BANZAI ENVIRONMENTAL

PALAEONTOLOGICAL DESKTOP ASSESSMENT

LUCKHOFF SOLAR 3 PHOTOVOLTAIC SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY, NEAR LUCKHOFF, FREE STATE PROVINCE

2022

COMPILED FOR:

ENVIRONAMICS ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

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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SIGNATURE: 

The heritage 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**: Checklist for Specialist studies in conformance with Appendix 6 of the EIA Regulations of 2014 (as amended).*

Requirements of Appendix 6 – GN R326 EIA Regulations of 7 April 2017	The relevant section in the report	Comment where not applicable.
1.(1) (a) (i) Details of the specialist who prepared the report	Page ii and Section 3 of Report – Contact details and company and Appendix A	-
(ii) The expertise of that person to compile a specialist report including a curriculum vita	Section 3 – 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 5 – Objective	-
(cA) An indication of the quality and age of base data used for the specialist report	Section 6 – 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 10	-

***Table 1**: Checklist for Specialist studies in conformance with Appendix 6 of the EIA Regulations of 2014 (as amended).*

Requirements of Appendix 6 – GN R326 EIA Regulations of 7 April 2017	The relevant section in the report	Comment where not applicable.
(d) The duration, date and season of the site investigation and the relevance of the season to the outcome of the assessment	Section 1; & 11	
(e) a description of the methodology adopted in preparing the report or carrying out the specialised process inclusive of equipment and modelling used	Section 8 Approach and Methodology	-
(f) details of an assessment of the specifically 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 & 11	
(g) An identification of any areas to be avoided, including buffers	Section 1 & 11	
(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 6 – Geological and Palaeontological history	
(i) A description of any assumptions made and any uncertainties or gaps in knowledge;	Section 8.1 – 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 & 11	

***Table 1**: Checklist for Specialist studies in conformance with Appendix 6 of the EIA Regulations of 2014 (as amended).*

Requirements of Appendix 6 – GN R326 EIA Regulations of 7 April 2017	The relevant section in the report	Comment where not applicable.
(k) Any mitigation measures for inclusion in the EMPr	Section 1 & 11	
(l) Any conditions for inclusion in the environmental authorisation	Section 1 & 11	
(m) Any monitoring requirements for inclusion in the EMPr or environmental authorisation	Section 1 & 11	
(n)(i) A reasoned opinion as to whether the proposed activity, activities or portions thereof should be authorised and	Section 1 & 11	
(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 & 11	-
(o) A description of any consultation process that was undertaken during the course of carrying out the study	N/A	Not applicable. A public consultation process was handled as part of the Environmental Impact

***Table 1**: Checklist for Specialist studies in conformance with Appendix 6 of the EIA Regulations of 2014 (as amended).*

Requirements of Appendix 6 – GN R326 EIA Regulations of 7 April 2017	The relevant section in the report	Comment where not applicable.
		Assessment (EIA) and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) process.
(p) A summary and copies of any comments that were received during any consultation process	N/A	Not applicable. To date, no comments regarding heritage resources that require input from a specialist have been raised.
(q) Any other information requested by the competent authority.	N/A	Not applicable.
(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 4 compliance with SAHRA guidelines	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Banzai Environmental was appointed by Environamics Environmental Consultants to conduct the Palaeontological Desktop Assessment (PDA) to assess the Luckhoff Solar 3 Solar Energy Facility (SEF) and associated infrastructure near Luckhoff in the Free State. In accordance with the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA) and to comply with the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999, section 38) (NHRA), this PDA is necessary to confirm if fossil material could potentially be present in the planned development footprint and to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed development on the Palaeontological Heritage of the area.

The proposed development is underlain by Quaternary aeolian sand as well as calcrete. The PalaeoMap of the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS) indicates that the Palaeontological Sensitivity of the calcretes is High while that of the aeolian sands are Moderate (Almond and Pether, 2009; Almond *et al*., 2013). Update geology (Council for Geosciences, Pretoria) indicates that the study area is underlain by calcrete, surface limestones and Hardpan as well as alluvium, colluvium, eluvium, gravel, scree, sand, soil and debris. The Quaternary Superficial Sediments, at depth is probably underlain by the Tierberg Formation (Ecca Group, Karoo Supergroup).

The Palaeontological Significance of the proposed Solar Energy Facility is considered to be Low and will not lead to detrimental impacts on the palaeontological resources of the area. The construction of the development may therefore be authorised as the development footprint is not considered sensitive in terms of palaeontological resources. 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.

If fossil remains are discovered during any phase of construction, either on the surface or uncovered by excavations, the ECO/site manager in charge of these developments must be notified immediately. These discoveries must be secured and the ECO/site manager must alert SAHRA so that appropriate mitigation (documented and collection) can be undertaken by a professional palaeontologist (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). The specialist would need a collection permit from SAHRA. Fossil material must be curated in an approved collection (museum or university) and all fieldwork and reports must meet the minimum standards for palaeontological impact studies developed by SAHRA.

Environmental parameter	Issues	Rating prior to mitigation	Average	Rating post mitigation	Average
Construction Stage SEF Loss of fossil heritage	Destroy or permanently seal-in fossils at or below the surface that are then no longer available for scientific study	30	Negative Medium impact	15	Negative Low impact
SEF Operational Phase	No Impact		No Impact		No Impact
SEF Decommissioning Phase	No Impact		No Impact		No Impact

It is therefore considered that the proposed Luckhoff Solar Power Plant will not lead to detrimental impacts on the palaeontological reserves of the area. Thus, the construction of the development may be authorised in its whole extent.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The development of a photovoltaic solar (PV) facility and associated infrastructure on Farm Rorich's Hulp No. 505, Farm Vijeboom No. 714 and Farm Klein Palmietfontein No. 370, Registration Division Fauresmith, situated within the Letsemeng Local Municipality is planned (Figure 1-2).

***Table 2**:General site information.*

Description of affected farm portion	Solar Power Plant Farm Rorich's Hulp No. 505, Farm Vijeboom No. 714 Farm Klein Palmietfontein No. 370
Province	Free State
District Municipality	Xhariep District Municipality
Local Municipality	Letsemeng Local Municipality
Ward numbers	
Closest towns	The town of Luckhoff is located approximately 3km south of the proposed development.
21 Digit Surveyor General codes	Solar Power Plant Farm Rorich's Hulp No. 505 – F01100000000050500000 Farm Vijeboom No. 714 – F01100000000071400000 Farm Klein Palmietfontein No. 370 – F00300000000172700000
Type of technology	Photovoltaic solar facility
Structure Height	Panels ~6m, buildings ~ 6m, and battery storage facility ~8m height
Battery storage	Within a 5-hectare area
Surface area to be covered (Development footprint)	Approximately 480 ha
Laydown area dimensions (EIA footprint)	Assessed 480 ha
Structure orientation	The panels will either be fixed to a single-axis horizontal tracking structure where the orientation of the panel varies according to the time of the day, as the sun moves from east to west or tilted at a fixed angle

	equivalent to the latitude at which the site is in order to capture the most sun.
Generation capacity	Up to 240MW
Expected production	N/A - this will be dependent on the chosen technology.

