

Environmental Authorisation for the Swartfontein Solar Photovoltaic (PV) and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project, in the Kgetlengrivier Local Municipality, North West Province

Background Information Document

DFFE reference number: To be confirmed

Purpose of the Document

This Background Information Document aims to provide you with important information regarding:

- Project background of Swartfontein Solar Photovoltaic (PV) and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project (“Proposed Project”), located in the in the Kgetlengrivier Local Municipality, North West Province.
- The independent Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the Public Participation Process (PPP) to be undertaken as part of the Environmental Authorisation process.
- The Public Participation Process (PPP) that will be undertaken as part of the S&EIA process.
- How can you register as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) and be kept informed about the Project’s developments?
- The public review and comment period for the Draft Scoping Report.

Project Background

Red Rocket South Africa (Pty) Ltd, through its Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Swartfontein PV (Pty) Ltd, intends to develop Swartfontein Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Facility and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project (“Proposed Project”), located on Remaining Extent (RE) of Portion 11 of Farm Shylock 256 J.Q and Portion 0 (RE) of Farm Kraalhoek 592 JQ (Project Site), near Rustenburg in the North West Province, South Africa.

The Proposed Project entails the development of a utility-scale solar PV facility of up to 300MW, together with an associated 300 MW BESS facility to supply electricity to the national grid. Utility-scale solar energy is one of the most cost-effective and rapidly deployable renewable energy technologies in South Africa, leveraging the country’s high solar resource. It plays a critical role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing reliance on coal-fired power generation, and providing energy security by contributing clean, reliable electricity to address the current electricity shortfalls.

The Proposed Project does not fall within a designated Renewable Energy Development Zone (REDZ) and therefore requires a full Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment (S&EIA) in terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended), promulgated in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA).

Overview: Solar PV Facility and Related Battery Energy Storage System

The Proposed Project will not form part of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP). The project is proposed as a Commercial and Industrial (C&I) renewable energy facility intended to supply electricity directly to private off-takers. No such C&I customer has yet been identified and no negotiations in this regard have been entered into at this stage.

Table 1 below provides a high-level summary of the key components and infrastructure associated with the Proposed Project.

Table 1: Key Components and Infrastructure Associated with the Proposed Project

Component	Brief Description
Solar PV Facility	Up to 300 MW solar PV plant using bifacial panels with tracking systems
Project Area	Total farm area ~930 ha; PV development footprint ~375 ha
Electrical Infrastructure	PV arrays, inverters, transformers, DC and AC cabling
On-site Substations	132/33 kV collector substation and Eskom switching station
Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)	Up to 300 MW / 1 200 MWh BESS within the PV footprint
Ancillary Facilities	Operations and maintenance buildings, control centre, storage, staff facilities and parking
Internal Roads & Access	Internal gravel roads, access roads and stormwater infrastructure
Temporary Construction Areas	Laydown areas and construction camps during construction
Safety & Environmental Controls	Fire detection and suppression systems, stormwater management and security infrastructure
End-of-Life Management	Recommissioning or Recycling or lawful disposal of PV panels and batteries.

Project Locality and Access

The Proposed Project is located within the Kgetlengrivier Local Municipality and Bojanala District Municipality, Rustenburg, North West Province. Refer to Figure 1.

The land is currently being used for cattle farming and hunting purposes. This primarily includes cattle and game grazing. Landowner consent for the EA application has been provided where applicable. Refer to Table 2 for a list of the directly affected properties.

Primary access of the Proposed Project will be from the N4 National, Platinum Highway Road. The width of the access roads is proposed to be 10 m (to allow vehicles to pass) and will be gravel. Temporary clearing may be required in areas should there be a need to cut and fill as well as for the construction of the bell mouth road junction, turning circles and temporary passing lanes.

Table 2: Directly Affected Property Details

Farm Name and Number	Farm ID	Farm Portion	Landowner
Kraalhoek 592	JQ	0 (RE)	Fernandes Family Trust
Shylock 256	JQ	11	Fernandes Boerdery Pty Ltd

Cumulative Impacts

Currently there are seven other solar PV developments with an approved Environmental Authorisation (EA) within a 30 km radius of the Proposed Project. These are presented Table 3 and Figure 2 found below.

