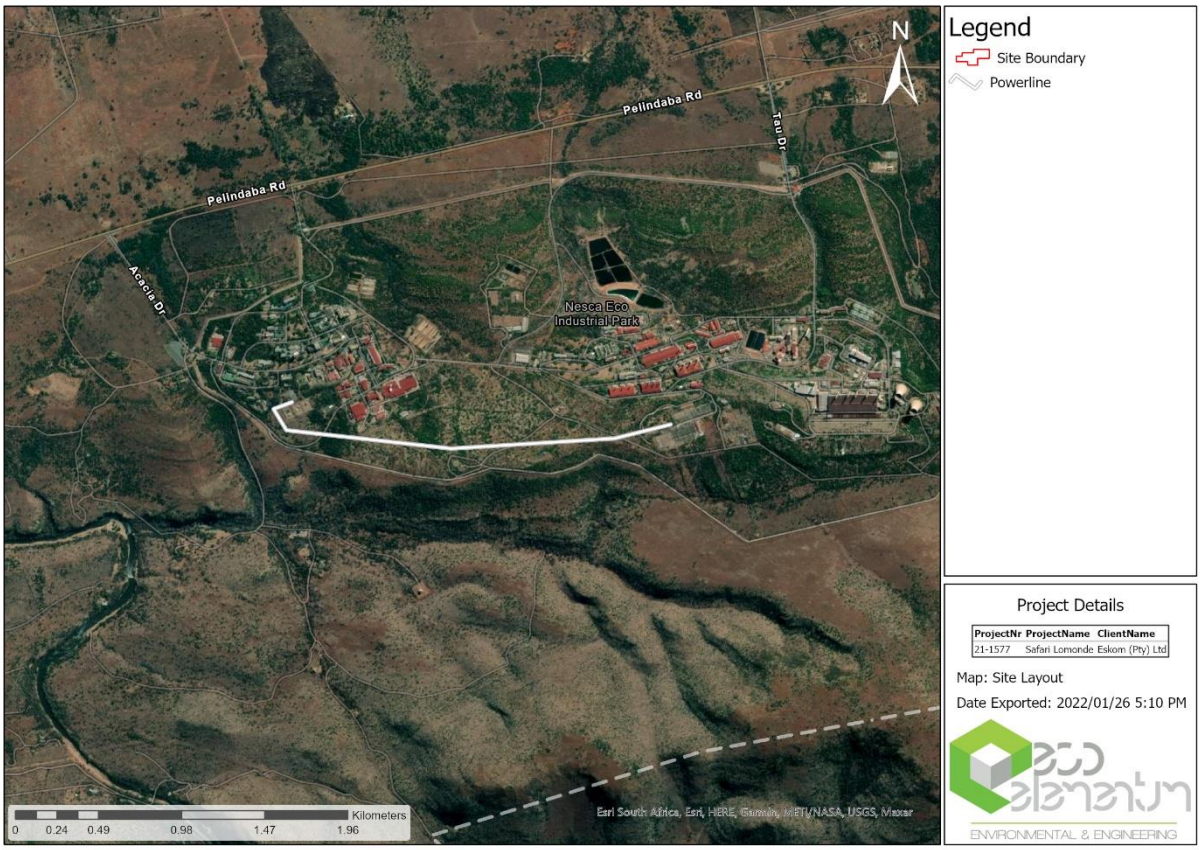


**Figure 2: Proposed Site Layout for the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project.**

## 2. SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work for this Visual Impact Assessment will include:

1. Describe the existing visual characteristics of the proposed sites and its environs;
2. Viewshed and viewing distance using GIS analysis up to 15 km from the proposed structures.
3. Visual Exposure Analysis comprising the following aspects:

- Terrain Slope;
    - Slope angle is determined from the Digital Terrain Model (DTM) and the location of the proposed structures given a ranking depending on the steepness of the slope.
- Aspect of structure location;
    - Aspect of the slope where the structures are to be built, are calculated from the DTM and given a ranking determined by the Sun angle.
- Landforms;
    - Landform of the location of the proposed structures are determined from the DTM and ranked according to the type of landform. Structures built on certain landforms, e.g. ridges, will be more visible than structures built in valleys.
- Slope Position of structure;
    - Using GIS analysis, the position of the proposed structure is determined and ranked according to the position on the slope the structure is to be built.
- Relative elevation of structure;
    - Using the DEM the elevation of the proposed structure relative to the surrounding elevation is determined and ranked according to the difference in height of the surrounding areas.
- Terrain Ruggedness;
    - The terrain ruggedness is determined from the DEM and given a ranking based on the homogeneousness of the terrain.
- Viewer Sensitivity;
    - The Viewer sensitivity ranking of the surrounding areas is determined using various land cover and land use datasets and ranked according to the sensitivity of the related structures to the environment.
- Overall Visual Impact;
    - Combing all the above dataset a final visual impact of the proposed structures is calculated.

# 3. DESCRIPTION OF AFFECTED AREA AND ENVIRONMENT

This section of the report provides a description of the current status of the environment. This provides a baseline context for assessment of the proposed structures.

## 3.1 LOCATION

### 3.1.1 Population

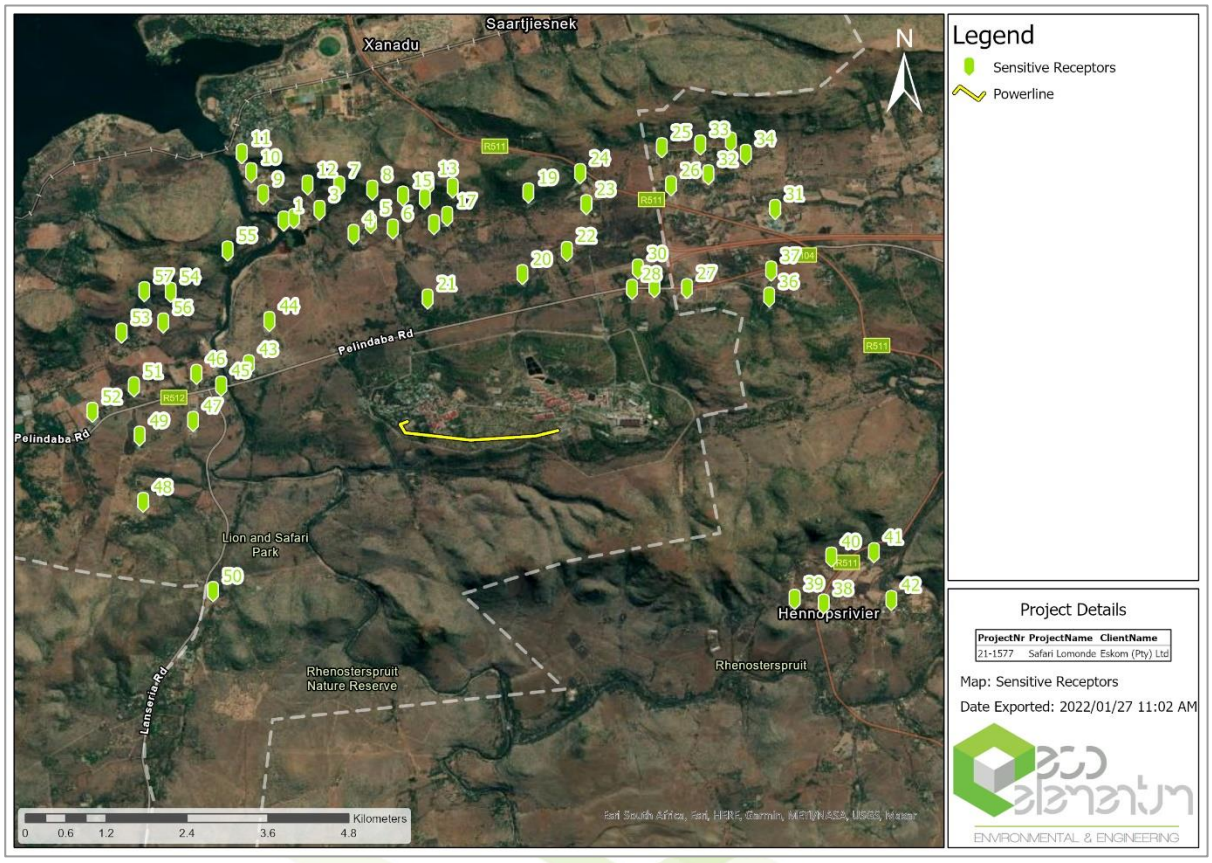


**Figure 3: Population areas within close proximity of the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project.**

From a desktop study of satellite imagery various sensitive receptors in the form of human habitation areas, consisting of various dispersed homes in the vicinity of the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project area can be seen in Figure 3. It should be noted that the sensitive receptors in the area may differ from those identified as not all areas may have been identified from the imagery successfully.