1.1 Technical Details

The term photovoltaic describes a solid-state electronic cell that produces direct current electrical energy from the radiant energy of the sun through a process known as the Photovoltaic Effect. This refers to light energy placing electrons into a higher state of energy to create electricity. Each PV cell is made of silicon (i.e., semiconductors), which is positively and negatively charged on either side, with electrical conductors attached to both sides to form a circuit. This circuit captures the released electrons in the form of an electric current (direct current). The key components of the proposed project are described below:

- PV Panel Array - To produce up to 240MW, the proposed facility will require numerous linked cells placed behind a protective glass sheet to form a panel. Multiple panels will be required to form the solar PV arrays which will comprise the PV facility. The PV panels will be tilted at a northern angle in order to capture the most sun or using one-axis tracker structures to follow the sun to increase the Yield

- Wiring to Inverters - Sections of the PV array will be wired to inverters. The inverter is a pulse width mode inverter that converts direct current (DC) electricity to alternating current (AC) electricity at grid frequency.

Connection to the grid - Connecting the array to the electrical grid requires transformation of the voltage from 480V to 33kV to 132kV. The normal components and dimensions of a distribution rated electrical substation will be required. Output voltage from the inverter is 480V and this is fed into step up transformers to 132kV. An onsite substation will be required to step the voltage up to 132kV, after which the power will be evacuated into the national grid. Whilst Luckhoff 1 Solar Power Plant has not yet received a cost estimate letter from Eskom, it is expected that generation from the facility will tie in with the proposed Luckhoff Grid Connection 132kV Overhead Power Line. The Project will inject up to 240MW into the National Grid. The installed capacity will be approximately 240MW.

In order to evacuate the energy generated by the facilities to the national grid, Luckhoff Solar 3 (Pty) Ltd is proposing to develop the activity entails the development of grid connection infrastructure which consists of the following Electrical Grid Infrastructure (EGI) 132kV single/double-circuit overhead power line (with the associated infrastructure) to enable the

connection and evacuation of the generated electricity of the proposed Luckhoff Solar 1, 2, 3 and 4 Photovoltaic Solar Energy Facilities, to the national grid network:

- A collector switching station (up to 132kV);
- A ~2.5 km 132 kV single/double circuit overhead powerline linking the collector switching station to the proposed Luckhoff Main Transmission Substation (MTS) (see below);
- A new 132 kV / 400 kV MTS; and
- Three 400kV Loop-in-Loop Out power lines from the existing Eskom powerlines (Hydra/Perseus 2, Hydra/Perseus 3 and Beta/Hydra 1) to the MTS.
- Electrical reticulation network – An internal electrical reticulation network will be required and will be lain ~2-4m underground as far as practically possible.
- Supporting Infrastructure – The following auxiliary buildings with basic services including water and electricity will be required on site:
    - A 33 kV switch room,
    - A gate house, ablutions, workshops, storage and warehousing areas, site offices and a control centre.
- Battery storage – A Battery Storage Facility with a maximum height of 8m and a maximum volume of 1,740 m^3 of batteries and associated operational, safety and control infrastructure.
- Roads - Access will be obtained via the S572 off the R48, an existing gravel road located adjacent to the site. An internal site road network will also be required to provide access to the solar field and associated infrastructure.
- Fencing - For health, safety and security reasons, the facility will be required to be fenced off from the surrounding farm. Fencing with a height of 3.5 meters will be used.

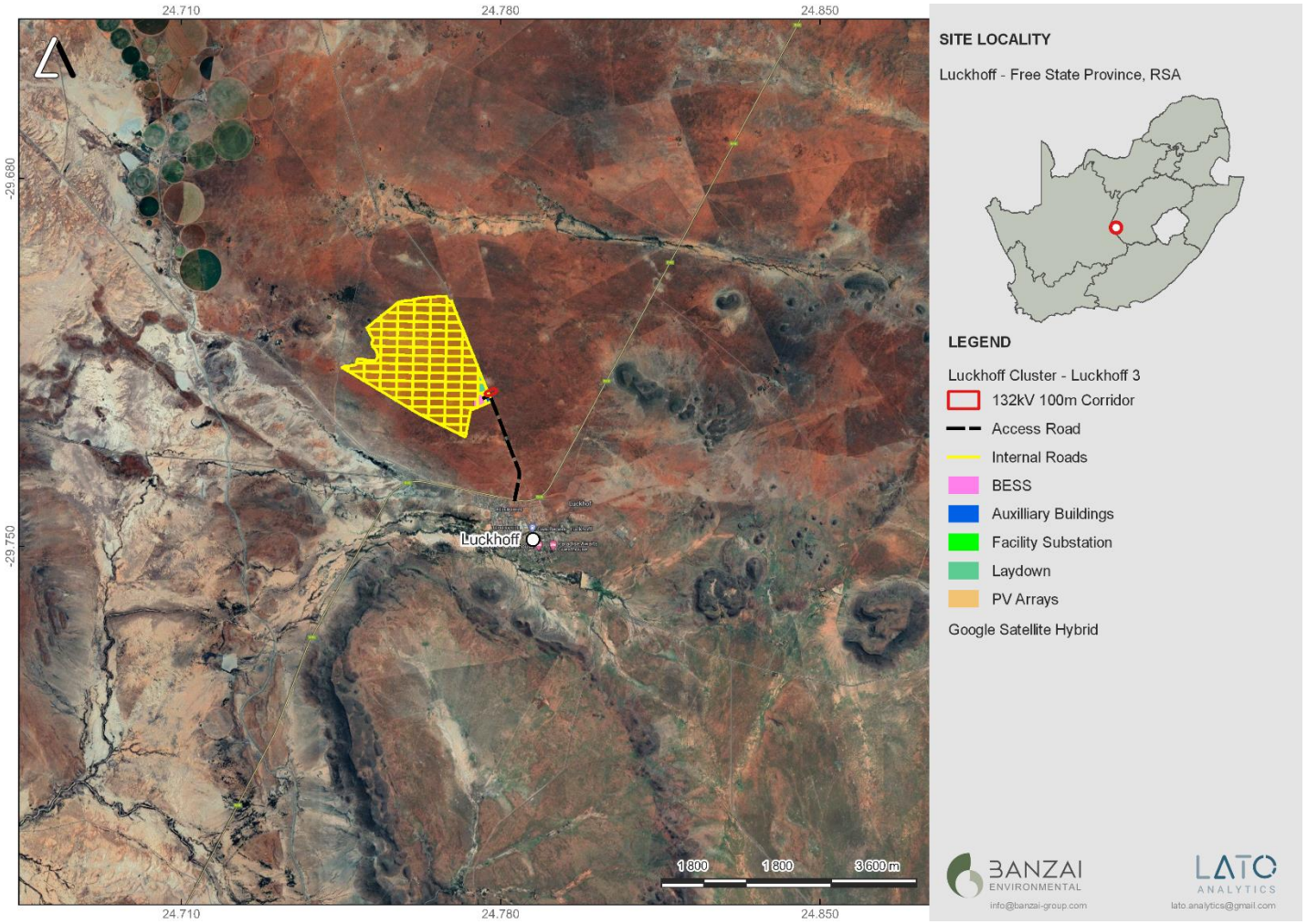


Figure 1: *Regional locality of the proposed Luckhoff Solar 3 Solar Energy Facility near Luckhoff in the Free State Province.*

