

PALAEONTOLOGICAL DESKTOP ASSESSMENT

ALTINA 120 MW SOLAR
PHOTOVOLTAIC PROJECT NEAR
ORKNEY IN THE FREE STATE

JULY 2022

COMPILED FOR:
NEMAI GREEN





Declaration of Independence

I, Elize Butler, declare that –

General declaration:

- I act as the independent palaeontological 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 favorable to the applicant
- I declare that there are no circumstances that may compromise my objectivity in performing such work.
- I have expertise in conducting palaeontological impact assessments, 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 will take into account, to the extent possible, the matters listed in section 38 of the NHRA when preparing the application and any report relating to the application.
- 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.
- I will ensure that information containing all relevant facts in respect of the application is distributed or made available to interested and affected parties and the public and that participation by interested and affected parties is facilitated in such a manner that all interested and affected parties will be provided with a reasonable opportunity to participate and to provide comments on documents that are produced to support the application.
- I will provide the competent authority with access to all information at my disposal regarding the application, whether such information is favorable to the applicant or not
- All the particulars furnished by me in this form are true and correct.
- I will perform all other obligations as expected a palaeontological specialist in terms of the Act and the constitutions of my affiliated professional bodies; and
- I realize that a false declaration is an offense in terms of regulation 71 of the Regulations and is punishable in terms of section 24F of the NEMA.



Disclosure of Vested Interest

I do not have and will not have any vested interest (either business, financial, personal, or other) in the proposed activity proceeding other than remuneration for work performed in terms of the Regulations.

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Banzai Environmental (Pty) Ltd

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SIGNATURE:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elize Butler".



This Palaeontological Impact Assessment report has been compiled considering the National Environmental Management Act 1998 (NEMA) and Environmental Impact Regulations 2014 as amended, requirements for specialist reports, Appendix 6, as indicated in the table below.

Table 1 - NEMA Table

Requirements of Appendix 6 – GN R326 EIA Regulations of 7 April 2017	Relevant section in report	Comment where not applicable.
1.(1) (a) (i) Details of the specialist who prepared the report	Page ii and Section 2 of Report – Contact details and company and Appendix A	-
(ii) The expertise of that person to compile a specialist report including a curriculum vitae	Section 2 – refer to Appendix A	-
(b) A declaration that the person is independent in a form as may be specified by the competent authority	Page ii of the report	-
(c) An indication of the scope of, and the purpose for which, the report was prepared	Section 4 – Objective	-
(cA) An indication of the quality and age of base data used for the specialist report	Section 5 – Geological and Palaeontological history	-
(cB) a description of existing impacts on the site, cumulative impacts of the proposed development and levels of acceptable change;	Section 9	-
(d) The duration, date and season of the site investigation and the relevance of the season to the outcome of the assessment		Desktop Assessment
(e) a description of the methodology adopted in preparing the report or carrying out the specialised process inclusive of equipment and modelling used	Section 7 Approach and Methodology	-
(f) details of an assessment of the specific identified sensitivity of the site related to the proposed activity or activities and its associated structures and infrastructure, inclusive of a site plan identifying site alternatives;	Section 1 and 10	



Requirements of Appendix 6 – GN R326 EIA Regulations of 7 April 2017	Relevant section in report	Comment where not applicable.
(g) An identification of any areas to be avoided, including buffers	Section 5	No buffers or areas of sensitivity identified
(h) A map superimposing the activity including the associated structures and infrastructure on the environmental sensitivities of the site including areas to be avoided, including buffers;	Section 5 – Geological and Palaeontological history	
(i) A description of any assumptions made and any uncertainties or gaps in knowledge;	Section 7.1 – Assumptions and Limitation	-
(j) A description of the findings and potential implications of such findings on the impact of the proposed activity, including identified alternatives, on the environment	Section 1 and 10	
(k) Any mitigation measures for inclusion in the EMPr	Section 1 and 10	
(l) Any conditions for inclusion in the environmental authorisation	Section 1 and 10	
(m) Any monitoring requirements for inclusion in the EMPr or environmental authorisation	Section 1 and 10	
(n)(i) A reasoned opinion as to whether the proposed activity, activities or portions thereof should be authorised and	Section 1 and 10	
(n)(iA) A reasoned opinion regarding the acceptability of the proposed activity or activities; and		
(n)(ii) If the opinion is that the proposed activity, activities or portions thereof should be authorised, any avoidance, management and mitigation measures that should be included in the EMPr, and where applicable, the closure plan	Section 1 and 10	-
(o) A description of any consultation process that was undertaken during the course of carrying out the study	N/A	



Requirements of Appendix 6 – GN R326 EIA Regulations of 7 April 2017	Relevant section in report	Comment where not applicable.
(p) A summary and copies if any comments that were received during any consultation process	N/A	
(q) Any other information requested by the competent authority.	N/A	
(2) Where a government notice by the Minister provides for any protocol or minimum information requirement to be applied to a specialist report, the requirements as indicated in such notice will apply.	Section 3 compliance with SAHRA guidelines	



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Banzai Environmental was appointed by NEMAI GREEN Environmental Solutions to conduct the Palaeontological Desktop Assessment (PDA) to assess the proposed Altina 120 MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Project near Orkney in the Free State. To comply with the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999, section 38) (NHRA), this PIA is necessary to verify if fossil material could potentially be present in the planned development area and to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed development on the Palaeontological Heritage.

The proposed development is underlain by Quaternary superficial deposits. The PalaeoMap of the South African Heritage Resources Information System indicates that the Palaeontological Sensitivity of the Quaternary deposits is moderate (Almond and Pether, 2009; Almond *et al.*, 2013). These superficial sediments mantle sediments of the Ecca and Transvaal Supergroup at depth. These underlying sediments will not impact on the development as the structures of the Altina PV Project will not penetrate that deep.

Two layout alternatives are considered for the proposed PV development. As both alternatives have the same geology and thus the impact of the proposed Altina PV Project on fossil heritage of the area, will be the same. From a Palaeontological view no alternative is more preferred above the other. A Moderate Palaeontological Significance has been allocated to the development footprint. It is therefore considered that the proposed development will not lead to detrimental impacts on the palaeontological resources of the area. The construction and operation of the project may be authorised, as the whole extent of the development footprint is not considered sensitive in terms of palaeontological heritage. If fossil remains or trace fossils are discovered during any phase of construction, either on the surface or exposed by excavations the Environmental Control Officer (ECO) in charge of these developments must report to SAHRA (Contact details: SAHRA, 111 Harrington Street, Cape Town. PO Box 4637, Cape Town 8000, South Africa. Tel: 021 462 4502. Fax: +27 (0)21 462 4509. Web: www.sahra.org.za) so that mitigation can be carry out by a palaeontologist.

It is consequently recommended that no further palaeontological heritage studies, ground truthing and/or specialist mitigation are required pending the discovery of newly discovered fossils.



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Curriculum Vitae Elize Butler





1 INTRODUCTION

Genesis Eco-Energy Developments (Pty) Ltd plans to develop the Altina 120MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Project near Orkney in the Free State. Nemaï Green was appointed to conduct the Environmental Authorization of the proposed development.

Two layout alternatives are considered for the proposed Altina 120MW PV Project. Both alternatives fall within the development footprint.