### 3.1.2 Topography

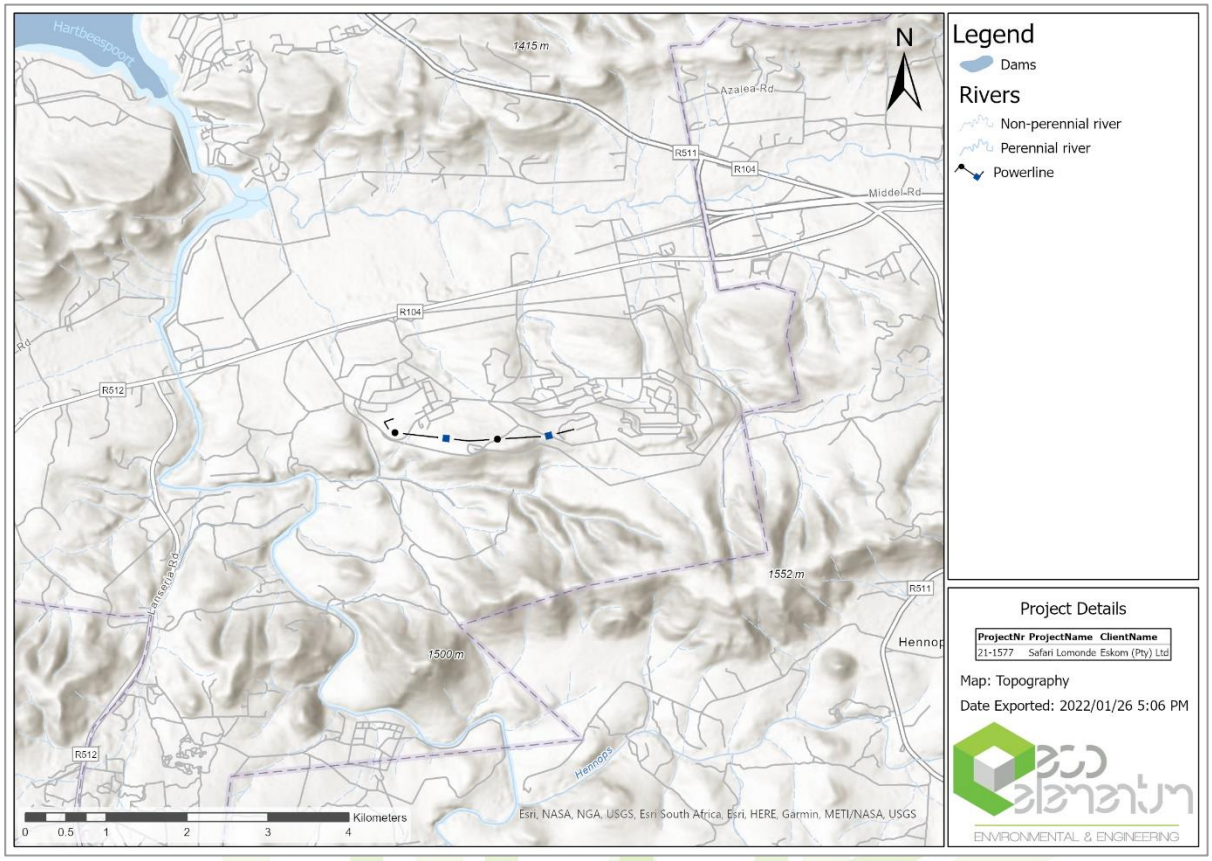


**Figure 4: Map showing the Topography surrounding the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project.**

The proposed project area is situated in small foothills on the southern part of a valley feature that runs east-west as can be seen in Figure 4 above.

## 3.2 New Infrastructure

The proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project will comprise of newly built Pylon structures. Some of the highest structures are included in this report as can been in Table 6.

**Table 6: Maximum Height of the Relevant Proposed Structures.**

| Description | Height (m) |
|---|---|
| **Pylon** | 25 |

## 3.3 Sense Of Place

The concept of "a Sense of Place" does not equate simply to the creation of picturesque landscapes or pretty buildings, but to recognize the importance of a sense of belonging. Embracing uniqueness as opposed to standardization attains quality of place. In terms of the natural environment, it requires the identification, a response to and the emphasis of the distinguishing features and characteristics of landscapes. Different natural landscapes suggest different responses. The sense of place is created by the predominant bushveld environment with the Pelindaba complex in the project area.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

The following sequence was employed in this Visual Assessment Report:

1. Viewshed and viewing distance using GIS analysis up to 5 km from the proposed structures utilizing ArcGIS Pro and Spatial Analyst extension.
2. A Visual Exposure Analysis were conducted that included the following parameters:

    - Terrain Slope
        - Slope angle is determined from the Digital Terrain Model (DTM) and the location of the proposed structures given a ranking depending on the steepness of the slope;
        - Structures built on steep slopes are assumed to be more visible and exposed than those on flat surfaces.
    - Aspect of structure location
        - Aspect of the slope where the structures are to be built, are calculated from the DTM and given a ranking determined by the Sun angle.
        - Structures on flat surface are illuminated by the sun the whole day and thus visible from all directions. In the southern hemisphere structures on North facing slopes are less visible from the south, structures on East and West facing slopes are only illuminated during half of the day thus less visible where structures on the southern slopes are mostly in the shade.
    - Landforms
        - Landform of the location of the proposed structures are determined from the DTM and ranked according to the type of landform. Structures built on certain landforms, e.g. ridges, will be more visible than structures built in valleys.
    - Slope Position of structure
        - Using GIS analysis, the position of the proposed structure is determined and ranked according to the position on the slope the structure is to be built.
    - Relative elevation of structure
        - Using the DEM the elevation of the proposed structure relative to the surrounding elevation is determined and ranked according to the difference in height of the surrounding areas. Structures built on higher ground are more visible than those built in low lying areas.
    - Terrain Ruggedness
        - The terrain ruggedness is determined from the DEM and given a ranking based on the homogeneousness of the terrain. Rugged terrain has a tendency to increase the visual absorption characteristics of the terrain.
    - Visual Absorption Capacity
        - To simulate the Visual Absorption Capacity (VAC) of the landscape, land cover data of the area were assigned a VAC ranking. The Visual Exposure results and VAC rankings of the landscape were use in an algorithm to determine a quantitative visual exposure for each sensitive receptor.

- Overall Visual Impact
  - Combing all the above dataset a final visual exposure ranking was determined for each of the identified sensitive receptor areas.

## 4.1 ASSUMPTIONS

- It is assumed that there are no alternative locations for the structures and that the visual assessment, therefore, assessed only the proposed site.
- The assessment was undertaken during the planning stage of the project and is based on the information available at that time.

## 4.2 LIMITATIONS

- Visual perception is by nature a subjective experience, as it is influenced largely by personal values. For instance, what one-viewer experiences as an intrusion in the landscape, another may regard as positive. Such differences in perception are greatly influenced by culture, education and socio-economic background. A degree of subjectivity is therefore bound to influence the rating of visual impacts. In order to limit such subjectivity, a combination of quantitative and qualitative assessment methods were used. A high degree of reliance has been placed on GIS-based analysis viewshed, visibility analysis, and on making transparent assumptions and value judgements, where such assumptions or judgements are necessary.
- The viewshed generated in GIS cannot be guaranteed as 100% accurate. Some viewpoints, which are indicated on the viewshed as being inside of the viewshed, can be outside of the viewshed. This is due to the change of the natural environment by surrounding activities as well as natural vegetation that play a significant role and can have a positive or negative influence on the viewshed.

## 4.3 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

There are no specific legal requirements for visual impact assessment in South Africa. Visual impacts are, however required to be assessed by implication when the provisions of relevant acts governing environmental impacts management are considered.

# 5. CRITERIA USED IN THE ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL IMPACTS

## 5.1 View Points And View Corridors

Viewpoints have been selected based on prominent viewing positions in the area. The selected viewpoints and view corridors are used as a basis for determining potential visual ability and visual impacts of the proposed structures.