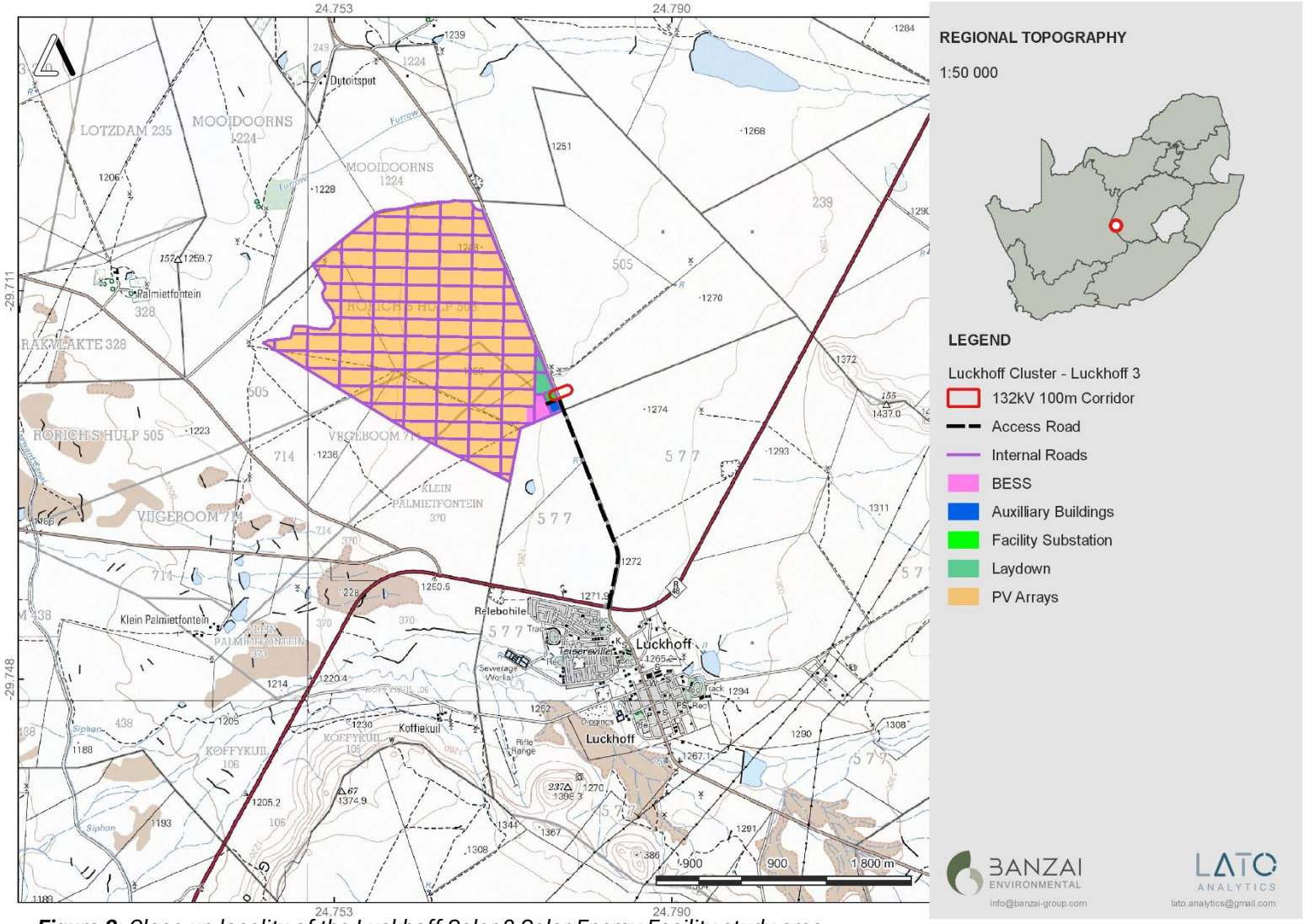


***Figure 2**: Close-up locality of the Luckhoff Solar 3 Solar Energy Facility study area.*

***Table 3**: Technical details for the proposed facility.*

Component	Description / dimensions
Height of PV panels	6 meters
Area of PV Array	480 Hectares (Development footprint)
Area occupied by inverter / transformer stations / substations / BESS	BESS: up to ± 5 ha Facility substation: up to 1 ha
Capacity of on-site substation	132kV
Capacity of the power line	132kV
Area occupied by both permanent and construction laydown areas	Permanent Laydown Area: 480 Hectares Construction Laydown Area: ~20 Hectares
Area occupied by buildings	A 33 kV switch room, a gate house, ablutions, workshops, storage and warehousing areas, site offices and a control centre: ~ 1Hectares
Battery storage facility	Maximum height: 8m Maximum volume: 1740 m^3
Length of internal roads	Approximately 33 km

1.2 Consideration of Alternatives

The DEAT 2006 guidelines on 'assessment of alternatives and impacts' proposes the consideration of four types of alternatives namely, the no-go, location, activity, and design alternatives. It is however, important to note that the regulation and guidelines specifically state that only 'feasible' and 'reasonable' alternatives should be explored. It also recognizes that the consideration of alternatives is an iterative process of feedback between the developer and EAP, which in some instances culminates in a single preferred project proposal. An initial site assessment was conducted by the developer the affected properties and the farm portions were found favorable due to its proximity to grid connections, solar radiation, ecology and relative flat terrain. These factors were then taken into consideration and avoided as far as possible.

The following alternatives were considered in relation to the proposed activity and all specialists should also make mention of these:

1.2.1 No-go alternative

This alternative considers the option of 'do nothing' and maintaining the status quo. The site is currently zoned for agricultural uses. Should the proposed activity not proceed, the site will remain unchanged and will continue to be used for agricultural purposes. The potential opportunity costs in terms of alternative land use income through rental for energy facility and the supporting social and economic development in the area would be lost if the status quo persist.

1.2.2 Location alternatives

No other possible sites were identified on Farm Rorich's Hulp No. 505, Farm Vijeboom No. 714 and Farm Klein Palmietfontein No. 370. This site is referred to as the preferred site. Some limited sensitive features occur on the site. The size of the site makes provision for the exclusion of any sensitive environmental features that may arise through the EIA proses.