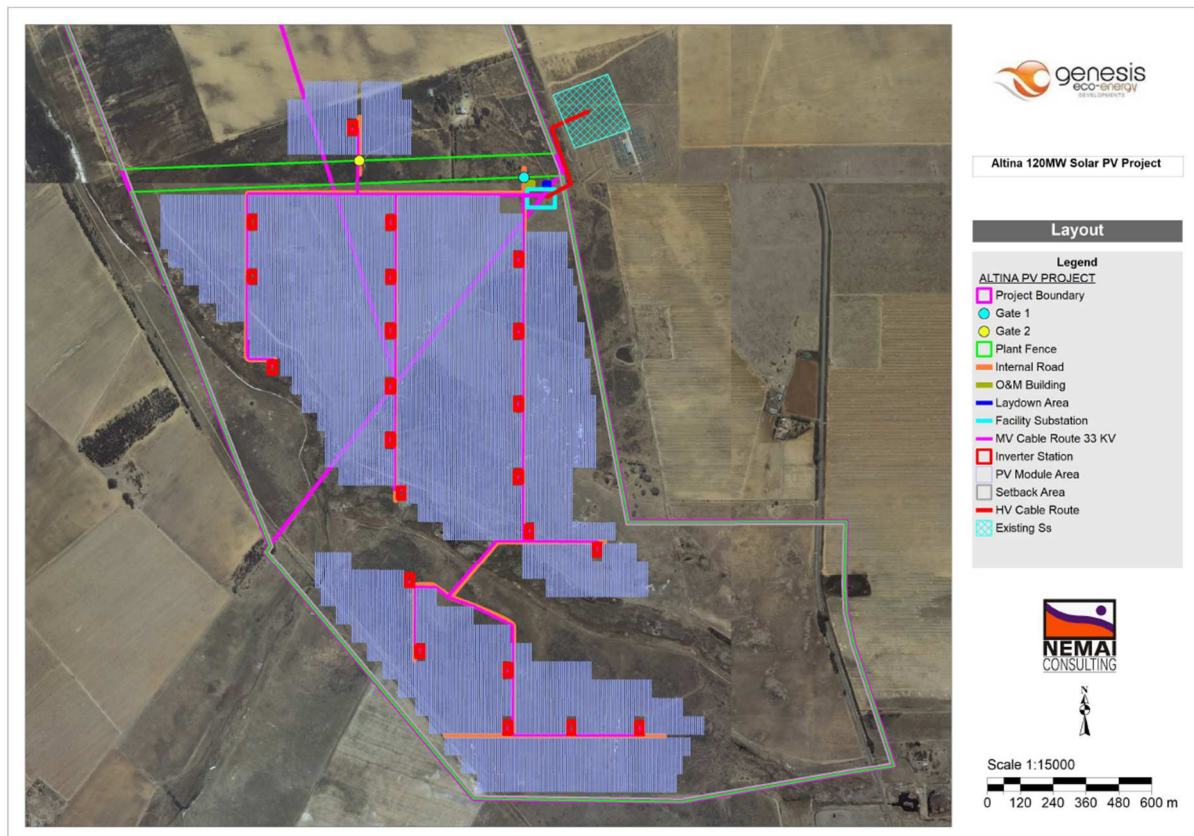


Figure 1: Alternative 1 of the proposed Altina 120MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Project near Orkney in the Free State.

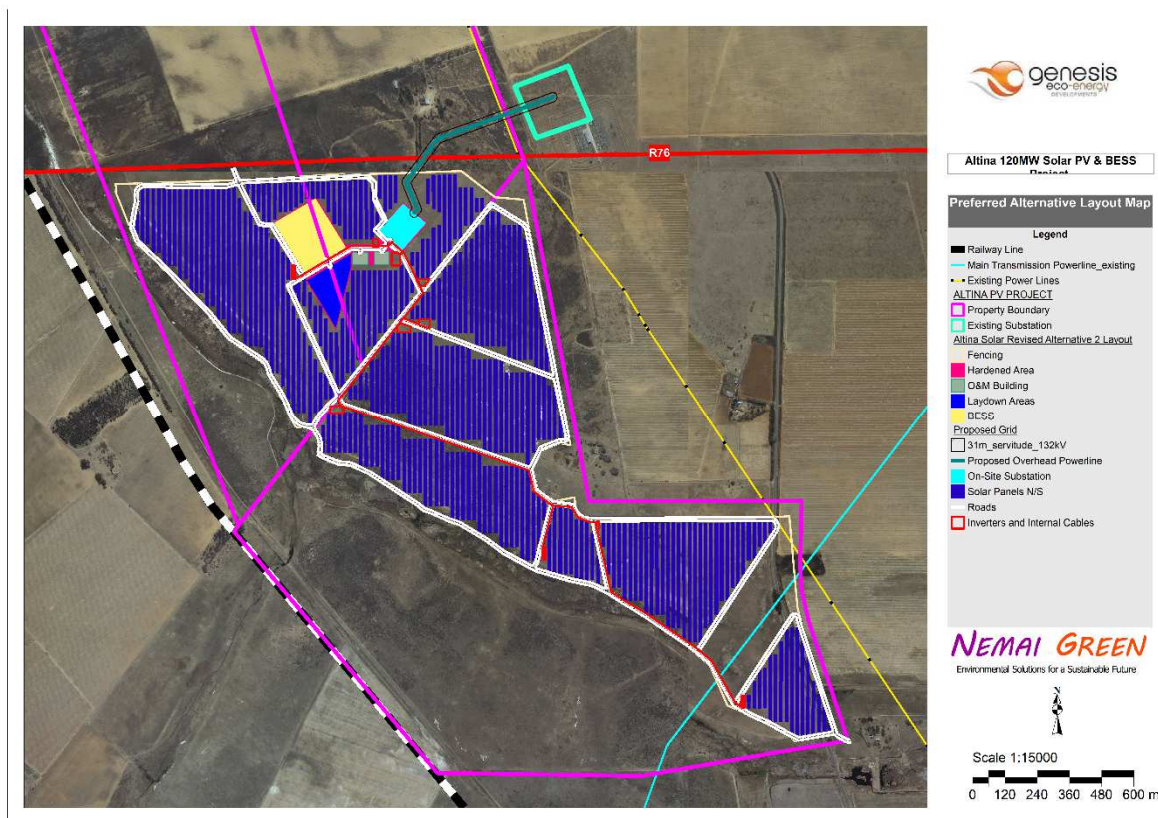


Figure 2: Alternative 2 of the proposed Altina 120MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Project near Orkney in the Free State.

The following information was provided by Nemai Green.

Electricity generation sources need to be diversified to ensure security of supply and reduction in the carbon footprint created by the current heavy reliance of South Africa (SA) on coal to produce electricity. The electricity demand is increasing in SA, and in order to match that demand there is a need to supply a diversified power generation that includes renewable energy technologies. These technologies include solar, wind, small utility scale hydro, biomass, biogas and energy storage that the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) intends to develop and implement as identified in the approved Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) 2019. Genesis Eco-Energy Developments (Pty) Ltd (the Applicant) has proposed the development of the Altina 120MW Solar PV Project near the town of Orkney, in the Free State Province (refer to locality map in **Figure 1**). The site falls within the Klerksdorp Renewable Energy Development Zone (REDZ), as published in Government Notice No. 142 of 26 February 2021. The electricity generated by the Project will be injected into the existing Eskom 132 kV distribution system. The Applicant intends to bid for Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) bid windows and /or other renewable energy markets within SA (**Figure 1-3**).