## 5.2 Visual Exposure

Visual exposure is based on distance from the project to selected viewpoints. Visual exposure or visual impact tends to diminish exponentially with distance. The visibility or visual exposure of any structure or activity is the point of departure for the visual impact assessment. It stands to reason that if the proposed structures were not visible, no visual impact would occur. Visual exposure is determined by the following variables:

- Slope angle (Figure 5);
- Aspect of slope (Figure 6);
- Landforms (Figure 9);
- Slope Position of structure (Figure 10);
- Relative Elevation of structure (Figure 8); and
- Terrain Ruggedness (Figure 7).

## 5.3 Landscape Integrity

Landscape integrity is visual qualities represented by the following qualities, which enhance the visual and aesthetic experience of the area:

- Intactness of the natural and cultural landscape;
- Lack of visual intrusions or incompatible structures; and
- Presence of a 'sense of place'.

## 5.4 Determine The Visual Absorption Capacity (VAC)

The VAC is the capacity of the receiving environment to absorb the potential visual impact of the proposed facility. The VAC is primarily a function of the vegetation, and will be high if the vegetation is tall, dense and continuous. Conversely, low growing, sparse and patchy vegetation will have a low VAC. Topography and built forms have the capacity to 'absorb' visual impact.

The digital terrain model utilised in the calculation of the visual exposure of the facility does not incorporate potential visual absorption capacity (VAC). It is therefore necessary to determine the VAC by means of the interpretation of the vegetation cover, topography and structures. Land cover is used in the ranking of the VAC.

# 6. VIEWSHED

## 6.1 SLOPE

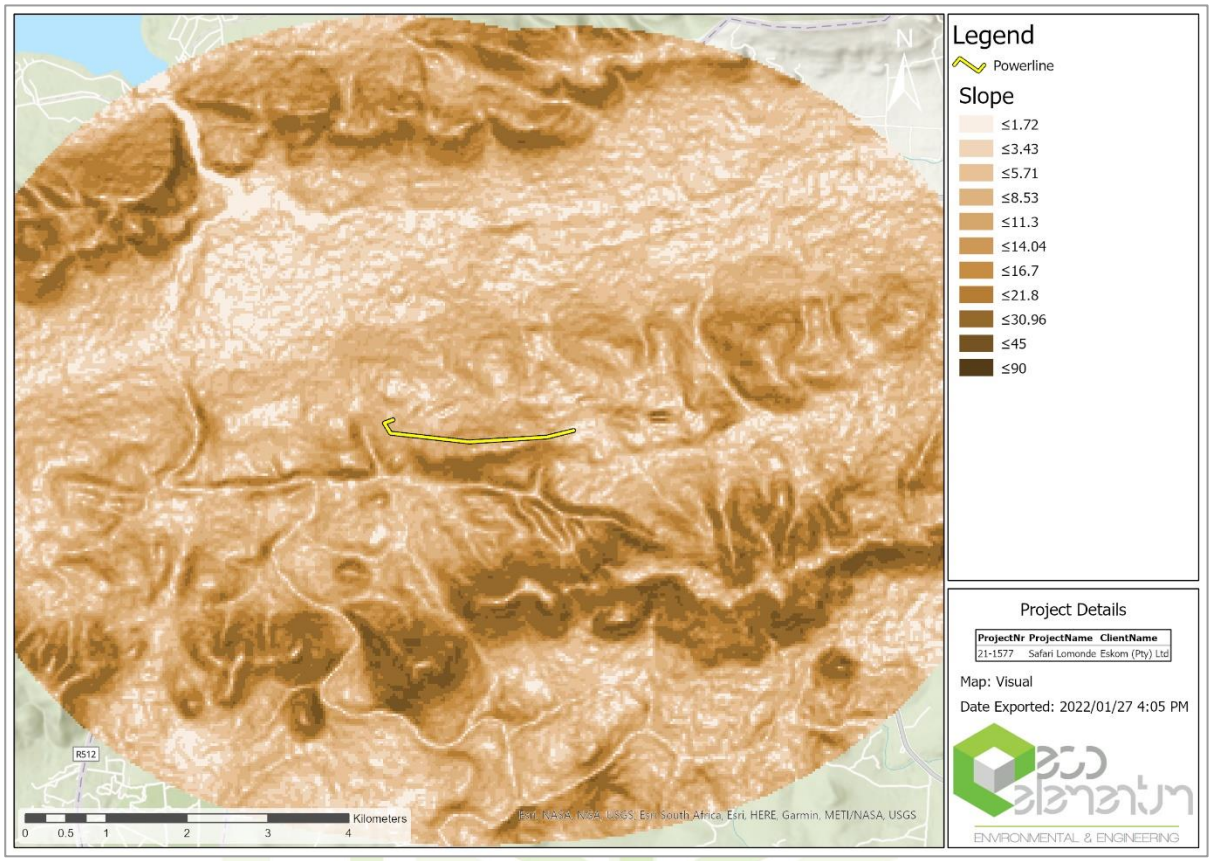


**Figure 5: Slope angles of the terrain in the 5 km buffer area surrounding the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project**

## 6.2 ASPECT

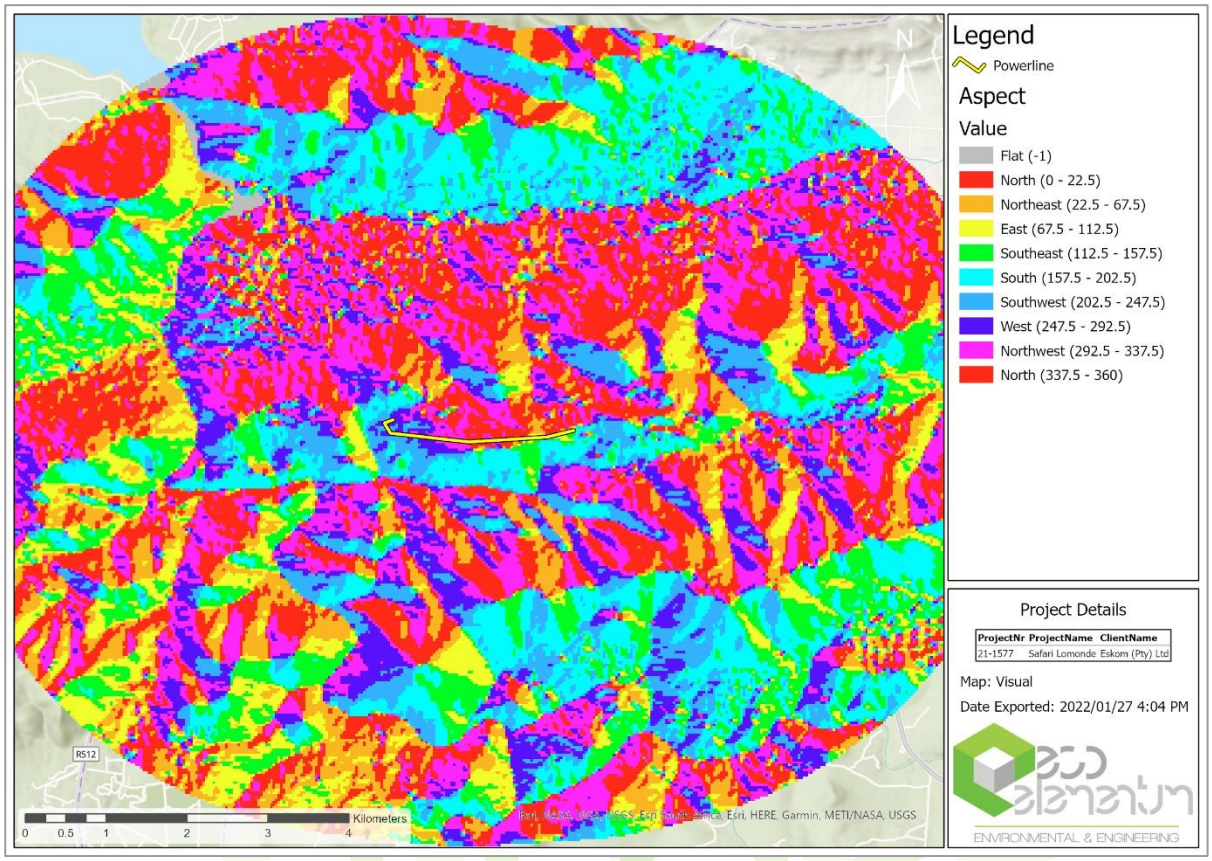


**Figure 6: Aspect direction of the terrain in a 5 km buffer area surrounding the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project**