1.2.3 Battery storage facility

It is proposed that a nominal up to 240 MW Battery Storage Facility for grid storage would be housed in stacked containers, or multi-storey building, with a maximum height of 8m and a maximum volume of 1,740m^3 of batteries and associated operational, safety and control infrastructure. Three types of battery technologies are being considered for the proposed project: Lithium-ion, Sodium-sulphur or Vanadium Redox flow battery. The preferred battery technology is Lithium-ion.

Battery storage offers a wide range of advantages to South Africa including renewable energy time shift, renewable capacity firming, electricity supply reliability and quality improvement, voltage regulation, electricity reserve capacity improvement, transmission congestion relief, load following and time of use energy cost management. In essence, this technology allows renewable energy to enter the base load and peak power generation market and therefore can compete directly with fossil fuel sources of power generation and offer a truly sustainable electricity supply option.

1.2.4 Design and layout alternatives

Design alternatives will be considered throughout the planning and design phase and specialist studies are expected to inform the final layout of the proposed development.

1.2.5 Technology alternatives

There are several types of semiconductor technologies currently available and in use for PV solar panels. Two, however, have become the most widely adopted, namely crystalline silicon (Mono-facial and Bi-facial) and thin film. The technology that (at this stage) proves more feasible and reasonable with respect to the proposed solar facility is crystalline silicon panels, due to it being non-reflective, more efficient, and with a higher durability. However, due to the rapid technological advances being made in the field of solar technology the exact type of technology to be used, such as bifacial panels, will only be confirmed at the onset of the project.

2 LEGAL MANDATE

2.1 Legal Mandate and Purpose of the Report

The National Environmental Management Act identifies listed activities (in terms of Section 24) which are likely to have an impact on the environment. These activities cannot commence without obtaining an EA from the relevant competent authority. Sufficient information is required by the competent authority to make an informed decision and the project is therefore subject to an environmental assessment process which can be either a Basic Assessment Process or a full Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment process.

The EIA Regulations No. 324, 325, and 327 outline the activities that may be triggered and therefore require EA. The following listed activities with special reference to the proposed development is triggered:

***Table 4**: Listed activities (SPPs).*

Relevant notice:	**Activity No (s)**	**Description of each listed activity as per project description**:
GNR. 327 (as amended in 2017)	Activity 11(i)	• *"The development of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity (i) outside urban areas or industrial complexes with a capacity of more than 33 but less than 275 kilovolts."* • Activity 11(i) is triggered as the proposed photovoltaic solar facility will transmit and distribute electricity of 132 kilovolts outside an urban area.
GNR. 327 (as amended in 2017)	Activity 28(ii)	• *"Residential, mixed, retail, commercial, industrial or institutional developments where such land was used for agriculture or afforestation on or after 1998 and where such development (ii) will occur outside an urban area, where the total land to be developed is bigger than 1 hectare."* • Activity 28(ii) is triggered as portions of the affected farm has been previously used for grazing and the property will be re-zoned to "special" use.
GNR. 327 (as amended in 2017)	Activity 24(ii)	• *"The development of a road (ii) with reserve wider than 13,5 meters, or where no reserve exists where the road is wider than 8 meters;* • Activity 24(ii) is triggered as the internal roads will vary between 6 and 12 meters in width.

GNR. 327 (as amended in 2017)	Activity 56 (ii):	• *"The widening of a road by more than 6 metres, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre (ii) where no reserve exists, where the existing road is wider than 8 metres…"* • Activity 56 (ii) is triggered as the existing access to the affected property does not have a reserve and will need to be widened by more than 6 metres.
GNR. 325 (as amended in 2017)	Activity 1	• *"The development of facilities or infrastructure for the generation of electricity from a renewable resource where the electricity output is 20 megawatts or more."* • Activity 1 is triggered since the proposed photovoltaic solar facility will generate up to 240 megawatts electricity through the use of a renewable resource.
GNR. 325 (as amended in 2017)	Activity 15	• *"The clearance of an area of 20 hectares or more of indigenous vegetation."* • More than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation will be cleared.
GNR. 324 (as amended in 2017)	Activity 4 (b)(i)(ee)	• *The development of a road wider than 4 metres with a reserve less than 13,5 metres, (b) Free State, (i) outside urban area, (ee) within Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority.* • Activity 4(b)(i)(ee) is triggered as the internal roads will vary between 6 and 12 meters in width.
GNR. 324 (as amended in 2017)	Activity 10 (b)(i)(ee)	• *The development and related operation of facilities or infrastructure for the storage, or storage and handling of a dangerous good, where such storage occurs in containers with a combined capacity of 30 but not exceeding 80 cubic metres (b) Free State, (i) outside urban area, (ee) within Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority.* • Activity 10 (b)(i)(ee) will be triggered since more than 30 cubic metres of fuel will be stored on site.
GNR. 324 (as amended in 2017)	Activity 12 (b)(i)	• *The clearance of an area of 300 square metres or more of indigenous vegetation except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation in (b) Free State (i) within Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority.*

		• Activity 12 (b)(i) is triggered since approximately 480 hectares of indigenous vegetation will be cleared.
GNR. 324 (as amended in 2017)	Activity 18 (b)(i)(ee)	• *The widening of a road by more than 4 metres, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre in (b) Free Stat, (i) outside urban areas, within (ee) Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority* • Activity 18 (b)(i)(ee) is triggered as the existing access to the affected property does not have a reserve and will need to be widened by more than 6 metres.

The activities triggered under Listing Notice 1, 2 and 3 (Regulation 327, 325 and 324) for the project implies that the development is considered as potentially having an impact on the environment and therefore require the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.

3 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE AUTHOR

This study has been conducted by Mrs Elize Butler. She has conducted approximately 400 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 thirty 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.

4 LEGISLATION

4.1 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 m^2 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.

5 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 as 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).

6 GEOLOGICAL AND PALAEONTOLOGICAL HISTORY

The proposed Luckhoff Solar 3 Photovoltaic Solar Energy Facility plant near Luckhoff in the Free State Province is depicted on the 1:250 000 Koffiefontein 2924 Geological map (1992) (Council of Geoscience, Pretoria) (Figure 3; Table 6) with a short sheet explanation by Zawada. The proposed development is underlain by Quaternary aeolian sand (Qs; yellow) as well as calcrete (Qc; dark yellow). The PalaeoMap of the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS) indicates that the Palaeontological Sensitivity of the calcretes is High while that of the Quaternary sands is Moderate (Figure 4, Table 6; Almond and Pether, 2009; Almond *et al*., 2013). Update geology (Council for Geosciences, Pretoria) indicates that the proposed Luckhoff Solar 1 Photovoltaic Solar Energy Facility is underlain by calcrete, surface limestones and Hardpan as well as alluvium, colluvium, eluvium, gravel, scree, sand, soil and debris (Figure 5).