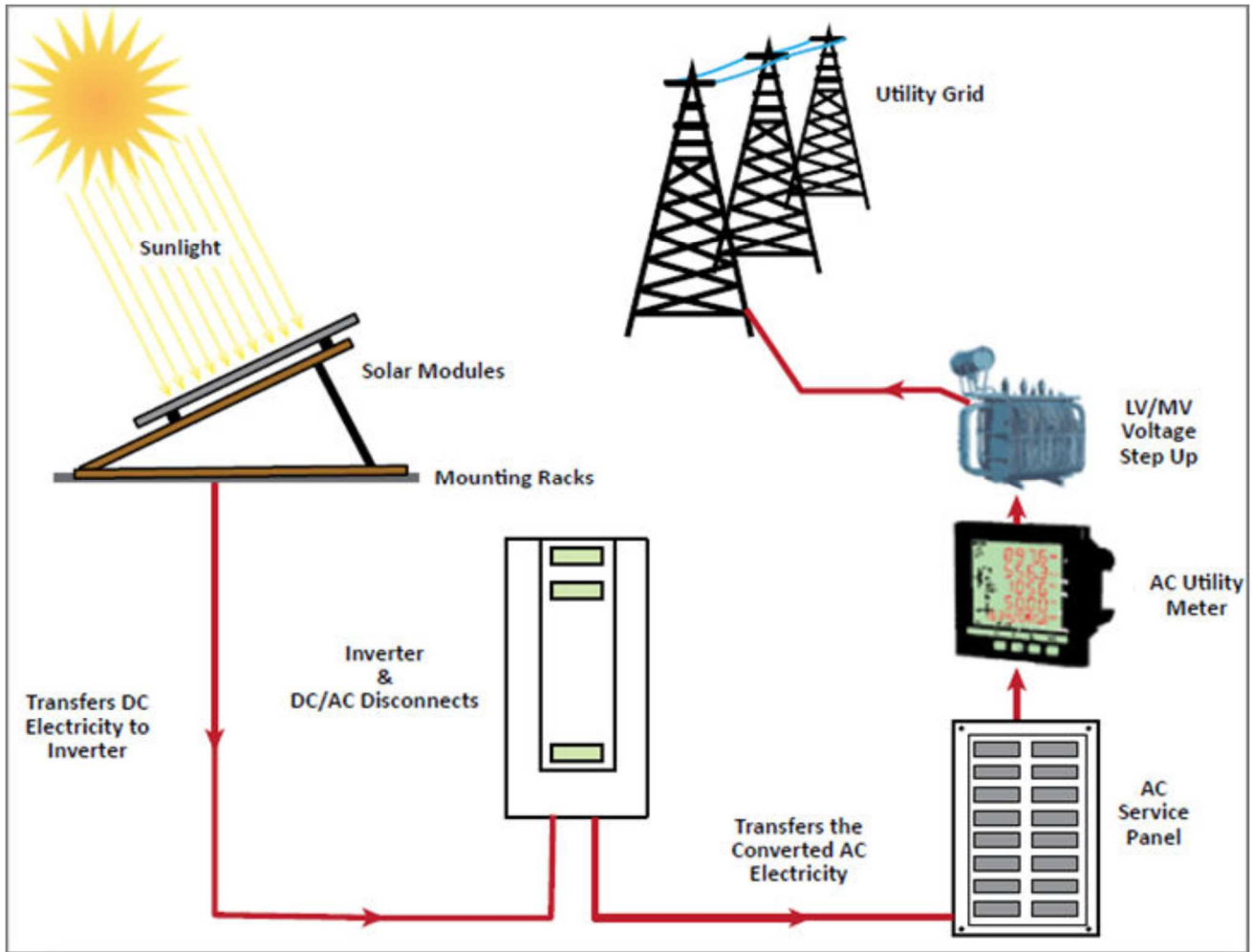


Figure 3: Overview of Solar PV Power Plant (Figure provided by Nemaï Green, taken from International Finance Corporation, 2015. Utility-scale solar Photovoltaic Power Plants).

1.1 Project Overview

The Project is located in the northern part of the Free State Province and falls within the Feiler Dabi District Municipality and Moqhaka Local Municipality. The site is located approximately 7km to the south of the town of

Orkney and is crossed by the R76.

The proposed Project footprint is as follows:

- ◆ Potential Solar Areas – 149Ha and 63Ha (total of 212Ha); and
- ◆ Grid connection – approximately 1km (substation located to the immediate east of the Project boundary).

The proposed Project consists of the following systems, sub-systems or components (amongst others):



- ◆ PV panel arrays, which are the subsystems which convert incoming sunlight into electrical energy.
- ◆ Mounting structures to support the PV panels.
- ◆ On-site inverters to convert DC to facilitate AC connection between the solar energy facility and electricity grid.
- ◆ New 132 kV power lines between the on-site substation(s) and the grid connection point.
- ◆ Cabling between the Project's components, to be laid underground (where practical);
- ◆ Administration Buildings (Offices).
- ◆ Workshop areas for maintenance and storage.
- ◆ Temporary laydown areas.
- ◆ Internal access roads and perimeter fencing of the footprint.
- ◆ High Voltage (HV) Transformers; and
- ◆ Security Infrastructure

2 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE AUTHOR

This present study has been conducted by Mrs Elize Butler. She has conducted approximately 300 palaeontological impact assessments for developments in the Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern, Central, and Northern Cape, Northwest, Gauteng, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga. She has an MSc (*cum laude*) in Zoology (specializing in Palaeontology) from the University of the Free State, South Africa and has been working in Palaeontology for more than twenty-five years. She has experience in locating, collecting, and curating fossils. She has been a member of the Palaeontological Society of South Africa (PSSA) since 2006 and has been conducting PIAs since 2014.

3 LEGISLATION

3.1 National Heritage Resources Act (25 of 1999)

Cultural Heritage in South Africa, includes all heritage resources, is protected by the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) (NHRA). Heritage resources as defined in Section 3 of the Act include **“all objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens”**.

The identification, evaluation and assessment of any cultural heritage site, artefact or finds in the South African context is required and governed by the following legislation:



- National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) Act 107 of 1998
- National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) Act 25 of 1999
- Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA) Act 28 of 2002
- Notice 648 of the Government Gazette 45421- general requirements for undertaking an initial site sensitivity verification where no specific assessment protocol has been identified.

The next section in each Act is directly applicable to the identification, assessment, and evaluation of cultural heritage resources.

GNR 982 (Government Gazette 38282, 14 December 2014) promulgated under the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) Act 107 of 1998

- Basic Assessment Report (BAR) – Regulations 19 and 23
- Environmental Impacts Assessment (EIA) – Regulation 23
- Environmental Scoping Report (ESR) – Regulation 21
- Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) – Regulations 19 and 23

National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) Act 25 of 1999

- Protection of Heritage Resources – Sections 34 to 36
- Heritage Resources Management – Section 38

MPRDA Regulations of 2014

Environmental reports to be compiled for application of mining right – Regulation 48

- Contents of scoping report – Regulation 49
- Contents of environmental impact assessment report – Regulation 50
- Environmental management programme – Regulation 51
- Environmental management plan – Regulation 52

The NEMA (No 107 of 1998) states that an integrated EMP should (23:2 (b)) “...*identify, predict, and evaluate the actual and potential impact on the environment, socio-economic conditions, and cultural heritage*”.