## 6.3 TERRAIN RUGGEDNESS

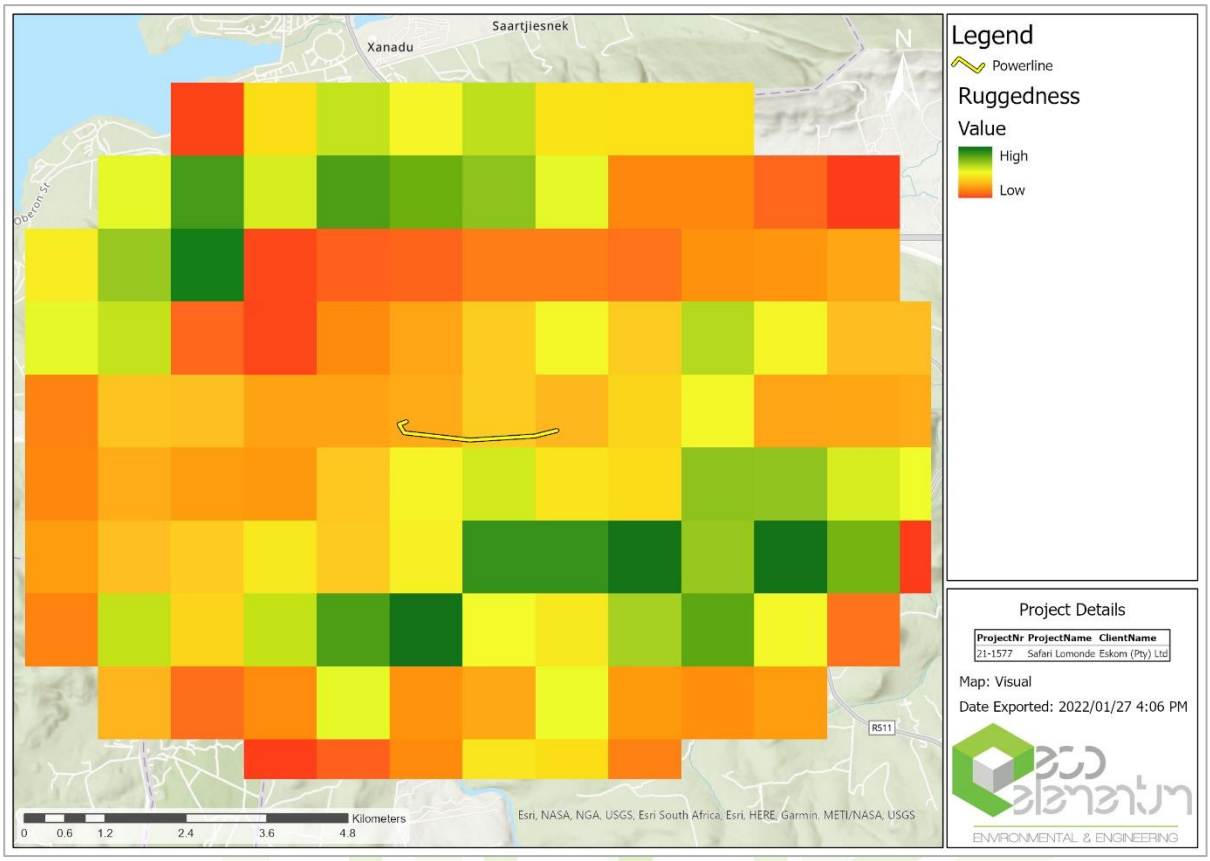


**Figure 7: Terrain ruggedness in a 5 km buffer area surrounding the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project**

## 6.4 RELATIVE ELEVATION

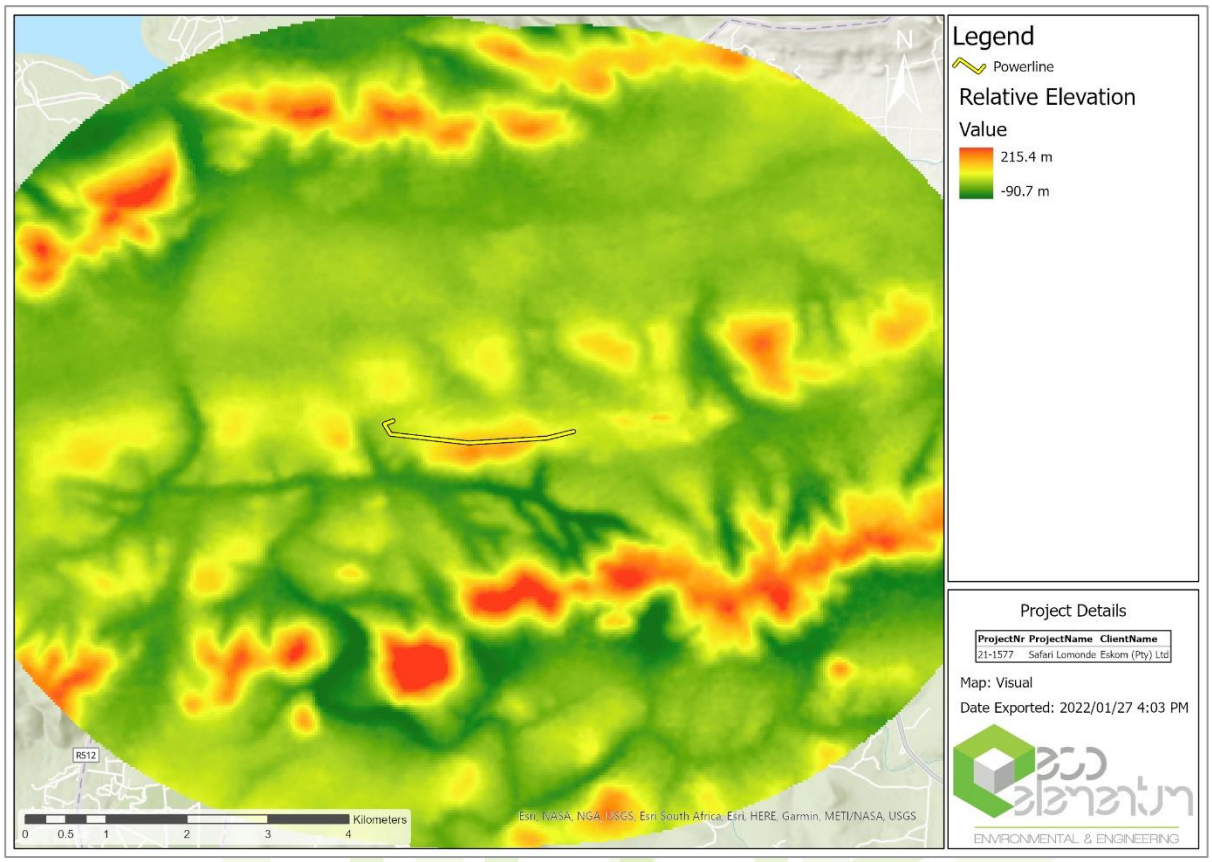


**Figure 8: Relative Elevation of terrain in a 5 km buffer area surrounding the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project**