Pleistocene mammal faunas are described from Cornelia, Florisbad, and Erfkroon (Free State Province) as well as elsewhere in the country (Wells & Cooke 1942, Cooke 1974, Skead 1980, Klein 1984, Brink, J.S. 1987, Bousman *et al.* 1988, Bender & Brink 1992, Brink *et al*. 1995, MacRae 1999, Meadows & Watkeys 1999, Churchill *et al*. 2000 Partridge & Scott 2000). Reworked Stone Age artifacts (Plio-Pleistocene) have been found in Quaternary alluvium. Fossils represent terrestrial plants and animals with a close resemblance to living forms. Fossil assemblages include bivalves, diatoms, gastropod shells, ostracods as well as bones, horn corns and mammalian teeth (Klein, 1984). Tortoise remains have also been uncovered as well as trace fossils which includes termite and insect's burrows and mammalian trackways. Amphibian and crocodile skeletons have been uncovered where the depositional settings in the past were wetter. The palaeontology of the Quaternary superficial deposits has been relatively neglected in the past.

The Quaternary superficial deposits are the youngest geological deposits formed during the most recent period of geological time (approximately 2.6 million years ago to present). Most of the superficial deposits are unconsolidated sediments and consist of gravel, sand, silt, and clay, and they form relatively thin, often discontinuous patches of sediments or larger spreads.

The Quaternary deposits are of important due to the palaeoclimatic changes that are reflected in the different geological formations (Hunter et al., 2006). During the climate fluctuations in the Cenozoic Era most geomorphologic features in southern Africa where formed (Maud, 2012). Barnosky (2005) indicated that various warming and cooling events occurred in the Cenozoic but states that climatic changes during the Quaternary Period, 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 Period 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).

The pedogenic limestone deposits is up to 10 meters thick and may displace or replace near-surface bedrocks. Netterberg (1978, 1980) revived the South African calcretes and found that the calcretes comprise of glaebular calcrete (with separate nodules), hardpan calcrete that contain solid limestone and honeycomb calcrete (fusing with glaebules). These calcretes are locally conglomeratic with clasts of exotic pebbles and reworked calcretes. Some of these calcretes may be diamondiferous

The surface sediments most probably overlie the Tierberg Formation (Ecca Group, Karoo Supergroup) at depth.

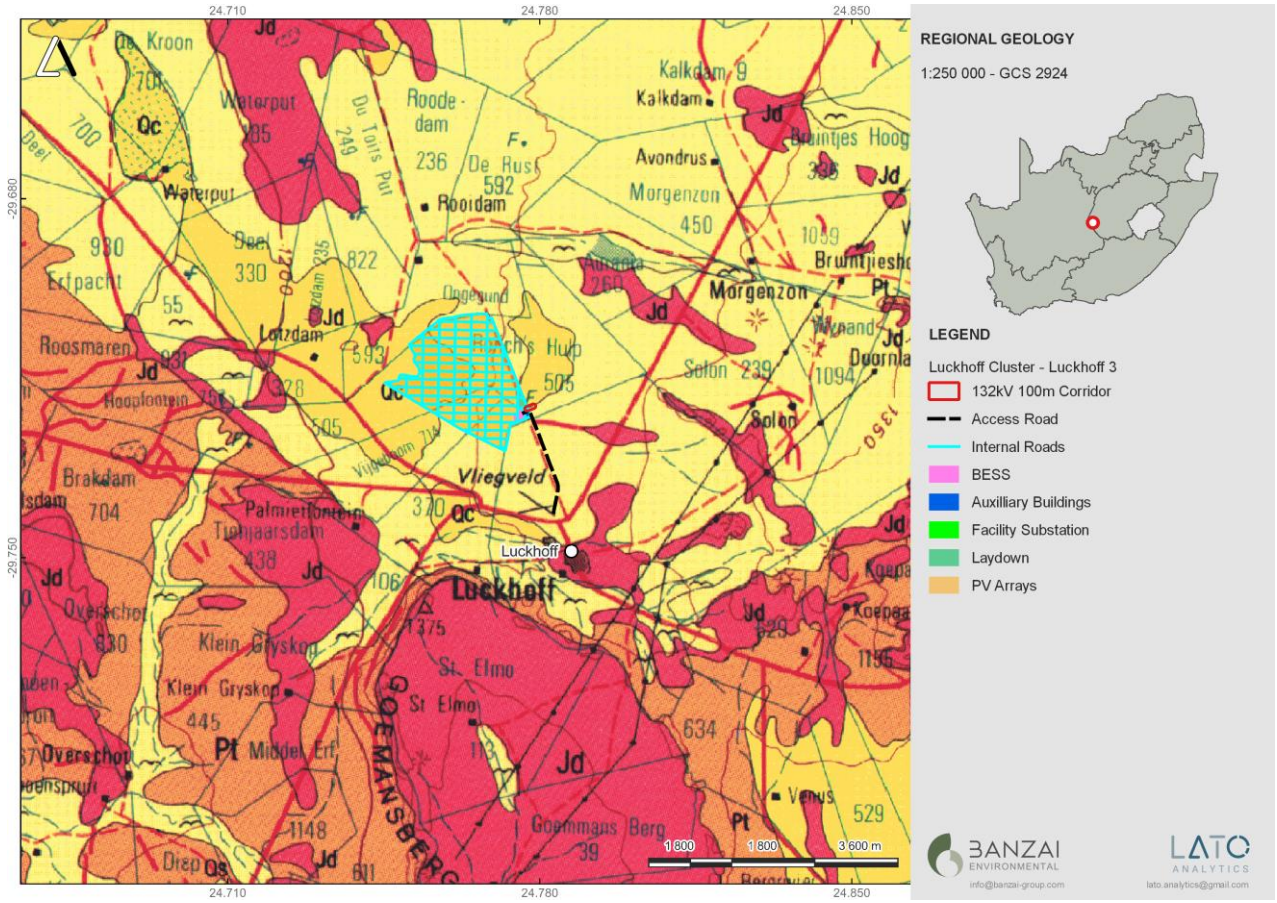
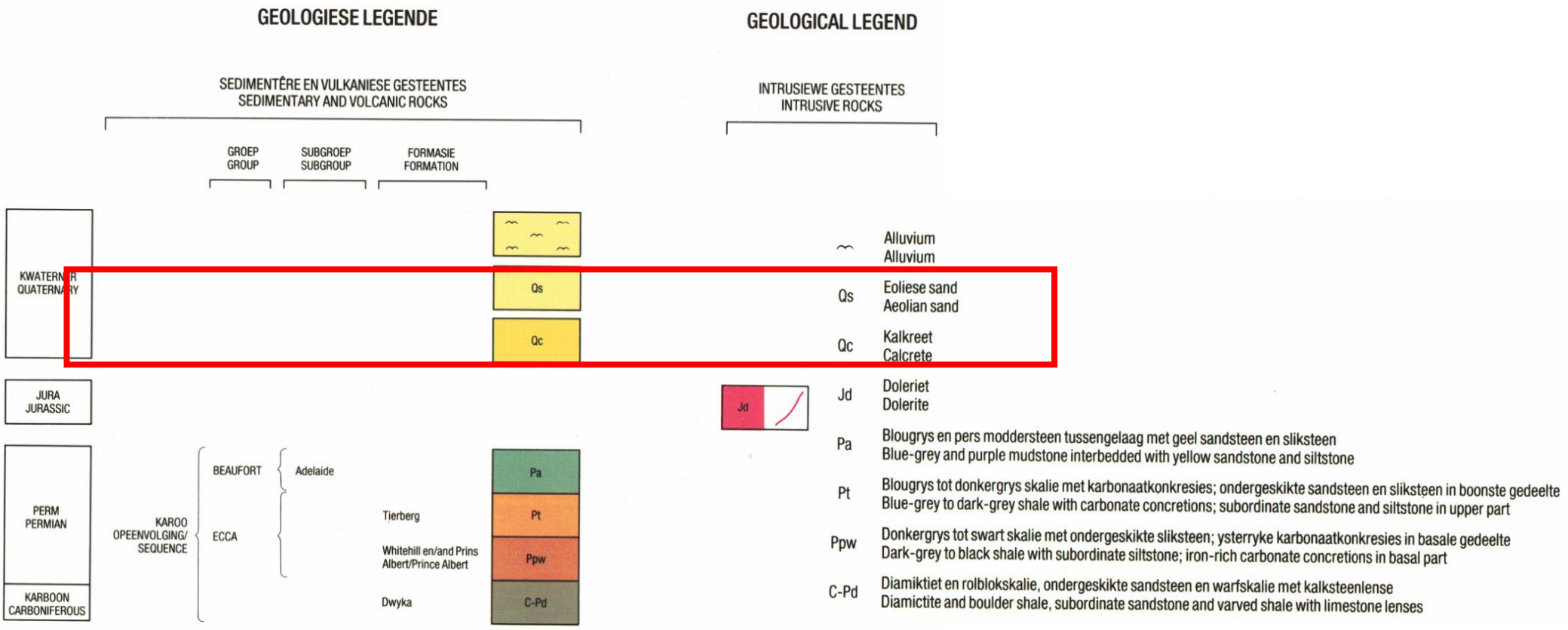