In agreement with legislative requirements, EIA rating standards as well as SAHRA policies the following comprehensive and legally compatible PIA report have been compiled.

Palaeontological heritage is exceptional and non-renewable and is protected by the NHRA. Palaeontological resources and may not be unearthed, broken moved, or destroyed by any development without prior assessment and without a permit from the relevant heritage resources authority as per section 35 of the NHRA.



This Palaeontological Impact assessment forms part of the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and adhere to the conditions of the Act. According to **Section 38 (1)**, an HIA is required to assess any potential impacts to palaeontological heritage within the development footprint where:

- the construction of a road, wall, power line, pipeline, canal or other similar form of linear development or barrier exceeding 300 m in length.
- the construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50 m in length.
- any development or other activity which will change the character of a site—
- (Exceeding 5 000 m² in extent; or
- involving three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof; or
- involving three or more erven or divisions thereof which have been consolidated within the past five years; or
- the costs of which will exceed a sum set in terms of regulations by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority
- the re-zoning of a site exceeding 10 000 m² in extent.
- or any other category of development provided for in regulations by SAHRA or a Provincial heritage resources authority.

4 OBJECTIVE

The aim of a Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) is to decrease the effect of the development on potential fossils at the development site.

According to the “SAHRA APM Guidelines: Minimum Standards for the Archaeological and Palaeontological Components of Impact Assessment Reports” the purpose of the PIA is: 1) to identify the palaeontological importance of the rock formations in the footprint; 2) to evaluate the palaeontological magnitude of the formations; 3) to clarify the impact on fossil heritage; and 4) to suggest how the developer might protect and lessen possible damage to fossil heritage.

The palaeontological status of each rock section is calculated as well as the possible impact of the development on fossil heritage by a) the palaeontological importance of the rocks, b) the type of development and c) the quantity of bedrock removed.

When the development footprint has a moderate to high palaeontological sensitivity a field-based assessment is necessary. The desktop and the field survey of the exposed rock determine the impact significance of the planned development and recommendations for further studies or mitigation are made. Destructive impacts on palaeontological heritage usually only occur during the construction phase while the excavations will change the current topography and destruct or permanently seal-in



fossils at or below the ground surface. Fossil Heritage will then no longer be accessible for scientific research.

Mitigation usually precede construction or may occur during construction when potentially fossiliferous bedrock is exposed. Mitigation comprises the collection and recording of fossils. Preceding excavation of any fossils a permit from SAHRA must be obtained and the material will have to be housed in a permitted institution. When mitigation is applied correctly, a positive impact is possible because our knowledge of local palaeontological heritage may be increased

The terms of reference of a PIA are as follows:

General Requirements:

- Adherence to the content requirements for specialist reports in accordance with Appendix 6 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended.
- Adherence to all applicable best practice recommendations, appropriate legislation, and authority requirements.
- Submit a comprehensive overview of all appropriate legislation, guidelines.
- Description of the proposed project and provide information regarding the developer and consultant who commissioned the study.
- Description and location of the proposed development and provide geological and topographical maps.
- Provide Palaeontological and geological history of the affected area.
- Identification sensitive areas to be avoided (providing shapefiles/kml's) in the proposed development.
- Evaluation of the significance of the planned development during the Pre-construction, Construction, Operation, Decommissioning Phases and Cumulative impacts. Potential impacts should be rated in terms of the direct, indirect, and cumulative:
 - a. **Direct impacts** are impacts that are caused directly by the activity and generally occur at the same time and at the place of the activity.
 - b. **Indirect impacts** of an activity are indirect or induced changes that may occur as a result of the activity.
 - c. **Cumulative impacts** result from the incremental impact of the proposed activity on a common resource when added to the impacts of other past, present or reasonably foreseeable future activities.
- Fair assessment of alternatives (infrastructure alternatives have been provided):
- Recommend mitigation measures to minimise the impact of the proposed development; and



- Implications of specialist findings for the proposed development (such as permits, licenses etc).

5 GEOLOGICAL AND PALAEOONTOLOGICAL HISTORY

The geology of the Altina 120MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Project near Orkney in the Free State is indicated on the 1:250 000 Kroonstad 2726 (Schutte , 2000) Geological Map (Council for Geosciences, Pretoria) (**Figure 3, Table 2**). According to this map the proposed development is underlain by the Quaternary deposits comprising of aeolian sand. Recent Shape files produced by the Council of Geosciences (Pretoria) indicates that the proposed Altina PV Project is underlain by alluvium , colluvium, and eluvium (**Figure 5**). The PalaeoMap of the South African Heritage Resources Information System indicates that the Palaeontological Sensitivity of the Quaternary deposits is moderate (Almond and Pether, 2009; Almond *et al.*, 2013) (**Figure 6**).

The Quaternary Era is also known as the “Age of the Mammals” and is preserved on coastal plains (Langebaanweg), cave systems (Makapan), and river gravel terraces (Cornelia), as well as other basins. These deposits have been subdivided in six African Land Mammal Ages, namely Recent, Florisian, Cornelian, Makapanian, Langebaanian, and Namibian (MacRae 1999). Quaternary deposits best known in the Free State is the Florisbad and Cornelia localities. Fossils recovered from these sites include teeth and bones of mammals, fish, reptiles, freshwater mollusks, trace fossils, wood, rhizoliths and diatom floras (Groenewald and Groenewald 2014). Quaternary fossils are usually very rare but may also include mammalian teeth and bone, ostrich eggshells, tortoise remains, ostracods, diatoms, and reptilian skeletons, trace fossils include burrows, vertebrate tracks, rhizoliths as well as calcretised termitaria (termite heaps). Plant remains include foliage, pear, wood, pollens. Microfossils and vertebrate remains are often found in Quaternary deposits near water courses and drainage lines.

The superficial deposits (represented by yellow on the geological maps, Qs/Qc./Qd) are the youngest geological deposits formed during the most recent geological period (approximately 2.6 million years ago to present). Most of the superficial deposits are unconsolidated sediments and consist of clay, gravel, sand, silt, that form relatively thin, discontinuous patches of sediments or larger spreads onshore. These sediments comprise of channel, floodplain and stream deposits, talus gravels and glacial drift sediments. Quaternary deposits are very important because palaeoclimatic changes are reflected in the different geological formations (Hunter et al., 2006). During the climate fluctuations in the Quaternary Era most geomorphologic features in southern Africa where formed (Maud, 2012). Barnosky (2005) indicated that various warming and cooling events occurred in the Quaternary but states that climatic changes during the Quaternary, specifically the last 1.8 Ma, were the most drastic climate changes relative to all climate variations in the past. Climate variations that occurred in the



Quaternary were both drier and wetter than the present and resulted in changes in river flow patterns, sedimentation processes and vegetation variation (Tooth et al., 2004).