## 6.5 LANDFORMS

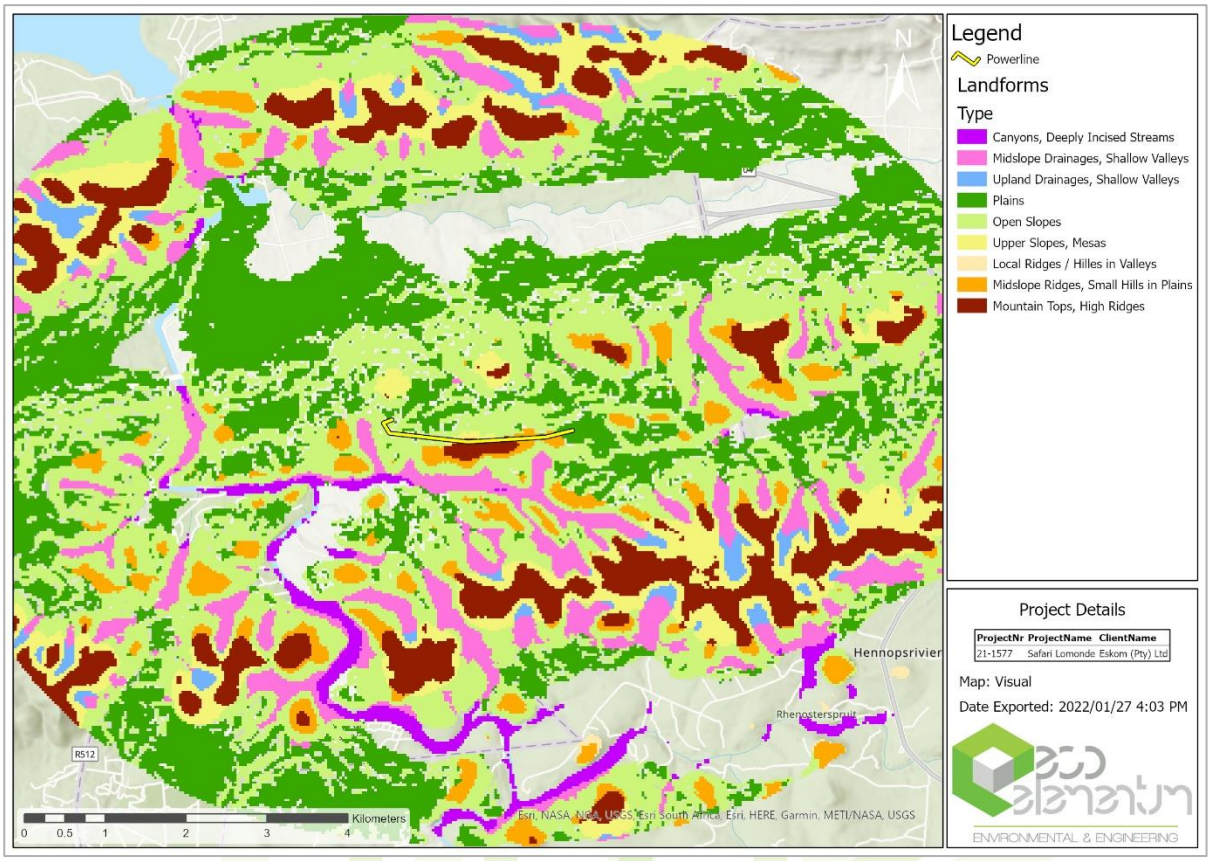


**Figure 9: Landforms in a 5 km buffer area surrounding the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project**

## 6.6 SLOPE POSITION

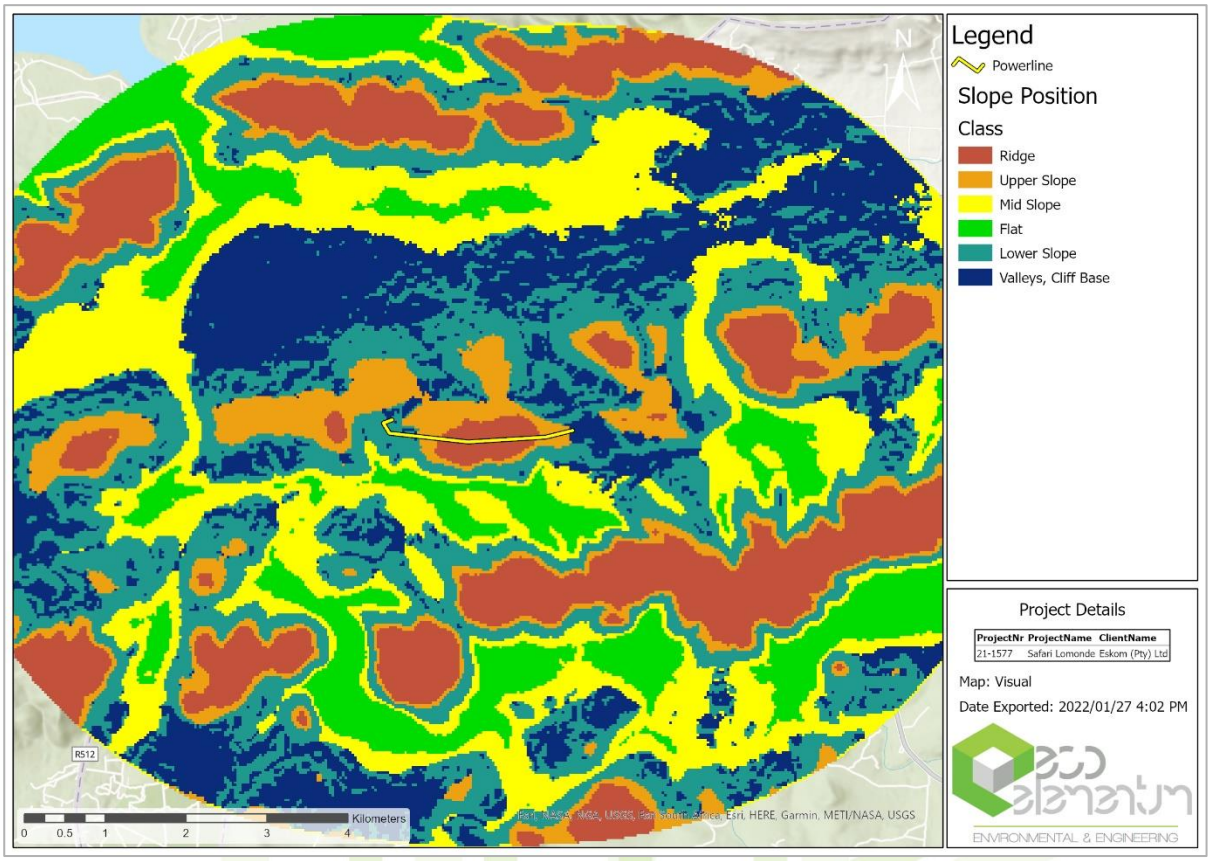


**Figure 10: Slope Positions in a 5 km buffer area surrounding the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project**

## 6.7 LANDCOVER VAC

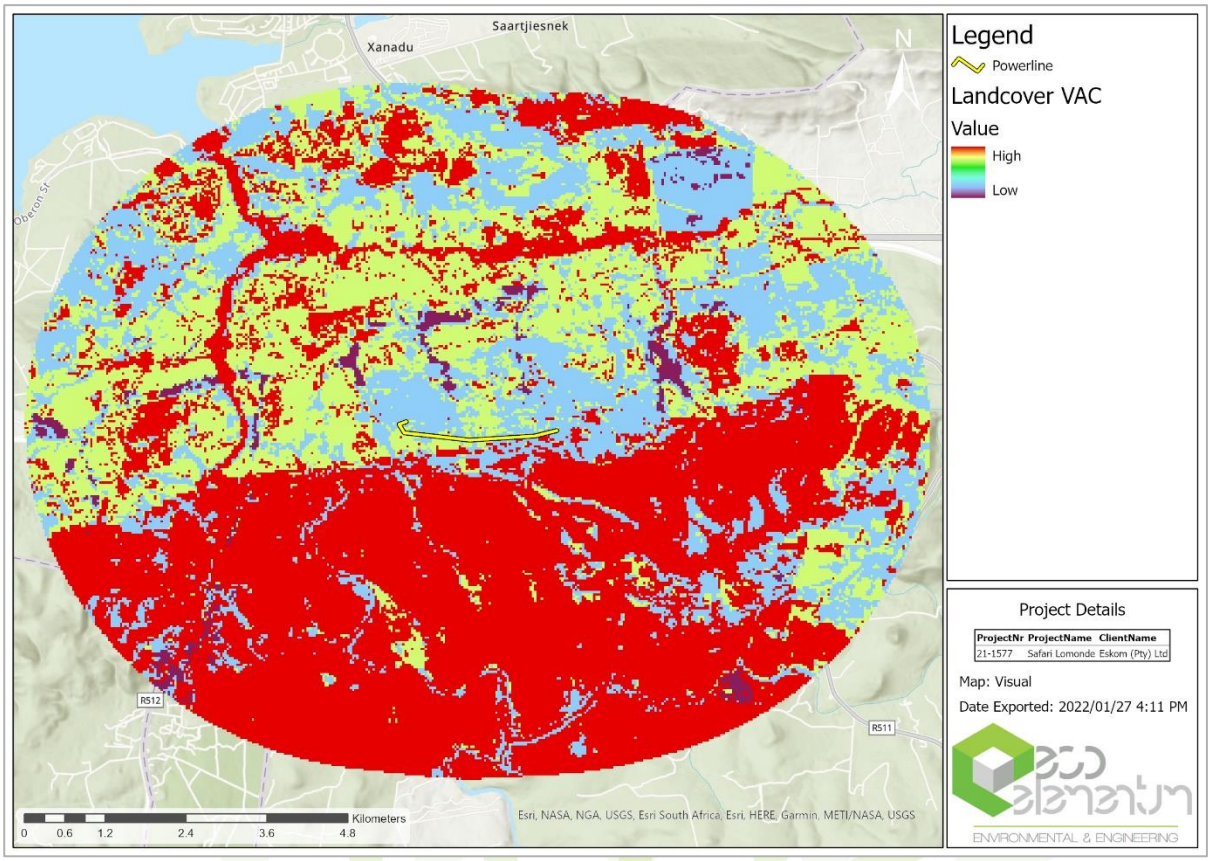


**Figure 11: Possible VAC of the Landcover in a 5 km buffer area surrounding the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project**