***Figure 3**: Extract of the 1:250 000 Koffiefontein 2924 Geological map (1992) (Council of Geoscience, Pretoria) indicating the geology of the Luckhoff Solar 3 Solar Energy Facility in the Free State Province. The development is underlain by Caenozoic aeolian sand (Qs) as well as calcrete (Qc, yellow).*

***Table 5**: Legend of the 1:250 000 Koffiefontein 2924 Geological map (1992) Geological map (Council of Geoscience, Pretoria).*



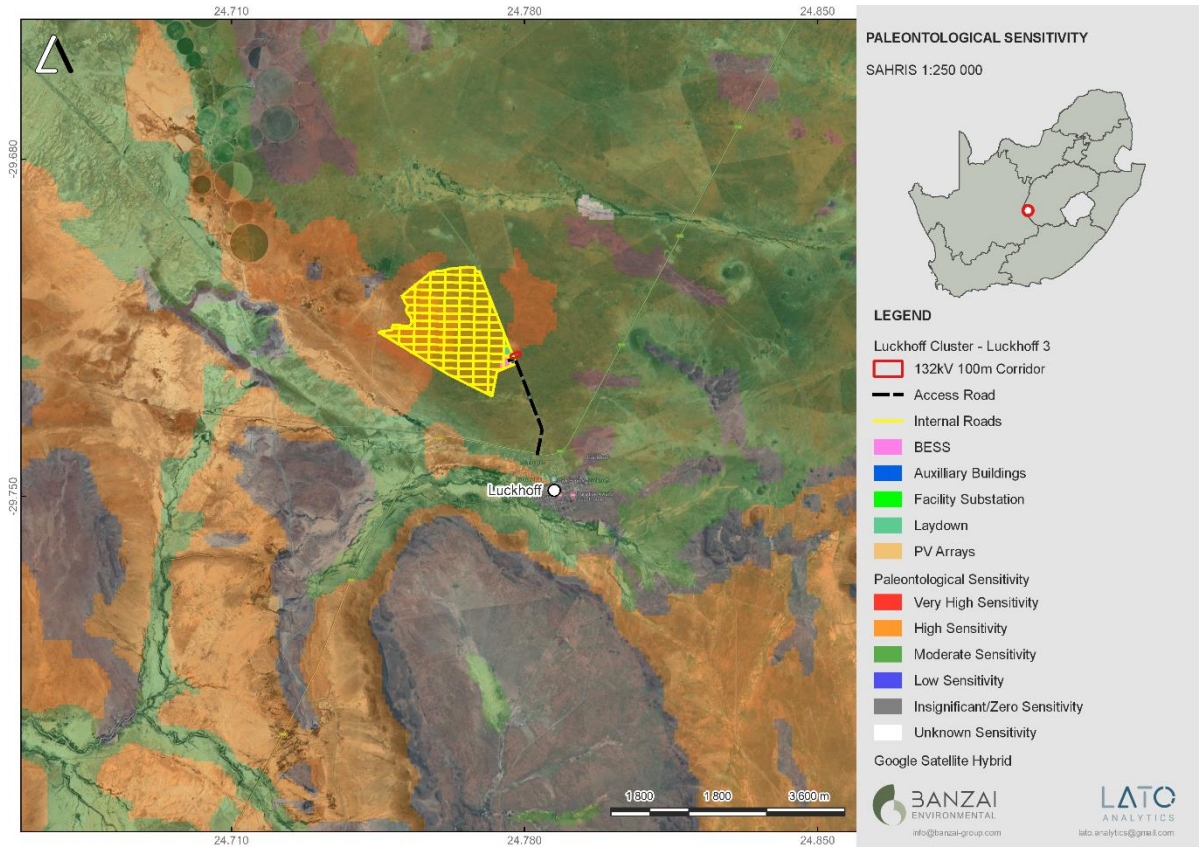


***Figure 4**: Palaeontological Sensitivity according to the SAHRIS PalaeoMap (Almond et al, 2013; SAHRIS website.*

Table 6: *Palaeontological Sensitivity according to the SAHRIS PalaeoMap (Almond et al, 2013; SAHRIS website).*		
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.