Table 3: Solar PV developments in the vicinity of the Proposed Project

No	EIA Reference No	Classification	Status of application	Distance from proposed area (km)
1	14/12/16/3/3/2/2510	Solar PV	Approved 2024	23
2	14/12/16/3/3/2/2508	Solar PV	Approved 2024	23
3	14/12/16/3/3/2/2509	Solar PV	Approved 2024	23
4	14/12/16/3/3/2/2320	Solar PV	Approved 2023	24.1
5	14/12/16/3/3/2/2319	Solar PV	Approved 2023	24.1
6	14/12/16/3/3/2/2450	Solar PV	Approved 2024	23
7	14/12/16/3/3/2/414	Solar PV	Approved 2019	21.6

Currently, there are no proposed solar PV developments in the vicinity of the proposed project based on the DFFE Screening Report.

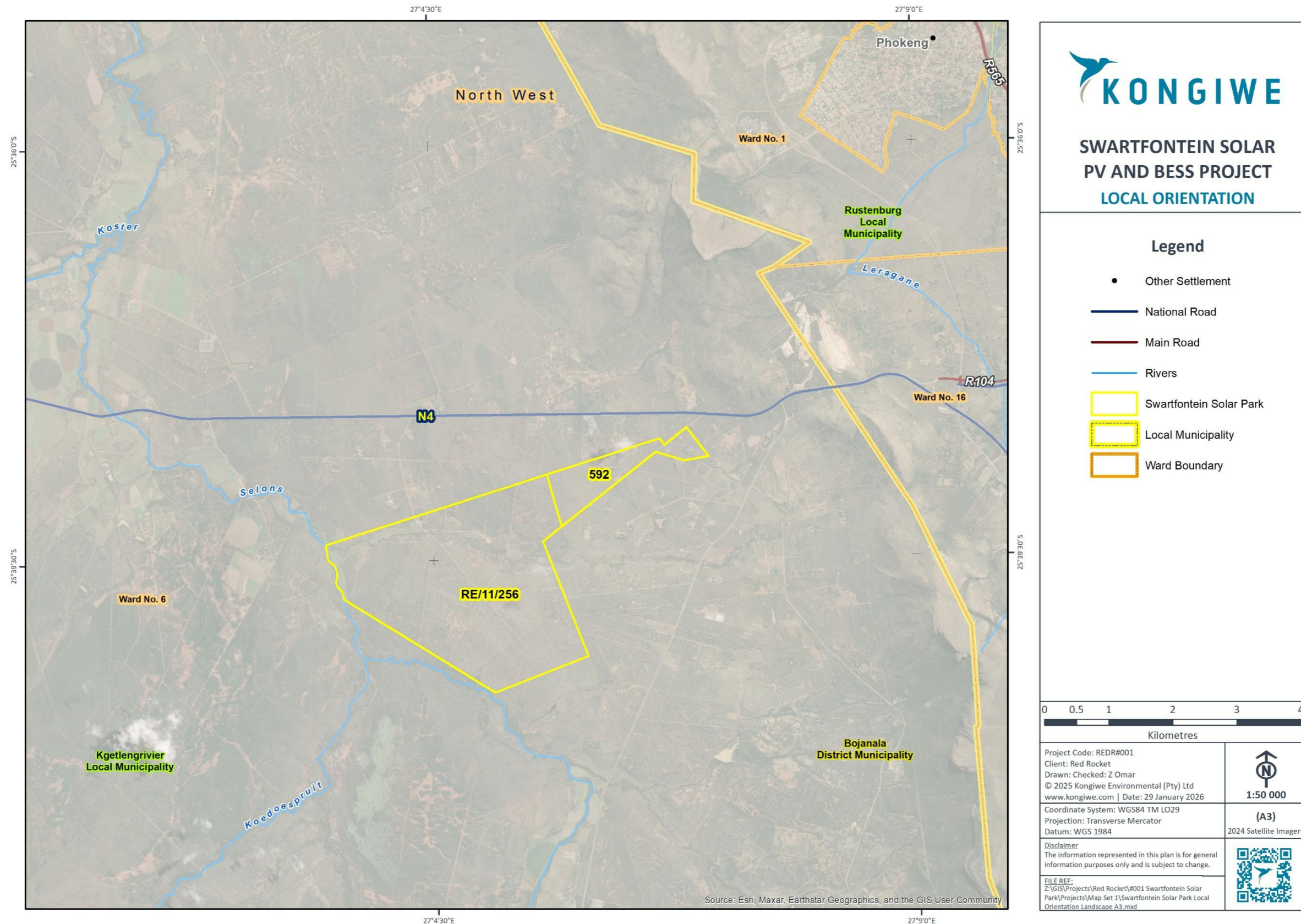


Figure 1: Locality Map of the Proposed Project

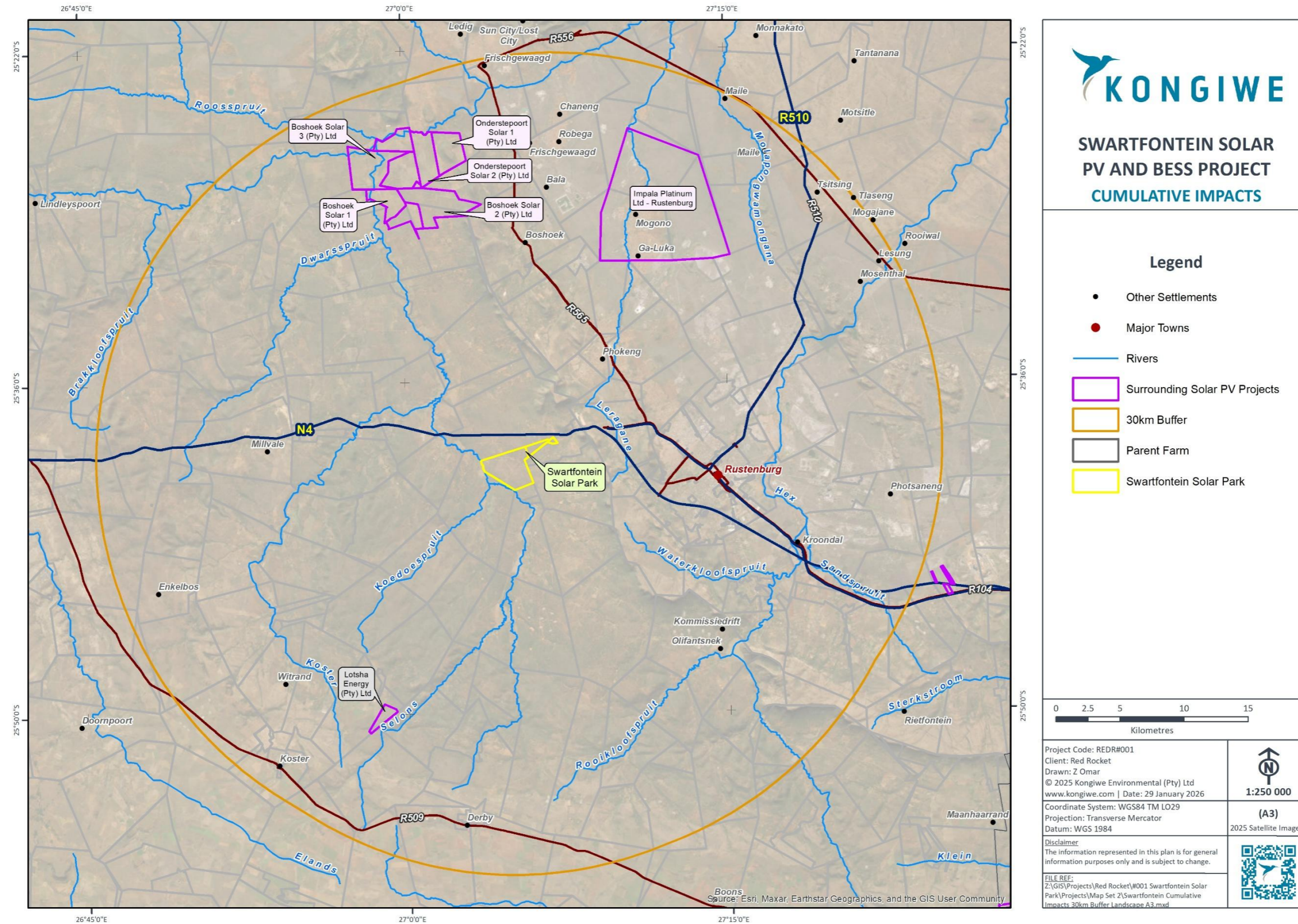


Figure 2: Other solar PV facilities within a 30km buffer

Anticipated Activities of the Project Lifecycle

The Project lifecycle includes the following (but not limited to) typical primary activities (Table 4):