## 6.8 VIEWSHED VISIBILITY

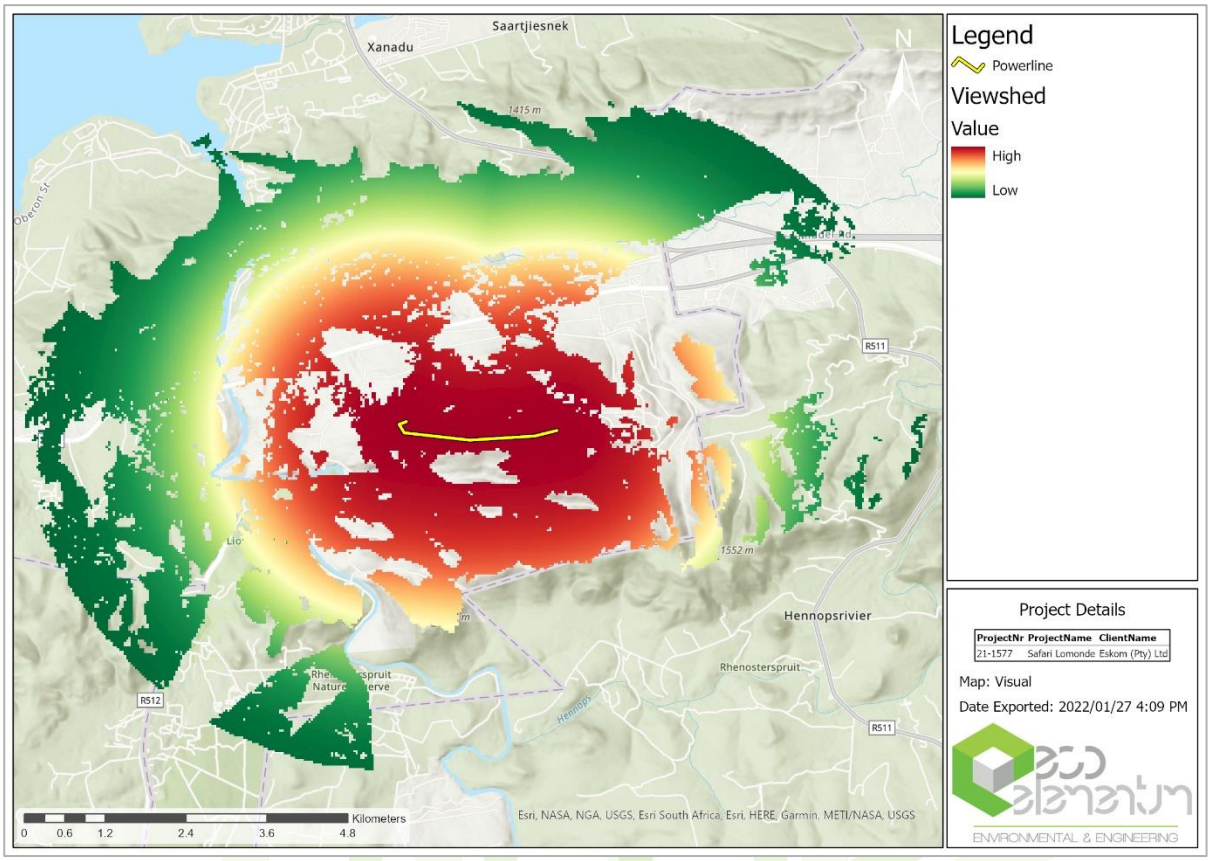


**Figure 12: Viewshed of proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project – Visibility (How likely surface infrastructure locations can be seen from any location on the map)**

For the assessment of the visibility of the area, the viewshed has been calculated for the amount of surface infrastructure features that can be seen from any point on the map as seen in Figure 12.

## 6.9 VIEW POINTS

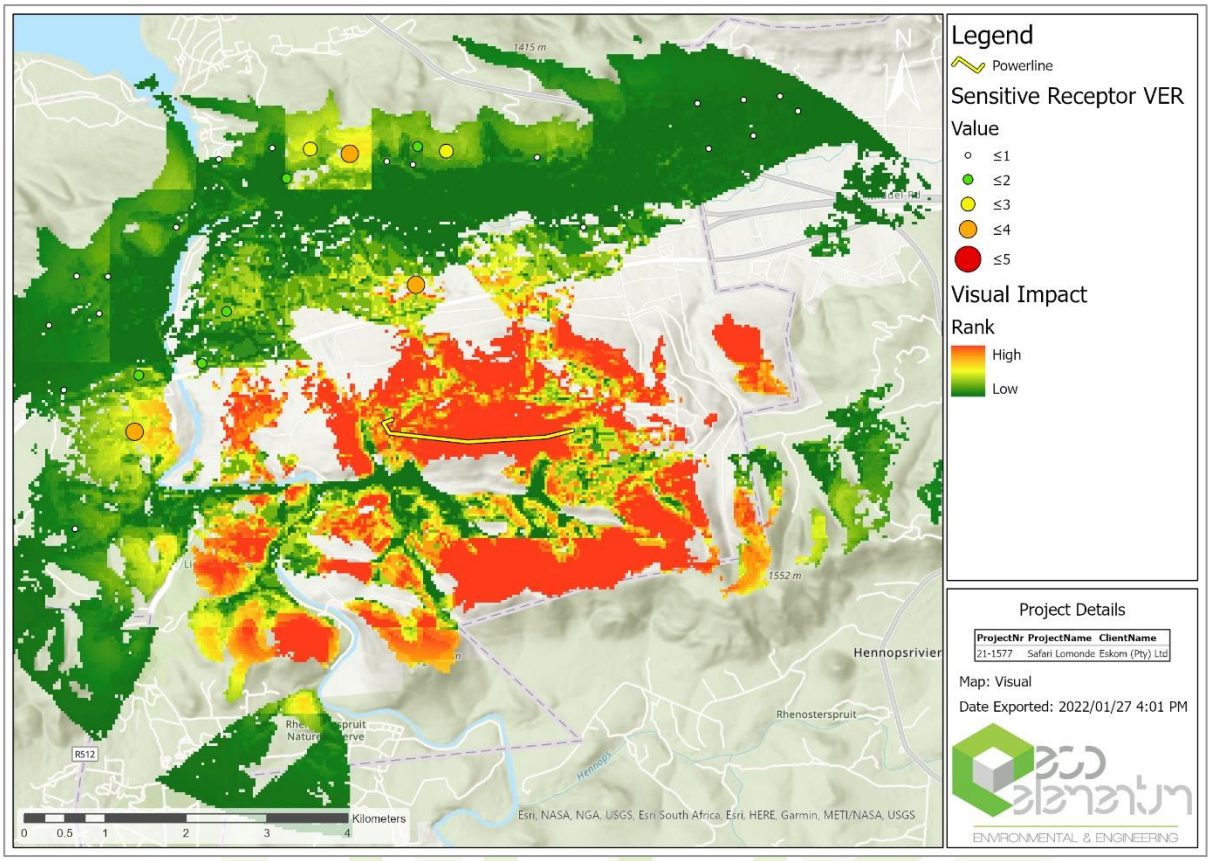


**Figure 13: Viewpoint sensitive receptors overlaid on the Visual Exposure Ranking**

Each identified sensitive receptor is then overlaid on the Visual Exposure Ranking and the value extracted to that pixel to give a quantitative ranking for each of the identified sensitive receptors as can be seen in Figure 13. Ranking is done from 1 to 5, 1 being very low and 5 very high.

Due to fact that topographic modification can take place by agricultural, vegetation and other activities in the area, the viewshed is only a theoretical study. The viewpoints have been identified based on the sensitivity of the areas to visual disturbance and areas that can be negatively impacted by the related structures.