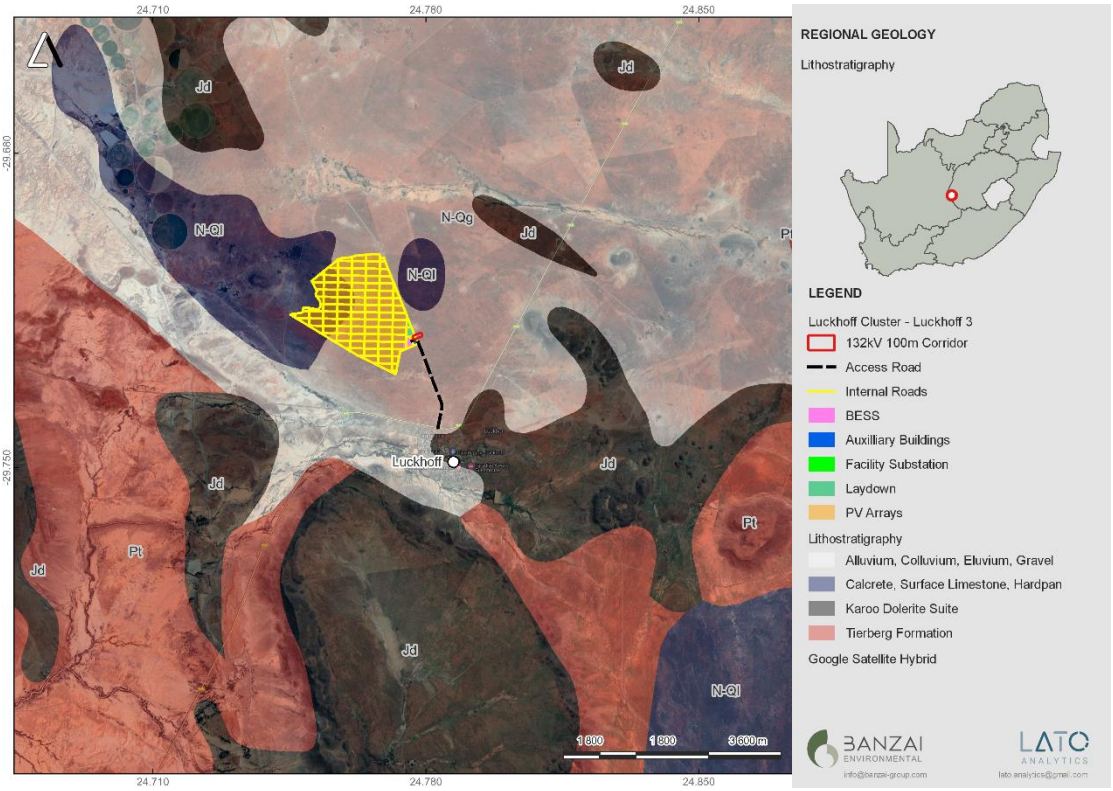


***Figure 5**: Updated Geology (Council of Geosciences, Pretoria) indicates that the proposed Luckhoff Solar 3 Solar Energy Facility in the Free State Province is underlain by underlain by calcrete, surface limestones and Hardpan as well as alluvium, colluvium, eluvium, gravel, scree, sand, soil and debris.*

7 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE SITE

The proposed development is located about 3km north of the Luckhoff in the Free State Province (Figure 1-2).

8 METHODS

The aim of a desktop study is to evaluate the possible risk to palaeontological heritage in the proposed development. This includes all trace fossils as well as all fossils in the proposed footprint. All possible information is consulted to compile a desktop study, and this includes the following: all Palaeontological Impact Assessment reports in the same area; aerial photos and Google Earth images, topographical as well as geological maps.

8.1 Assumptions and Limitations

The focal point of geological maps is the geology of the area and the sheet explanations of the Geological Maps were not meant to focus on palaeontological heritage. Many inaccessible regions of South Africa have never been reviewed by palaeontologists and data is generally based on aerial photographs alone. 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.

Areas with similar Assemblage Zones in other areas is also used to provide information on the existence of fossils in an area which has not documented in the past. When using similar Assemblage Zones and geological formations for Desktop studies it is generally assumed that exposed fossil heritage is present within the footprint. A field-assessment will thus improve the accuracy of the desktop assessment and thus this study has been commissioned.

9 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 Environamics Environmental Consulting.
- 1:250 000 Koffiefontein 2924 Geological map (1992) (Council of Geoscience, Pretoria)
- Updated Geology (Council of Geosciences, Pretoria).
- PIAs in the Luckhoff district include that of Almond 2016 (see references)

10 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

10.1. Method of Environmental Assessment

The environmental assessment aims to identify the various possible environmental impacts that could results from the proposed activity. Different impacts need to be evaluated in terms of its significance and in doing so highlight the most critical issues to be addressed.

Significance is determined through a synthesis of impact characteristics which include context and intensity of an impact. Context refers to the geographical scale i.e., site, local, national, or global whereas intensity is defined by the severity of the impact e.g., the magnitude of deviation from background conditions, the size of the area affected, the duration of the impact and the overall probability of occurrence. Significance is calculated as shown in Table 4.1.

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 total number of points scored for each impact indicates the level of significance of the impact.

10.2. Impact Rating System

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 project phases:

- planning
- construction
- operation
- 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** 7:The rating system*		
NATURE		
Include a brief description of the impact of environmental parameter being assessed in the context of the project. This criterion includes a brief written statement of the environmental aspect being impacted upon by a particular action or activity.		
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: (Extent + probability + reversibility + irreplaceability + duration + cumulative effect) x magnitude/intensity.

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 effects.

(Extent + probability + reversibility + irreplaceability + duration + cumulative effect) x magnitude/intensity

Table 8: Summary of Impacts

Impacts	Extent	Duration	Magnitude	Reversibility	Irreplaceable loss	Cumulative effect	Impact
Pre-mitigation	1	4	2	4	4	2	30
Post mitigation	1	4	1	4	4	2	15

10.3 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic area of evaluation is the spatial boundary in which the cumulative effects analysis was undertaken. The spatial boundary evaluated in this cumulative effects analysis generally includes an area of a 30km radius surrounding the proposed development – refer to below.