Underlying these superficial sediments at depth is sediments of the Ecca Group (Vryheid Formation) as well as sediments of the Malmani Subgroup (Chuniespoort Group, Transvaal Supergroup).

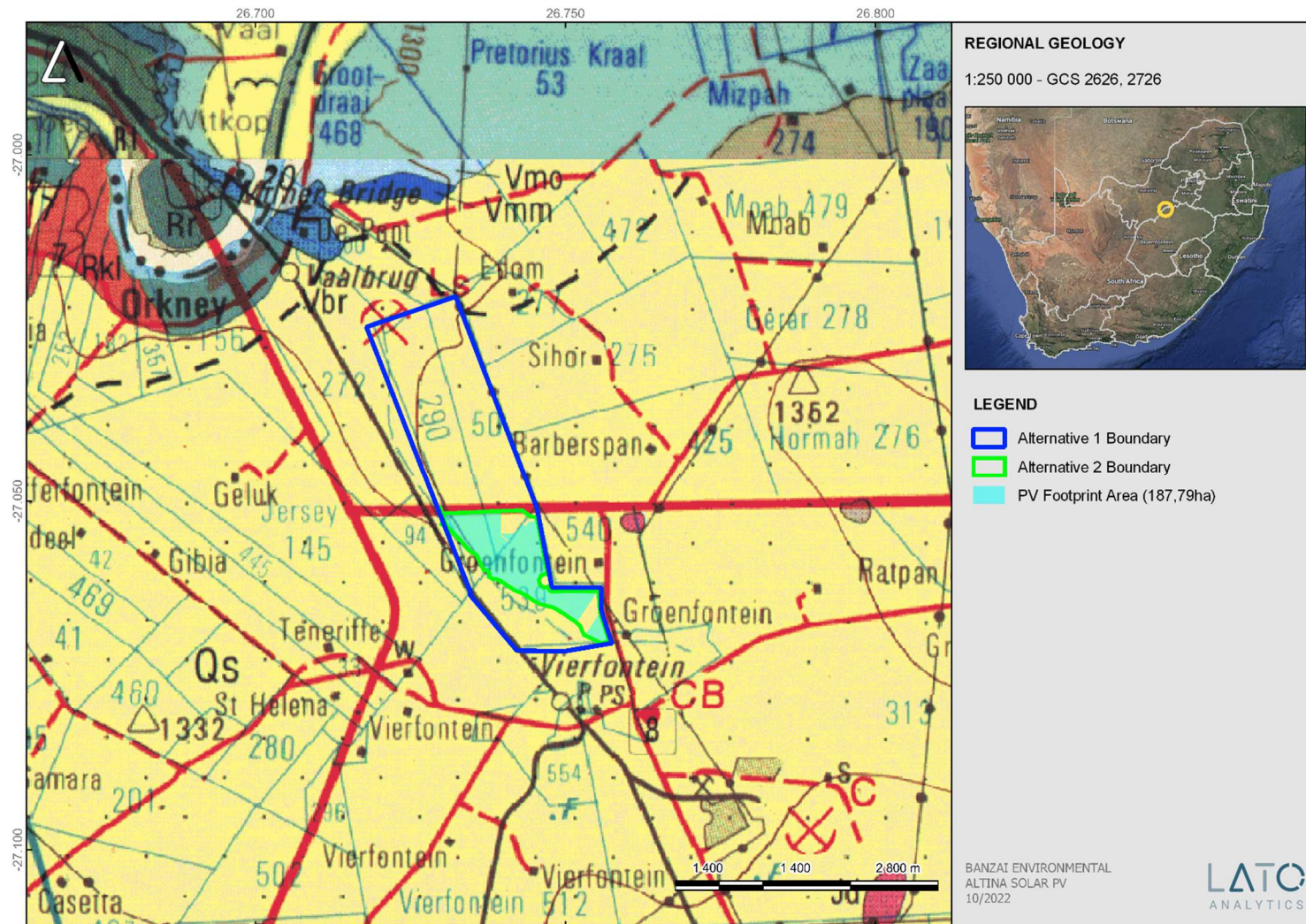


Figure 4: Extract of the 1:250 000 Kroonstad 2726 (Schutte, 2000) Geological Map (Council for Geosciences, Pretoria) indicating the proposed Altina 120 MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Project near Orkney in the Free State. The development is underlain by Quaternary (Os-dune sand).



Table 2: Legend of the 1:250 000 Kroonstad 2726 (Schutte , 2000) Geological Map (Council for Geosciences, Pretoria)

	GROEP GROUP	SUBGROEP SUBGROUP	FORMASIE FORMATION	
KWARTÈR QUATERNARY				 Alluvium Alluvium
				 Rivierterrasgruis River terrace gravel
			Qd	Qc Kalksteen, toefa Limestone, tufa
			Qs	Qd Duinsand Dune sand
			Qc	Qs Eoliese sand Aeolian sand