Table 4: Project Life Cycle

Design and Early Works:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirming key design features such as the type of PV module to be used, tilting angle, mounting and tracking systems, inverters, and module arrangement. • Confirming specifications for the components of the Solar PV Plant and BESS. • Preparing detailed designs (layout, civil, electrical). • Preparing construction plans. • Preparing the project schedule and • Preparing the commissioning plans.
Construction:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pegging the footprint of the development. • Establishing access roads. • Preparing the site (fencing, clearing, levelling and grading, etc.). • Establishing the site office. • Establishing laydown areas and storage facilities. • Transporting equipment to site. • Undertaking civil, mechanical and electrical work and • Reinstating and rehabilitating working areas outside of permanent development footprint. • Concurrent Rehabilitation
Operation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing and commissioning the facility's components. • Cleaning of PV modules (with water). • Controlling vegetation. • Managing stormwater and waste. • Conducting preventative and corrective maintenance and • Monitoring of the facility's performance. • Ongoing Rehabilitation and Maintenance
Decommissioning:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decommissioning phase will include measures for complying with the prevailing regulatory requirements, rehabilitation and managing environmental impacts in order to render the affected area suitable for a future desirable use. At the end of the 20-to-30-year lifespan, two scenarios exist for the PV panels: • The old, redundant panels can be disposed of (at a registered disposal facility designated for this purpose) or recycled and reused. • The facility is recommissioned and the old panels are replaced by new ones.

Listing Notice Activities Triggered by the Proposed Project

The following Listing Notice Activities are expected to be triggered by the proposed project. These activities will be assessed through the S&EIA process:

- **GN R 983 – Activity 11:** On-site electricity transmission infrastructure (33–132 kV substation)
- **GN R 983 – Activity 12:** Infrastructure with $\geq 100 \text{ m}^2$ footprint within 32 m of a watercourse
- **GN R 983 – Activity 14:** Storage/handling of dangerous goods (80–500 m^3) – BESS dependent
- **GN R 983 – Activity 24:** Access roads wider than 8 m (up to $\pm 10 \text{ m}$ wide, $\pm 3 \text{ km}$ long)
- **GN R 984 – Activity 1:** Renewable electricity generation $\geq 20 \text{ MW}$ (300 MW Solar PV)
- **GN R 984 – Activity 4:** Storage/handling of dangerous goods $> 500 \text{ m}^3$ – BESS dependent
- **GN R 984 – Activity 15:** Clearance of $\geq 20 \text{ ha}$ of indigenous vegetation

- **GN R 983 – Activity 28:** Industrial development on agricultural/game farming land >1 ha
- **GN R 985 – Activity 4 (North West):** Roads >4 m wide within biodiversity priority/sensitive areas
- **GN R 985 – Activity 10 (North West):** Dangerous goods storage (30–80 m³) in sensitive/biodiversity areas – BESS dependent
- **GN R 985 – Activity 12 (North West):** Clearance of ≥300 m² indigenous vegetation in sensitive/biodiversity areas
- **GN R 985 – Activity 14:** Infrastructure ≥10 m² within 32 m of a watercourse

Legislative Requirements and Good-Practice Guidelines

Applicable Legislation and International Best Practice

The Public Participation Process (PPP), as required by the environmental law and regulations specified therein, is being undertaken in line with the statutory requirements for public participation. The following legislation was considered when developing and implementing the PPP:

- National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA).
- The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014 (as amended) (EIA 2014 Regulations).
- Public Participation guideline in terms of NEMA.
- Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013) (POPIA).
- Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000) (PAIA).

NEMA mandates public participation for environmental decision-making, ensuring affected communities have a voice in development projects through the EIA Regulations, 2014. The NEMA Public Participation Guideline (in terms of the EIA Regulations) is a mandatory part of the (EA process, aiming for transparent, informed decisions that promote sustainable development by integrating social, economic, and environmental factors.

The POPIA regulates the processing of personal information by both public and private bodies, aiming to protect individuals' constitutional right to privacy.

The PAIA gives effect to the constitutional right to access information held by both the state and private bodies. The Act establishes procedures for individuals to request information for the protection or exercise of their rights

International Standards

In addition to the above legislation, the PPP is to be aligned to International good-practice guidelines for public participation, particularly in regard to the following Core Values of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2):

- To be based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- To include the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- To promote sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- To seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- To seek input from participants in designing how they participate.
- To provide participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- To communicate to participants how their input affected the decision.

Development of a PPP also needs to align to any additional considerations noted in the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Performance Standards.