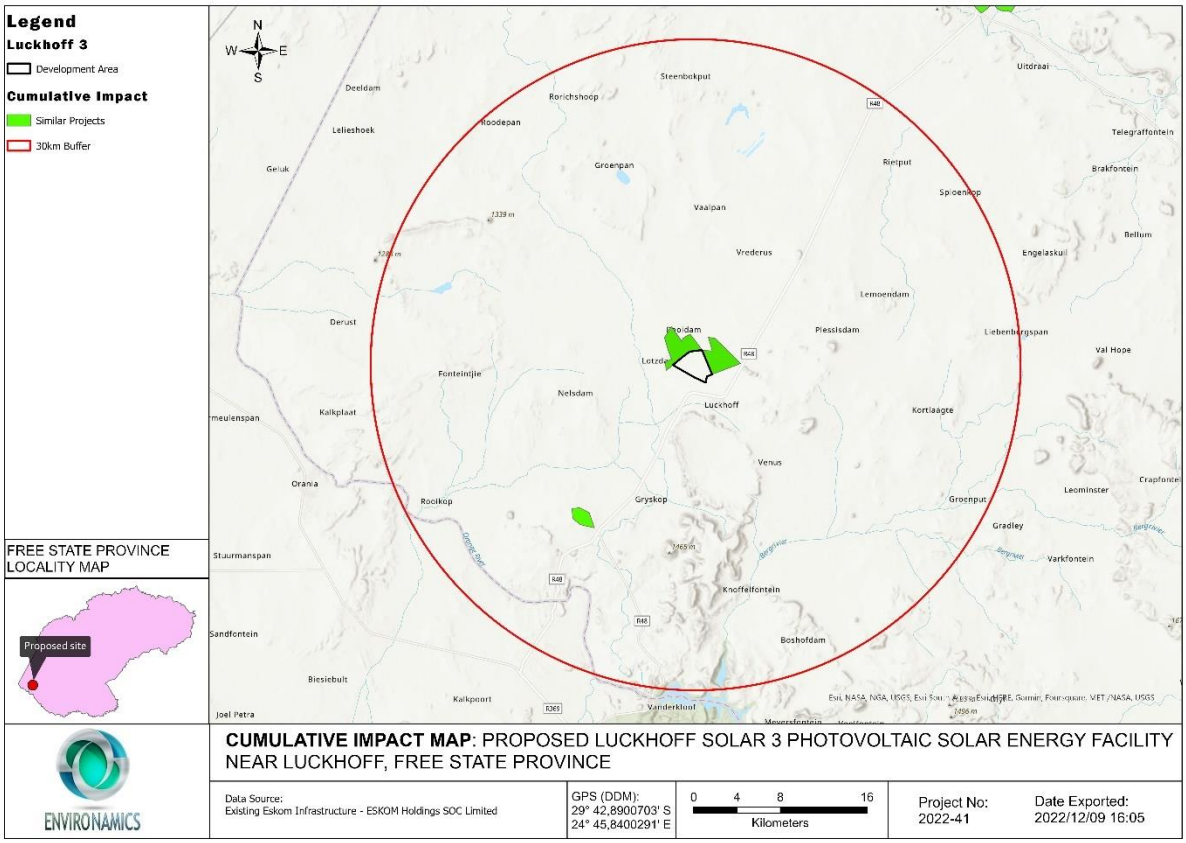


***Figure 6**: Cumulative Impact Map: Luckhoff Solar 3 Solar Energy Facility near Luckhoff in the Free State Province.*

The geographic spread of PV solar projects, administrative boundaries and any environmental features (the nature of the landscape) were considered when determining the geographic area of investigation. It was argued that a radius of 30km would generally confine the potential for cumulative effects within this particular environmental landscape. The geographic area includes projects located within the Free State Province specific temporal or spatial impacts of a resource. For example, the socioeconomic cumulative analysis may include a larger area, as the construction workforce may draw from a much wider area. The geographic area of analysis is specified in the discussion of the cumulative impacts for that resource where it differs from the general area of evaluation described above.

A temporal boundary is the timeframe during which the cumulative effects are reasonably expected to occur. The temporal parameters for these cumulative effects analysis is the anticipated lifespan of the Proposed Project, beginning in 2024 and extending out at least 20 years, which is the minimum expected project life of the proposed project. Where appropriate, particular focus is on near-term cumulative impacts of overlapping construction schedules for proposed projects in the area of evaluation.

The general Palaeontological Sensitivity of the area is Low to High (see SAHRIS Palaeomap (Figure 4). However, it is important to note that the quality of preservation of these different sites will most probably vary and it is thus difficult to allocate a Cumulative Sensitivity to the projects. If all the mitigation measures are carried out, a conservative estimate of the Cumulative impacts on fossil Heritage will vary between Low and Medium.

***Table 9**: A summary of related facilities that may have a cumulative impact, in a 30 km radius of Luckhoff Solar.*

Site name	Distance from study area	Proposed generating capacity	DFFE reference	EIA process	Project status
Luckhoff Solar 1	0km	240MW	To be confirmed	S&EIA	In Process
Luckhoff Solar 2	0km	240MW	To be confirmed	S&EIA	In Process
Grootpoort PV	16km	100MW	14/12/16/3/3/2/835	S&EIA	Approved

It is unclear whether other projects not related to renewable energy is or has been constructed in this area, and whether other projects are proposed. In general, development activity in the area is focused on agriculture and mining. It is quite possible that future solar farm development may take place within the general area.

11 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed development is underlain by Quaternary aeolian sand as well as calcrete. The PalaeoMap of the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS) indicates that the Palaeontological Sensitivity of the calcretes is High while that of the aeolian sands are Moderate (Almond and Pether, 2009; Almond *et al*., 2013). Update geology (Council for Geosciences, Pretoria) indicates that the study area is underlain by calcrete, surface limestones and Hardpan as well as alluvium, colluvium, eluvium, gravel, scree, sand, soil and debris. The Quaternary Superficial Sediments, at depth is probably underlain by the Tierberg Formation (Ecca Group, Karoo Supergroup).

It is considered that the proposed Luckhoff Solar 3 Photovoltaic Solar Energy Facility in the Free State will not lead to detrimental impacts on the palaeontological resources of the area. The construction of

the development may therefore be authorised as the development footprint is not considered sensitive in terms of palaeontological resources. 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.

If fossil remains are discovered during any phase of construction, either on the surface or uncovered by excavations, the ECO/site manager in charge of these developments must be notified immediately. These discoveries must be secured and the ECO/site manager must alert SAHRA so that appropriate mitigation (documented and collection) can be undertaken by a professional palaeontologist (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). The specialist would need a collection permit from SAHRA. Fossil material must be curated in an approved collection (museum or university) and all fieldwork and reports must meet the minimum standards for palaeontological impact studies developed by SAHRA.

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APPENDIX A

CURRICULUM VITAE

ELIZE BUTLER

PROFESSION:	Palaeontologist
YEARS' EXPERIENCE:	30 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	National Museum, Bloemfontein

and Collection Manager 1998–2022

TECHNICAL REPORTS

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Butler, E. 2018. Palaeontological Phase 1 Assessment of the proposed Swaziland-Mozambique border patrol road and Mozambique barrier structure. Bloemfontein.
Butler, E. 2018. Palaeontological Desktop Assessment for the proposed electricity expansion project and Sekgame Switching Station at the Sishen Mine, Northern Cape Province. Bloemfontein.
Butler, E. 2018. Palaeontological field assessment of the proposed construction of the Zonnebloem Switching Station (132/22kV) and two loop-in loop-out power lines (132kV) in the Mpumalanga Province. Bloemfontein.
Butler, E. 2018. Palaeontological Field Assessment for the proposed re-alignment and de-commissioning of the Firham-Platrand 88kv Powerline, near Standerton, Lekwa Local Municipality, Mpumalanga province. Bloemfontein.
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