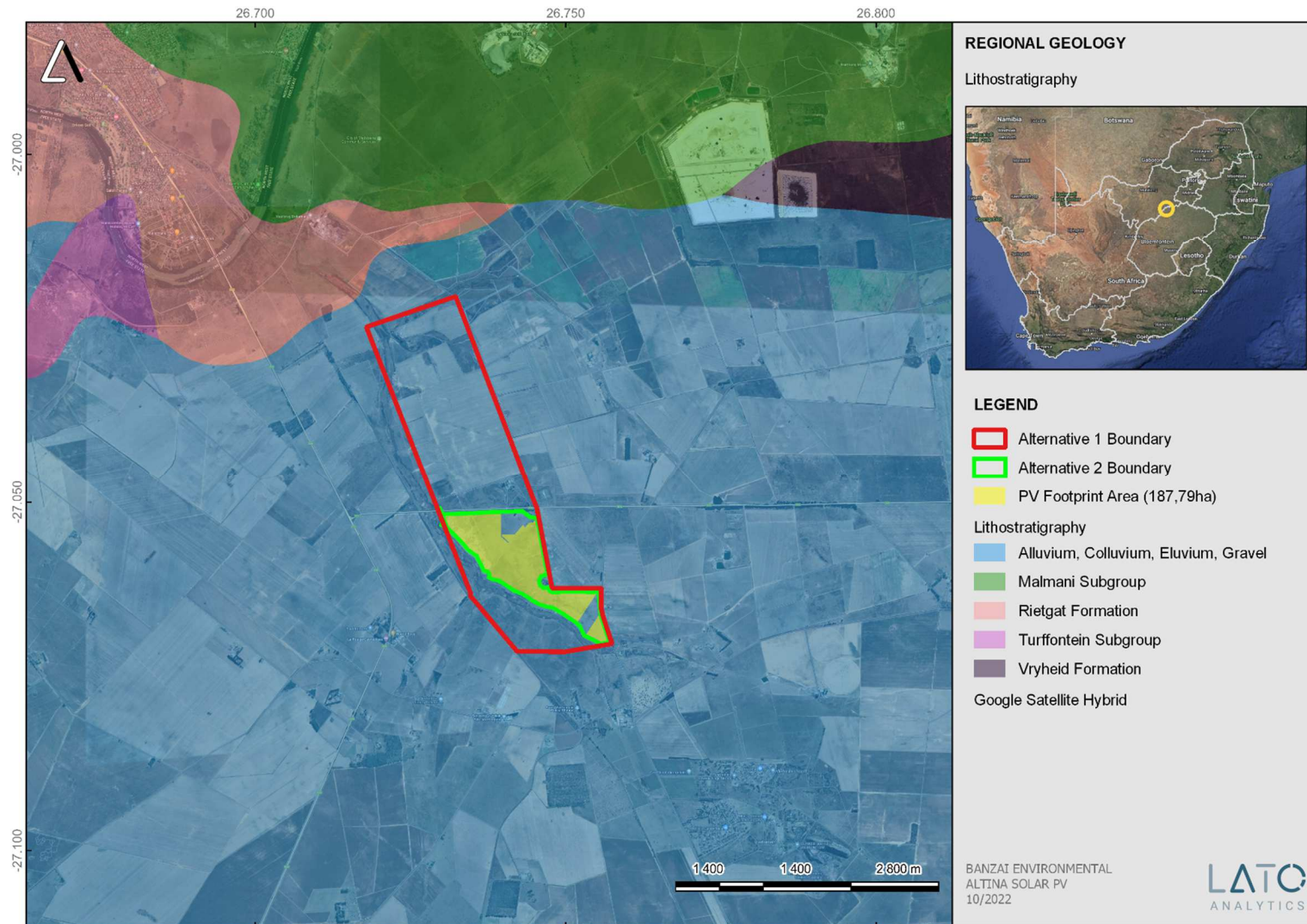


Figure 5: Updated geology indicates that the proposed Altina 120 MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Project near Orkney in the Free State is underlain by alluvium, colluvium, elluvium and gravel.

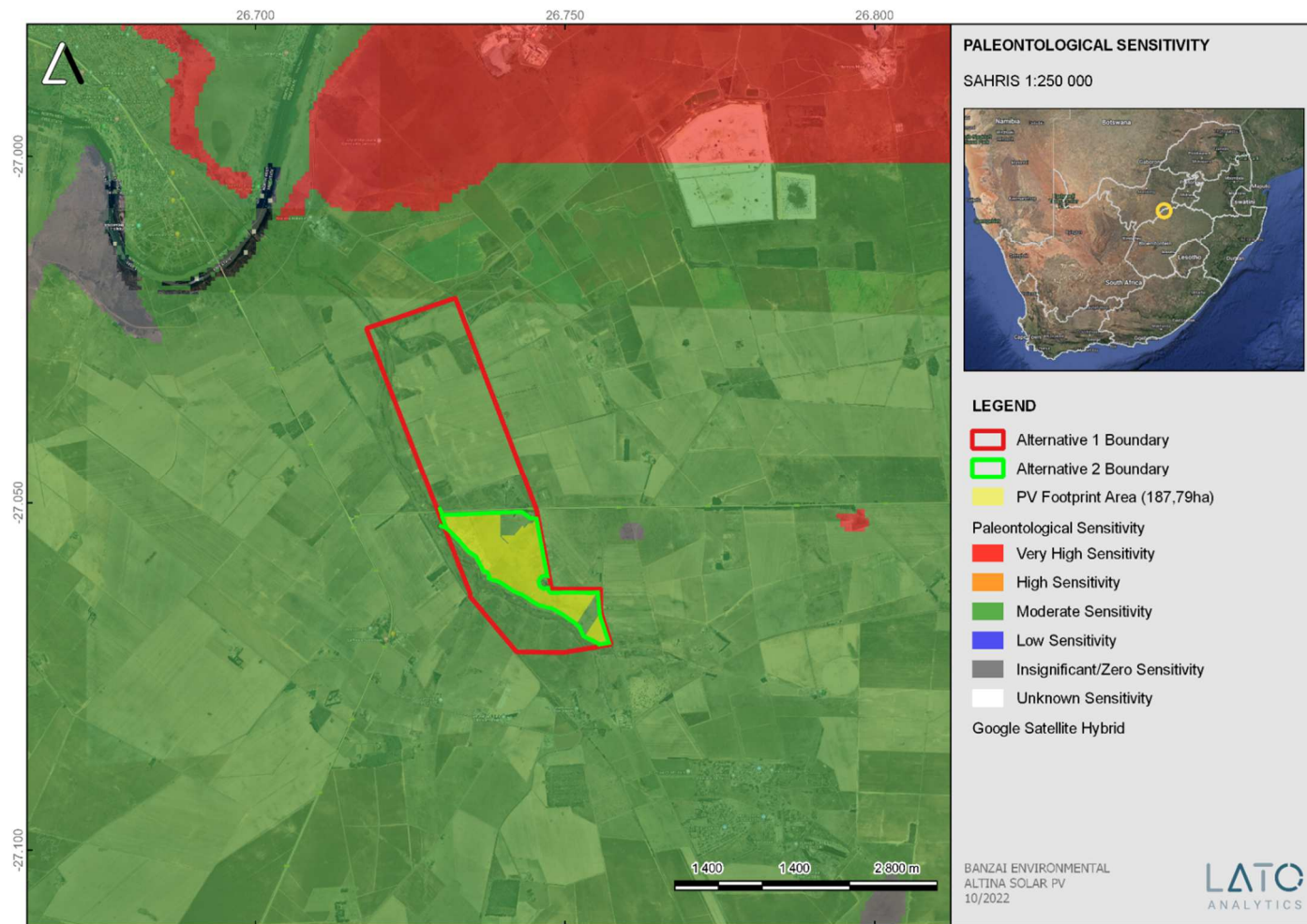


Figure 6: Extract of the 1:250 000 SAHRIS PalaeoMap (Council of Geosciences, Pretoria) indicating the proposed Altina 120 MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Project near Orkney in the Free State.



According to the SAHRIS Palaeosensitivity map (**Figure 6**) the proposed development is underlain by sediments of a Moderate (green) Palaeontological Sensitivity.

Table 3: Palaeontological Significance

Colour	Sensitivity	Required Action
RED	VERY HIGH	Field assessment and protocol for finds is required
ORANGE/YELLOW	HIGH	desktop study is required and based on the outcome of the desktop study; a field assessment is likely
GREEN	MODERATE	desktop study is required
BLUE	LOW	no palaeontological studies are required however a protocol for finds is required
GREY	INSIGNIFICANT/ZERO	no palaeontological studies are required
WHITE/CLEAR	UNKNOWN	these areas will require a minimum of a desktop study. As more information comes to light, SAHRA will continue to populate the map.

The colours on the PalaeoMap indicate the following degrees of sensitivity: red = very highly sensitive; orange/yellow = high; green = moderate; blue = low; grey = insignificant/zero.