Table 7: Quantified ranking of Visual Exposure each identified sensitive receptor may have due to proposed infrastructure

| Visibility ratings | |
|---|---|
| ID | Rating |
| 3 | 1.22 |
| 7 | 2.80 |
| 8 | 3.32 |
| 9 | 0.82 |
| 12 | 0.18 |
| 13 | 1.57 |
| 14 | 2.05 |
| 15 | 0.65 |
| 16 | 0.67 |
| 19 | 0.52 |
| 21 | 3.46 |
| 25 | 0.13 |
| 32 | 0.14 |
| 33 | 0.29 |
| 34 | 0.05 |
| 35 | 0.12 |
| 43 | 1.34 |
| 44 | 1.99 |
| 46 | 1.47 |
| 47 | 3.02 |
| 48 | 0.43 |
| 51 | 0.46 |
| 53 | 0.32 |
| 54 | 0.14 |
| 55 | 0.43 |
| 56 | 0.94 |
| 57 | 0.61 |

The above table display the results as calculated by the GIS. Only locations that did not receive a 0 are shown. Ratings are ranked 1 - 5, 1 being very low and 5 very high. The system only takes into account the variables as described in this report and the amount of infrastructure that would be visible. Factors like real time and micro scale vegetation are not taken into account, thus the actual rating may be lower or higher depending on the updated land use in the vicinity or latest vegetation growth or height on a micro and macro scale.

The table is by no means a rating of visual quality; it is rather used to determine the likelihood that the proposed infrastructure will be seen from the viewpoint receptors. It is also used to quantitively determine the best option in terms of visual impact.

## 6.10 Visual Impact Criteria

The level of detail as depicted in the EIA regulations were fine-tuned by assigning specific values to each impact. In order to establish a coherent framework within which all impacts could be objectively assessed, it was necessary to establish a rating system, which was applied consistently to all the criteria. For such purposes each aspect was assigned a value, ranging from one (1) to five (5), depending on its definition. This assessment is a relative evaluation within the context of all the activities and the other impacts within the framework of the project.

The impact assessment criteria used to determine the impact of the proposed development are as follows:

1. ***Severity*** of the impact;
2. **Spatial Scale** - The physical and spatial scale of the impact;
3. ***Duration*** - The lifetime of the impact, measured in relation to the lifetime of the proposed development;
4. ***Frequency of the Activity*** – How often do the activity take place;
5. ***Frequency of the incident/impact*** – How often does the activity impact on the environment;
6. ***Legal Issues*** – How is the activity governed by legislation; and
7. ***Detection*** – How quickly/easily the impacts/risks of the activity be detected on the environment, people and property.

To ensure uniformity, the assessment of potential impacts will be addressed in a standard manner so that a wide range of impacts is comparable. For this reason a clearly defined rating scale is provided for the specialist to assess impacts associated with the investigation.

**Table 8: Assessment criteria**

| | |
|---|---|
| **SEVERITY** | |
| Insignificant / non-harmful | 1 |
| Small / potentially harmful | 2 |
| Significant / slightly harmful | 3 |
| Great / harmful | 4 |
| Disastrous / extremely harmful / within a regulated sensitive area | 5 |
| **SPATIAL SCALE** | |
| Area specific (at impact site) | 1 |
| Whole site (entire surface right) | 2 |
| Local (within 5 km) | 3 |
| Regional / neighboring areas (5 km to 50 km) | 4 |
| National | 5 |
| **DURATION** | |
| One day to one month (immediate) | 1 |
| One month to one year (Short term) | 2 |
| One year to 10 years (medium term) | 3 |
| Life of the activity (long term) | 4 |
| Beyond life of the activity (permanent) | 5 |
| **FREQUENCY OF THE ACTIVITY** | |
| Annually or less | 1 |
| 6 monthly | 2 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Monthly | 3 |
| Weekly | 4 |
| Daily | 5 |
| **FREQUENCY OF THE INCIDENT/IMPACT** | |
| Almost never / almost impossible / >20% | 1 |
| Very seldom / highly unlikely / >40% | 2 |
| Infrequent / unlikely / seldom / >60% | 3 |
| Often / regularly / likely / possible / >80% | 4 |
| Daily / highly likely / definitely / >100% | 5 |
| **LEGAL ISSUES** | |
| No legislation | 1 |
| Fully covered by legislation | 5 |
| **DETECTION** | |
| Immediately | 1 |
| Without much effort | 2 |
| Need some effort | 3 |
| Remote and difficult to observe | 4 |
| Covered | 5 |
| Immediately | 1 |

The impacts that are generated by the development can be minimised if measures are implemented in order to reduce the impacts. The mitigation measures ensure that the development considers the environment and the predicted impacts in order to minimise impacts and achieve sustainable development.

### 6.10.1 Consequence

Consequence is determined by the following equation after the assessment of each impact.

**Consequence = Severity + Spatial Scale + Duration**

### 6.10.2 Likelihood

The Likelihood of the activity is then calculated based on frequency of the activity and impact, how easily it can be detected and whether the activity is governed by legislation. Thus:

**Likelihood = Frequency of activity + frequency of impact + legal issues + detection**

### 6.10.3 Risk

The risk is then based on the consequence and likelihood.

**Risk = Consequence x likelihood**

### 6.10.4 Impact Ratings

The impact is then rated according to the following table:

Table 9: Impact Rating Table

| Rating | Class |
|---|---|
| **1-55** | (L) Low Risk |
| **56-169** | (M) Moderate Risk |
| **170-600** | (H) High Risk |

# 7. VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The previous section identified specific areas where, and likelihood of, the potential visual impact would occur as well as scenario with the least predicted visual impact on the sensitive receptors. This section will attempt to quantify these visual impacts in their respective geographic locations and in terms of the identified issues related to the visual impact.

## 7.1 Potential Construction Phase Visual Impact Of The Structures

**Table 10: Summarizing the significance of visual impacts on the viewpoint with an Exposure rating for the Construction phase.**

| **Nature of impact: Potential visual impact on the viewpoints that had a visual exposure rating for the construction phase.** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Unmitigated** | **Mitigated** |
| **Assessment Criteria** | **Severity** [Insignificant / non-harmful (1); Small / potentially harmful (2); Significant / slightly harmful (3); Great / harmful (4); Disastrous / extremely harmful / within a regulated sensitive area (5)] | **2** | **2** |
| | **Spatial Scale** [Area specific (at impact site) (1); Whole site (entire surface right) (2); Local (within 5km) (3); Regional / neighbouring areas (5 km to 50 km) (4); National (5)] | **1** | **1** |
| | **Duration** [One day to one month (immediate) (1); One month to one year (Short term) (2); One year to 10 years (medium term) (3); Life of the activity (long term) (4); Beyond life of the activity (permanent) (5)] | **2** | **2** |
| | **Frequency of Activity** [Annually or less (1); 6 monthly (2); Monthly (3); Weekly (4); Daily (5)] | **4** | **4** |
| | **Frequency of Incident/Impact** [Almost never / almost impossible / >20% (1); Very seldom / highly unlikely / >40% (2); Infrequent / unlikely / seldom / >60% (3); Often / regularly / likely / possible / >80% (4); Daily / highly likely / definitely / >100% (5) | **4** | **3** |
| | **Legal Issues** [No legislation(1); Fully covered by legislation (5)] | **1** | **1** |
| | **Detection** [Immediately(1); Without much effort (2); Need some effort (3); Remote and difficult to observe (4); Covered (5)] | **3** | **3** |
| **Consequence** | Severity + Spatial Scale + Duration | **5** | **5** |
| **Likelihood** | Frequency of Activity + Frequency of impact + Legal issues + Detection | **12** | **11** |
| **Risk** | Consequence * Likelihood | **MODERATE (60)** | **LOW (55)** |
| **Mitigation:** | The construction area will be cleared of construction camps and equipment as soon as construction of the infrastructure is finished. | | |
| **Cumulative Impact:** | The construction of the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project with its associated infrastructure will increase the cumulative visual impact within the region.<br>In context of the existing bushveld, and dispersed homesteads, the construction phase of Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline structures will contribute to a regional increase in heavy vehicles on the roads in the region, with construction activity noticeable. | | |

The impact on the surrounding farmers and land users will be more significant but can still be seen as MODERATE because of the short time the proposed activity will be undertaken. Although the construction activities will be highly visible, the time of exposure is short and thus the impact on the users will be low after mitigation measures have been implemented.

## 7.2 Potential Permanent Visual Impact Of The Structures

Visibility is determined by a line of sight where nothing obscures the view of an object. Exposure is defined by the degree of visibility, in other words "how much" of it can be seen. This is influenced by topography and the incidence of objects such as trees and buildings that obscure the view partially or in total.