POPIA: Safeguarding Registered Person’s Personal Information

In terms of section 19 of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013) (POPIA), a responsible party must, subject to Sections 9 and 11 of the Act, ensure the integrity and confidentiality of personal information in its possession or under its control by taking appropriate, reasonable technical and organisational measures to prevent loss of, damage to or unauthorised destruction of personal information, unlawful access to or processing of personal information. POPIA requires that personal information should be adequately protected to avoid unauthorised access. Therefore, Kongiwe continuously reviews security controls and procedures to ensure that personal information is secured. It should be noted that in terms of Section 11, personal information may be processed to the extent that this is necessary for pursuing the legitimate interests of the responsible party or parties to whom the information is supplied.

SCOPING AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Kongiwe Environmental (Kongiwe) has been tasked with conducting the S&EIA process which is aimed at critically evaluating the potential environmental and social impacts of the Proposed Project.

The steps involved in the EIA process are outlined in Figure 3.

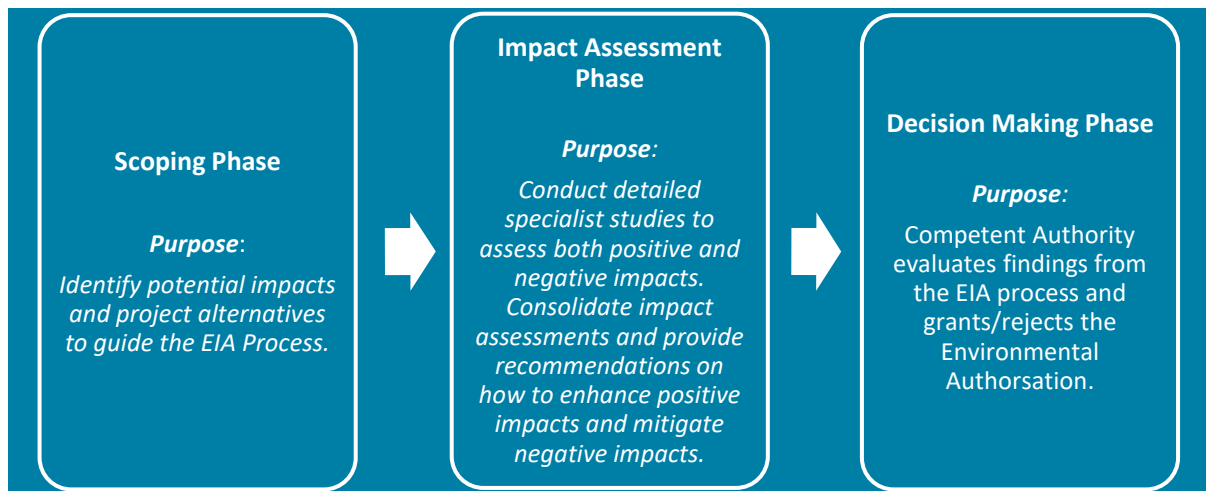


Figure 3: S&EIA Process

Specialist Studies

Various specialist studies are being undertaken as part of the S&EIA process to assess the potential impacts associated with the Proposed Project. Specialist studies being undertaken include:

- Socio-Economic Impact Assessment including Performance Standard 6 Statement
- Terrestrial Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) including Performance Standard 5 Statement
- Heritage, Archaeology and Palaeontology
- Traffic Impact Assessment
- Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment
- Desktop Geotechnical Assessment
- Visual (Landscape) Impact Assessment
- BESS Risk Assessment
- Noise Assessment
- Soils, Land Capability & Land Use (Agricultural)
- Climate Change Impact Assessment

The findings of the specialist studies will be incorporated into the S&EIA.

Public Participation Process

The Public Participation Process (PPP) will form part of the S&EIA process. The PPP offers stakeholders an opportunity to be informed about the Project, to raise issues and to make suggestions for enhanced Project benefits. It also outlines the ways in which the Project team will communicate with stakeholders.

The PPP has been developed to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and facilitate meaningful stakeholder engagement for the S&EIA process.

Availability of the Draft Scoping Report for Public Review and Comment

As part of the Scoping Process, the applicant is required to compile a **Draft Scoping Report (DSR)** for related activities. The DSR will be available for public review and comment for a period of 30 days from **Wednesday, 11 February 2026 to Thursday, 12 March 2026**.

A notification of the availability of the DSR for public review and comment was distributed on **Wednesday, 4 February 2026** to all stakeholders on the database.