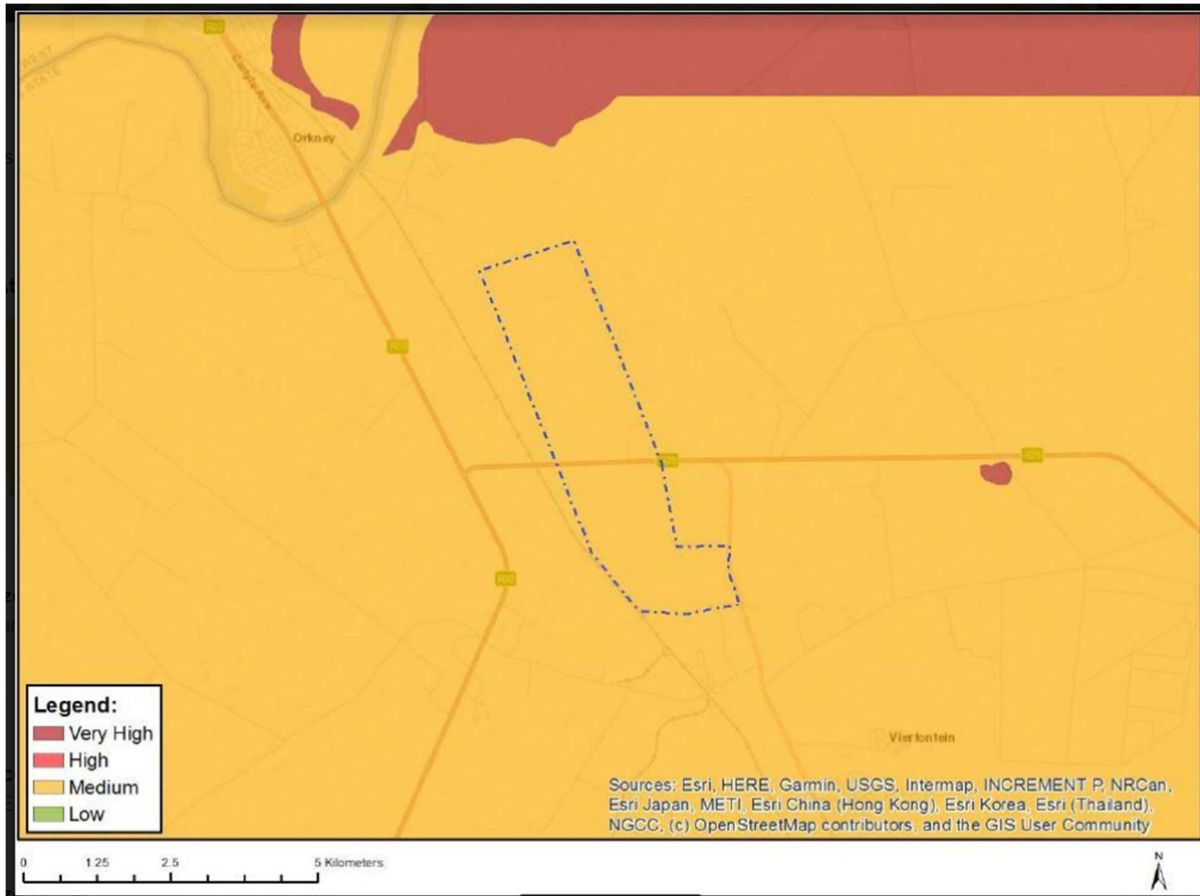


Figure 7: Palaeontological Sensitivity generated by the National Environmental Web-Based Screening Tool indicating the proposed Altina 120 MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Project near Orkney in the Free State

The National Environmental Web-Based Screening Tool indicates that the proposed Altina Solar PV Project has a medium Palaeontological Sensitivity. This corresponds with the Palaeontological Sensitivity on the SAHRIS PalaeoMap (Figure 6).

6 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE SITE

The proposed Altina 120 MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Project near Orkney in the Free State is about 25km south west of Orkney (Figure1-2).

Farm Portion	Latitude	Longitude
Altina 120 MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Project	27° 1'30.03"S	26°43'5.10"E
	27° 1'14.53"S	26°43'55.95"E
	27° 3'48.32"S	26°44'4.51"E
	27° 4'17.33"S	26°44'31.63"E
	27° 3'44.41"S	26°44'52.11"E



	27° 3'45.23"S	26°45'20.52"E
	27° 4'13.67"S	26°45'26.49"E



7 METHODS

The aim of a desktop study is to evaluate the risk to palaeontological heritage in the proposed development. This includes all trace fossils and fossils. All available information is consulted to compile a desktop study and includes Palaeontological impact assessment reports in the same area, aerial photos, and Google Earth images, topographical as well as geological maps. Scientific research articles of research conducted in the area is also sourced and included in the Impact Assessment.

7.1 Assumptions and Limitations

When conducting a PIA several factors can affect the accuracy of the assessment. The focal point of geological maps is the geology of the area, and the sheet explanations were not meant to focus on palaeontological heritage. Many inaccessible regions of South Africa have not been reviewed by palaeontologists and data is generally based on aerial photographs. Locality and geological information of museums and universities databases have not been kept up to date or data collected in the past have not always been accurately documented.

Comparable Assemblage Zones in other areas is used to provide information on the existence of fossils in an area which was not yet been documented. When similar Assemblage Zones and geological formations for Desktop studies is used it is generally **assumed** that exposed fossil heritage is present within the footprint.

8 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONSULTED

In compiling this report the following sources were consulted:

- Geological map 1:100 000, Geology of the Republic of South Africa (Visser 1984).
- A Google Earth map with polygons of the proposed development was obtained from Nemai Green
- 1:250 000 Kroonstad 2726 (Schutte , 2000) Geological Map (Council for Geosciences, Pretoria
- *Nemai Green. 2022. BID for the he proposed Altina 120 MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Project near Orkney in the Free State*
- Shape files produced by the Council of Geosciences (Pretoria).

9 IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

PLEASE NOTE: Both alternatives of the Altina PV Project are located in the development footprint. As such, these alternatives have the same impact as they have the same geology. From a Palaeontological view no alternative is more preferred above the other.



Impact assessment must take account of the nature, scale, and duration of impacts on the environment whether such impacts are positive or negative. Each impact is also assessed according to the following project phases:

- Construction.
- Operation; and
- Decommissioning.

Where necessary, the proposal for mitigation or optimisation of an impact should be detailed. A brief discussion of the impact and the rationale behind the assessment of its significance should also be included. The rating system is applied to the potential impacts on the receiving environment and includes an objective evaluation of the mitigation of the impact. In assessing the significance of each impact, the following criteria is used:

Table 4: The rating system

NATURE		
The Nature of the Impact is the possible destruction of fossil heritage		
GEOGRAPHICAL EXTENT		
This is defined as the area over which the impact will be experienced.		
1	Site	The impact will only affect the site.
2	Local/district	Will affect the local area or district.
3	Province/region	Will affect the entire province or region.
4	International and National	Will affect the entire country.
PROBABILITY		
This describes the chance of occurrence of an impact.		
1	Unlikely	The chance of the impact occurring is extremely low (Less than a 25% chance of occurrence).
2	Possible	The impact may occur (Between a 25% to 50% chance of occurrence).
3	Probable	The impact will likely occur (Between a 50% to 75% chance of occurrence).