Potential permanent visual impact on the Viewpoints is expected to have a MODERATE impact before mitigation and MODERATE significance after mitigation, as indicated in the table below. The structures will be MODERATE visible from the Viewpoints, the time of exposure is permanent and thus the impact on the users will still remain MODERATE.

**Table 11: Impact table summarising the significance of the structures on users of roads and land-users**

| **Nature of impact: Potential visual impact on the viewpoints that had a visual exposure rating.** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Unmitigated** | **Mitigated** |
| **Assessment Criteria** | **Severity** [Insignificant / non-harmful (1); Small / potentially harmful (2); Significant / slightly harmful (3); Great / harmful (4); Disastrous / extremely harmful / within a regulated sensitive area (5)] | **2** | **2** |
| | **Spatial Scale** [Area specific (at impact site) (1); Whole site (entire surface right) (2); Local (within 5km) (3); Regional / neighbouring areas (5 km to 50 km) (4); National (5)] | **4** | **2** |
| | **Duration** [One day to one month (immediate) (1); One month to one year (Short term) (2); One year to 10 years (medium term) (3); Life of the activity (long term) (4); Beyond life of the activity (permanent) (5)] | **4** | **4** |
| | **Frequency of Activity** [Annually or less (1); 6 monthly (2); Monthly (3); Weekly (4); Daily (5)] | **5** | **5** |
| | **Frequency of Incident/Impact** [Almost never / almost impossible / >20% (1); Very seldom / highly unlikely / >40% (2); Infrequent / unlikely / seldom / >60% (3); Often / regularly / likely / possible / >80% (4); Daily / highly likely / definitely / >100% (5) | **4** | **3** |
| | **Legal Issues** [No legislation(1); Fully covered by legislation (5)] | **1** | **1** |
| | **Detection** [Immediately(1); Without much effort (2); Need some effort (3); Remote and difficult to observe (4); Covered (5)] | **3** | **3** |
| **Consequence** | Severity + Spatial Scale + Duration | **10** | **8** |
| **Likelihood** | Frequency of Activity + Frequency of impact + Legal issues + Detection | **13** | **12** |
| **Risk** | Consequence * Likelihood | **MODERATE (130)** | **MODERATE (96)** |
| **Mitigation:** | The visual impact can be minimized by:<br>Building the powerlines and pylons next to existing linear structures as far as possible;<br>Clear vegetation only by cutting and not earth moving equipment; and<br>Use of existing roads for access where possible. | | |
| **Cumulative Impact:** | The construction of the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline structures with its associated infrastructure will increase the cumulative visual impact of powerline infrastructure within the region. | | |

The permanent impact on the surrounding farmers and land users will be increased due to the extra powerline structures added to the area.

The modelling of visibility is merely conceptual. Being based on DEM and Land cover data, it does not take into account the real world effect of buildings, trees etc. that could shield the structures from being visible or could have changed over time.

The viewshed analysis therefore signifies a worst-case scenario. The immediate landscape surrounding the observer has a determining influence on long distance views. It is expected that different land cover may offer some degree of visual screening, especially where tall trees occur around farmsteads. This influence was quantified using the land cover data, it must however be noted that this can change on a micro scale or land cover may have changed over time.

## 7.3 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative landscape and visual effects (impacts) result from additional changes to the landscape or visual amenity caused by the proposed development in conjunction with other developments (associated with or separate to it), or actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future. They may also affect the way in which the landscape is experienced. Cumulative effects may be positive or negative. Where they comprise of a range of benefits, they may be considered to form part of the mitigation measures.

Cumulative effects can also arise from the inter-visibility (visibility) of a range of developments and / or the combined effects of individual components of the proposed development occurring in different locations or over a period of time. The separate effects of such individual components or developments may not be significant, but together they may create an unacceptable degree of adverse effects on visual receptors within their combined visual envelopes. Inter-visibility depends upon general topography, aspect, tree cover or other visual obstruction, elevation and distance, as this affects visual acuity, which is also influenced by weather and light conditions. (Institute of Environmental Assessment and The Landscape Institute, 1996).

- The cumulative visual intrusion of the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline structures, will be MODERATE as it is a powerline. The visual impact and impact on sense of place of the proposed project will contribute to the cumulative negative effect on the aesthetics of the area. The site location is how ever inside the Pelindaba complex, which is already a manmade visual intrusion of the natural landscape, and thus decreases the visual impact of the project further.

## 7.4 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures may be considered in two categories:

- Primary measures that intrinsically comprise part of the development design through an iterative process. Mitigation measures are more effective if they are implemented from project inception when alternatives are being considered.
- Secondary measures designed to specifically address the remaining negative effects of the final development proposals.

Primary measures to be implemented will mainly be measures that will minimise the visual impact by softening the visibility of the structures by “blending” with the surrounding areas. Such measures will include:

- Rehabilitation of the construction areas by re-vegetation of the sites and surrounding area;
- Building the Powerlines and pylons next to existing linear structures as far as possible;
- Clear vegetation only by cutting and not earth moving equipment; and
- Use of existing roads for access roads where possible.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The construction and operation phase of the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline project related activities and its associated infrastructure will have a MODERATE visual impact on the natural scenic resources and the topography. However, with the correct mitigation measures the impact might decrease to a point where the visual impact can be seen as less significant. The moderating factors of the visual impact of the proposed powerline in close range are the following:

- The few number of human inhabitants located in the area;
- Natural hilly topography and dense vegetation;
- The length of the powerline; and
- High absorption capacity of the landscape being inside the Pelindaba complex.

In light of the above mentioned factors that reduce the impact of the powerline, the visual impact is assessed as MODERATE VISUAL IMPACT after mitigation measures have been implemented.

**Table 12: The overall Assessment of the Visual Impact**

| **Nature of impact: The overall Assessment of the Visual Impact of the area.** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Unmitigated** | **Mitigated** |
| **Assessment Criteria** | **Severity** [Insignificant / non-harmful (1); Small / potentially harmful (2); Significant / slightly harmful (3); Great / harmful (4); Disastrous / extremely harmful / within a regulated sensitive area (5)] | **2** | **2** |
| | **Spatial Scale** [Area specific (at impact site) (1); Whole site (entire surface right) (2); Local (within 5km) (3); Regional / neighbouring areas (5 km to 50 km) (4); National (5)] | **4** | **2** |
| | **Duration** [One day to one month (immediate) (1); One month to one year (Short term) (2); One year to 10 years (medium term) (3); Life of the activity (long term) (4); Beyond life of the activity (permanent) (5)] | **4** | **4** |
| | **Frequency of Activity** [Annually or less (1); 6 monthly (2); Monthly (3); Weekly (4); Daily (5)] | **5** | **5** |
| | **Frequency of Incident/Impact** [Almost never / almost impossible / >20% (1); Very seldom / highly unlikely / >40% (2); Infrequent / unlikely / seldom / >60% (3); Often / regularly / likely / possible / >80% (4); Daily / highly likely / definitely / >100% (5) | **4** | **3** |
| | **Legal Issues** [No legislation(1); Fully covered by legislation (5)] | **1** | **1** |
| | **Detection** [Immediately(1); Without much effort (2); Need some effort (3); Remote and difficult to observe (4); Covered (5)] | **3** | **3** |
| **Consequence** | Severity + Spatial Scale + Duration | **10** | **8** |
| **Likelihood** | Frequency of Activity + Frequency of impact + Legal issues + Detection | **13** | **12** |
| **Risk** | Consequence * Likelihood | **MODERATE (130)** | **MODERATE (96)** |
| **Mitigation:** | The visual impact can be minimized by:<br>Building the powerlines and pylons next to existing linear structures as far as possible;<br>Clear vegetation only by cutting and not earth moving equipment; and<br>Use of existing roads for access where possible. | | |

| Nature of impact: The overall Assessment of the Visual Impact of the area. | |
|---|---|
| **Cumulative Impact:** | The construction of the proposed Lomond Safari 88kV Powerline structures with its associated infrastructure will increase the cumulative visual impact of powerline infrastructure within the region. |

The Visual Impact due to powerline infrastructure can be seen as having a MODERATE impact on the surrounding environment and inhabitants before mitigation measures are implemented. After mitigation, the visual impact can be seen as MODERATE although lower. If the mitigation measures are not done correctly then the visual impact will remain high moderate and become a concern. However, with correct mitigation, the impact will be low moderate.

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