The DSR will be made available as follows:

- An electronic copy on Kongiwe’s website: <https://kongiwe.com/projects/>.
- Hard copies at the Rustenburg Public Library and Enloguard cc T/A MJ Energy. Contact details are shown in Table 5.

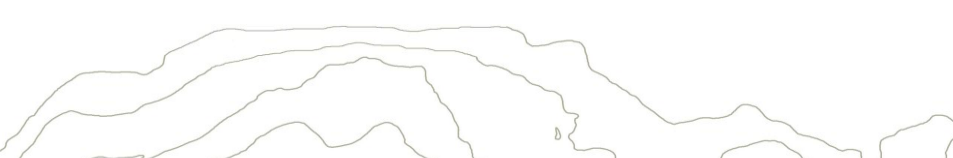
The non-technical summaries of the DSR will be available electronically to all stakeholders on the stakeholder database and distributed in hard copy at the Open Day (discussed below).

Table 5: Public Places with Hard Copies of the Draft Scoping Report

Location	Physical Address	Contact Person
Rustenburg Public Library	Cnr Heystek and President Thabo Mbeki Street, Rustenburg	Mr Tshepo Suze, Librarian: (060) 543 8989 Monday - Friday Open: 09H00 Close: 17H00
Enloguard cc T/A MJ Energy	Plot 27, Shylock, Rustenburg	Mr Manny Fernandes: (071) 506 7181 Monday - Thursday Open: 08H00 Close: 16H00

Availability of the EIA/EMPr for Public Review and Comment

During the EIA phase of the project, the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment and Draft Environmental Management Programme (DEIA/EMPr) will be made available for public review for **30 days**.



Stakeholder Engagement Meetings

Stakeholders are invited to participate through online and in-person engagements. Consultation meetings will be held using platforms like Microsoft Teams, and Open Day. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the Project and the contents of the Draft Scoping Report, and to provide Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) with the opportunity to raise their comments and to interact with the project team.

Table 6 provides details of the proposed stakeholder meetings. Please confirm your attendance for the meeting (*Confirmation of attendance may be submitted via the stakeholder's email address or telephonically*).

Table 6: Schedule of Stakeholder Meetings

Proposed Dates	Available Time Slots	Method of Engagement
Online Meeting		
Wednesday, 25 February 2026	10H00 – 11H00	Microsoft Teams
In-Person Meetings: Open Day		
Thursday, 26 February 2026	09H00 – 11H00	Mogro Lodge (P30, Kraalhoek 269 JQ 2km off the N4 Koster, 0348)

Invitation to be Involved as a Stakeholder

Kongiwe has put measures in place to ensure that all stakeholders are meaningfully consulted by using a wide range of media, documents and online tools. The proposed methods of engagement for the Proposed Project are as follows:

- Telephonic consultations.
- Short Message Services (SMSes).
- Email correspondence:
 - Stakeholders with access to emails are requested to send their comments/queries via email.
 - Stakeholders can email their Registration and Comment Forms.
- Online engagements:
 - Project information will be timeously uploaded on Kongiwe's website.
 - Microsoft Teams meetings.
- In-person Engagements:
 - One-on-one consultation meetings.
 - Open Day.

The purpose of the above-mentioned methods of engagement is to encourage dialogue with stakeholders and provide stakeholders with opportunities to raise their comments. Minutes of all meetings with stakeholders will be compiled and recorded in the Comments and Responses Report (CRR). Stakeholders are encouraged to indicate their preferred method of engagement on the Registration Form below the BID.

For consultation to be Inclusive, it is the Responsibility of Stakeholders to

- Register or ensure you are registered as an I&AP.
- Inform others whom you think may be interested and/or affected by the Project.
- Provide comments on the Project.
- Ensure comments are submitted within the allowed timeframes and received by the Stakeholder Engagement office.
- Contribute information and/or knowledge of the Project area’s environment.
- Attend meetings that are scheduled throughout the process to participate and access information.

Comments and Queries

Any person affected by or who may be interested in the Project are encouraged to complete the Registration and Comments Form provided below this document (BID) should they have any comments / queries.

Contact Details		
Ms Thuli Phakathi	+27 (10) 140 1726	stakeholders@kongiwe.com
Ms Jean-Mari Williams	+27 (10) 140 1729	stakeholders@kongiwe.com
Ms Vanessa Viljoen	+27 (10) 140 1725	stakeholders@kongiwe.com

Our team welcomes your participation and looks forward to your involvement throughout this process