4	Definite	Impact will certainly occur (Greater than a 75% chance of occurrence).
DURATION		
This describes the duration of the impacts. Duration indicates the lifetime of the impact as a result of the proposed activity.		
1	Short term	The impact will either disappear with mitigation or will be mitigated through natural processes in a span shorter than the construction phase (0 – 1 years), or the impact will last for the period of a relatively short construction period and a limited recovery time after construction, thereafter it will be entirely negated (0 – 2 years).
2	Medium term	The impact will continue or last for some time after the construction phase but will be mitigated by direct human action or by natural processes thereafter (2 – 10 years).
3	Long term	The impact and its effects will continue or last for the entire operational life of the development, but will be mitigated by direct human action or by natural processes thereafter (10 – 30 years).
4	Permanent	The only class of impact that will be non-transitory. Mitigation either by man or natural process will not occur in such a way or such a time span that the impact can be considered indefinite.
INTENSITY/ MAGNITUDE		
Describes the severity of an impact.		
1	Low	Impact affects the quality, use and integrity of the system/component in a way that is barely perceptible.
2	Medium	Impact alters the quality, use and integrity of the system/component but system/component still continues to function in a moderately modified way and maintains general integrity (some impact on integrity).
3	High	Impact affects the continued viability of the system/component and the quality, use, integrity and functionality of the system or component is severely impaired and may



		temporarily cease. High costs of rehabilitation and remediation.
4	Very high	Impact affects the continued viability of the system/component and the quality, use, integrity and functionality of the system or component permanently ceases and is irreversibly impaired. Rehabilitation and remediation often impossible. If possible rehabilitation and remediation often unfeasible due to extremely high costs of rehabilitation and remediation.
REVERSIBILITY		
This describes the degree to which an impact can be successfully reversed upon completion of the proposed activity.		
1	Completely reversible	The impact is reversible with implementation of minor mitigation measures.
2	Partly reversible	The impact is partly reversible but more intense mitigation measures are required.
3	Barely reversible	The impact is unlikely to be reversed even with intense mitigation measures.
4	Irreversible	The impact is irreversible, and no mitigation measures exist.
IRREPLACEABLE LOSS OF RESOURCES		
This describes the degree to which resources will be irreplaceably lost as a result of a proposed activity.		
1	No loss of resource	The impact will not result in the loss of any resources.
2	Marginal loss of resource	The impact will result in marginal loss of resources.
3	Significant loss of resources	The impact will result in significant loss of resources.
4	Complete loss of resources	The impact is result in a complete loss of all resources.
CUMULATIVE EFFECT		



This describes the cumulative effect of the impacts. A cumulative impact is an effect which in itself may not be significant but may become significant if added to other existing or potential impacts emanating from other similar or diverse activities as a result of the project activity in question.

1	Negligible cumulative impact	The impact would result in negligible to no cumulative effects.
2	Low cumulative impact	The impact would result in insignificant cumulative effects.
3	Medium cumulative impact	The impact would result in minor cumulative effects.
4	High cumulative impact	The impact would result in significant cumulative effects

SIGNIFICANCE

Significance is determined through a synthesis of impact characteristics. Significance is an indication of the importance of the impact in terms of both physical extent and time scale, and therefore indicates the level of mitigation required. The calculation of the significance of an impact uses the following formula:

$$(\text{Extent} + \text{probability} + \text{reversibility} + \text{irreplaceability} + \text{duration} + \text{cumulative effect}) \times \text{magnitude/intensity} = X.$$

The summation of the different criteria will produce a non-weighted value. By multiplying this value with the magnitude/intensity, the resultant value acquires a weighted characteristic which can be measured and assigned a significance rating.

Points	Impact significance rating	Description
6 to 28	Negative low impact	The anticipated impact will have negligible negative effects and will require little to no mitigation.
6 to 28	Positive low impact	The anticipated impact will have minor positive effects.
29 to 50	Negative medium impact	The anticipated impact will have moderate negative effects and will require moderate mitigation measures.
29 to 50	Positive medium impact	The anticipated impact will have moderate positive effects.
51 to 73	Negative high impact	The anticipated impact will have significant effects and will require significant mitigation measures to achieve an acceptable level of impact.



51 to 73	Positive high impact	The anticipated impact will have significant positive effects.
74 to 96	Negative very high impact	The anticipated impact will have highly significant effects and are unlikely to be able to be mitigated adequately. These impacts could be considered "fatal flaws".
74 to 96	Positive very high impact	The anticipated impact will have highly significant positive

9.1 Summary of Impact Tables

Loss of fossil heritage will be a negative impact. Only the site will be affected by the proposed development. The expected duration of the impact is assessed as potentially permanent to long term. In the absence of mitigation procedures, the damage or destruction of any palaeontological materials will be permanent. Impacts on palaeontological heritage during the construction phase could potentially occur and are regarded as having a medium probability. As fossil heritage will be destroyed the impact is irreversible. The significance of the impact occurring will be moderate

Table 5: Summary of Impact Tables

	Site	Probability	Duration	Magnitude	Reversibility	Irreplicable Loss	Cumulative Effect	Significance
Alternative 1	1	2	4	2	4	4	2	32
Alternative 2	1	2	4	2	4	4	2	32

10 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed development is underlain by Quaternary superficial deposits. The PalaeoMap of the South African Heritage Resources Information System indicates that the Palaeontological Sensitivity of the Quaternary deposits is moderate (Almond and Pether, 2009; Almond *et al.*, 2013). These superficial sediments mantle sediments of the Ecca and Transvaal Supergroup at depth. These underlying sediments will not impact on the development as the structures of the Altina PV Project will not penetrate that deep.



Two layout alternatives are considered for the proposed PV development. As both alternatives have the same geology, the impact of the proposed Altina PV Project on fossil heritage of the area, will be the same. From a Palaeontological view no alternative is more preferred above the other. A Moderate Palaeontological Significance has been allocated to the development footprint. It is therefore considered that the proposed development will not lead to detrimental impacts on the palaeontological resources of the area. The construction and operation of the project may be authorised, as the whole extent of the development footprint is not considered sensitive in terms of palaeontological heritage. If fossil remains or trace fossils are discovered during any phase of construction, either on the surface or exposed by excavations the Environmental Control Officer (ECO) in charge of these developments must report to SAHRA (Contact details: SAHRA, 111 Harrington Street, Cape Town. PO Box 4637, Cape Town 8000, South Africa. Tel: 021 462 4502. Fax: +27 (0)21 462 4509. Web: www.sahra.org.za) so that mitigation can be carry out by a palaeontologist.

It is consequently recommended that no further palaeontological heritage studies, ground truthing and/or specialist mitigation are required pending the discovery of newly discovered fossils.

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Appendix A
CURRICULUM VITAE

ELIZE BUTLER

PROFESSION: Palaeontologist

YEARS' EXPERIENCE: 29 years in Palaeontology

EDUCATION: B.Sc Botany and Zoology, 1988
University of the Orange Free State

B.Sc (Hons) Zoology, 1991
University of the Orange Free State

Management Course, 1991
University of the Orange Free State

M. Sc. *Cum laude* (Zoology), 2009
University of the Free State

Dissertation title: The postcranial skeleton of the Early Triassic non-mammalian Cynodont *Galesaurus planiceps*: implications for biology and lifestyle

MEMBERSHIP

Palaeontological Society of South Africa (PSSA) 2006-currently

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Part-time Laboratory assistant	Department of Zoology & Entomology University of the Free State Zoology 1989-1992
Part-time laboratory assistant	Department of Virology University of the Free State Zoology 1992
Research Assistant	National Museum, Bloemfontein 1993 – 1997
Principal Research Assistant and Collection Manager	National Museum, Bloemfontein 1998–currently



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