

Scoping and Environmental Impact
Assessment for the Proposed
Construction and Operation of the
up to 240 MWac Ingwe Wind Energy
Facility 2 and associated
infrastructure, near Molteno
in the Eastern Cape

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT**

COMMENTS *and*
RESPONSES
REPORT



Prepared for:
Ingwe Wind Energy
Facility 2 (Pty) Ltd

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Comments and Responses Report

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PART A: SCOPING PHASE

1. COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE 30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD, WHICH EXTENDED FROM 14 JANUARY 2023 to 15 FEBRUARY 2023 (EXCLUDING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS)

The tables below include the comments and/or issues raised by stakeholders and registered Interested and/or Affected Parties (I&APs), together with the responses from the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) project team, following the release of the Draft Scoping Report (DSR) and associated specialist scoping input reports for the 30-day comment period, which extended from 14 January 2023 to 15 February 2023 (excluding public holidays). The tables below include the original comments received (emails and letters) as included in Appendix D.4 of the EIA Report. **Please note that the comments are taken verbatim from the comments provided by stakeholders and registered I&APs.**

The approach followed for this Comments and Responses Report (CRR) was guided by sections 3(3), 9, 12(1) and (2), 11 as well as 18 of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 14 of 2013) (POPIA). Note that in accordance with the POPIA, the CSIR conducts itself responsibly when collecting, processing, storing, and sharing any personal information collected for the purposes of Public Participation Processes (PPP) in terms of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). By registering as an I&AP and/or submitting information and comments, stakeholders consent to the collection, collation, processing, and storing of such information and the use and disclosure of such information for the aforementioned purpose (<https://www.csir.co.za/csir-privacy-notice>). Therefore, erring on the side of caution as recommended by the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), the names and affiliations of non-governmental I&APs are represented by an 'XXXX' in this CRR.

An integrated Public Participation Process was undertaken for the proposed Ingwe Wind Energy Facility (WEF) 1 and Ingwe WEF 2 projects. **The comments included in this CRR only apply to the proposed Ingwe WEF 2.** Comments relating to the Ingwe WEF 1 have been included for context or background purposes (where necessary). Comments and responses for the Ingwe WEF 1 project is included in the respective CRR. The comments received have been grouped per organisation, based on the structure recommended by the DFFE.

1.1. GENERAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROJECT NEED¹

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	16/01/2023, Email, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Wildlife and Energy Programme Manager (Lourens Leeuwner)	Going forward please send all correspondence to eia@ewt.org.za and remove me from the list, thanks!	CSIR: EIA@ewt.org.za was included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of the Scoping and EIA Process (S&EIA). As per the request, this I&AP was removed from the I&AP project database. The email address provided will be used for future correspondence. Refer to Appendix C of the Scoping Report for a copy of the I&AP database.
2.	17/01/2023, Email, Eskom Transmission Division: Land and Rights (John Geeringh)	Please send me KMZ files of the affected property, proposed layout and proposed grid connection. Please find attached Eskom requirements for work at or near Eskom infrastructure and servitudes, as well as a setbacks guideline for renewable energy developments.	CSIR: A composite KMZ file of the two proposed Ingwe WEFs was sent to this stakeholder on 27 January 2023 via email. The EAP also conveyed that it is proposed that the Electrical Grid Infrastructure (EGI), in support of the above-mentioned two proposed WEFs, will comprise of a new loop-in loop-out (LILO) connection into the existing Beta-Delphi 400 kV overhead powerline, and a new LILO connection into the existing Dorper-Stormberg 132 kV overhead powerline, at the point where these existing lines cross the project sites, to facilitate the connection of the two proposed WEFs to the national grid. This I&AP was also informed that separate Environmental Assessment Processes will be undertaken for the EGI component of the above-mentioned WEF projects, and therefore does not form part of these S&EIA Processes

¹ This includes requests to register on and de-register from the project I&AP database.

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NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
			currently being undertaken for the two proposed WEFs. Therefore, the Eskom requirements for work at or near Eskom infrastructure and servitudes, as well as a setbacks guideline for renewable energy developments as shared by Eskom (and included in Appendix D.4 of the FSR) will be considered and incorporated in the Generic EMPs for powerlines and substations which will be included in the Draft EIA Reports (DEIRs) as part of the separate Environmental Assessment Processes to be undertaken for the EGI component as stated above.
3.	18/01/2022, Email (XXXX)	Subject: Electrician for the upcoming project between Burgersdorp and Molteno	CSIR: The I&AP provided a Curriculum Vitae which was forwarded to the Project Applicant, noting that the S&EIA process is not a recruitment process.
4.	20/01/2023 Email, DFFE, The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation (Kamogelo Mathetja, MMatlala Rabothata)	DFFE Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation hereby acknowledge receipt of the invitation to review and comment on the project mentioned on the subject line. Kindly note that the project has been allocated to Mrs M Rabothata and Mr K Mathetja (Both copied on this email). Please note: All Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA review and any other Biodiversity EIA queries must be submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation at Email: BCAdmin@environment.gov.za for attention of Mr Seoka Lekota	CSIR: Comment was received from this Directorate on 16 February 2023 and have been included in Section 2.2 of this CRR. BCAdmin@dffe.gov.za was included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of the S&EIA Process and will receive future communication regarding the proposed WEF projects. Refer to Appendix C of the FSR for a copy of the I&AP database. This also aligns with a recommendation made in this regard in the comment received from the DFFE. Also, all Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA review and any other Biodiversity EIA queries will be submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation for comment during the EIA Phase.


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5.	31/01/2023, Email, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Wildlife and Energy Programme Manager (Lourens Leeuwner)	Going forward pls send all correspondence to eia@ewt.org.za and remove me from the list	CSIR: This comment was received in response to a reminder email that was sent out to all I&APs and is noted. EIA@ewt.org.za was included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of the S&EIA Process. As per the request, this I&AP was removed from the I&AP project database. The email address provided will be used for future correspondence. Refer to Appendix C of the FSR for a copy of the I&AP database.
6.	31/01/2023, Email, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Wildlife and Energy Programme Manager (Lourens Leeuwner)	Comments have been submitted, thanks	CSIR: Comments were received from the EWT on 20 January 2023 and have been included in Section 6 of this CRR.
7.	31/01/2023, Email, South African Heritage Resources Agency (Natasha Higgitt)	Please note that SAHRA does not have jurisdiction to provide comments on development applications located in the Eastern Cape. Please liaise with the ECPHRA (copied in this email) for comments in this regard.	CSIR: The Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (ECPHRA) was included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of the S&EIA Process. Comments received from ECPHRA have been included in Section 3 of this CRR. Refer to Appendix C of the FSR for a copy of the I&AP database. Section 7.3.5 in Chapter 7 of the FSR has also been revised to reflect that the ECPHRA is the main commenting authority on development applications located in the Eastern Cape and that the HIA to be included in the DEIR will be submitted to ECPHRA for comment during the EIA Phase.

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8.	31/01/2023 Email, DFFE, The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation (Kamogelo Mathetja, MMatlala Rabothata)	Thank you for the reminder. Kindly note the aforementioned project is still under review and we will be providing comments within the legislative timeframe.	CSIR: This comment was received in response to a reminder email that was sent out to all I&APs and is noted. Comments were received from this Directorate on 16 February 2023 and have been included in Section 2.2 of this CRR.
9.	08/02/2023, Email, (XXXX)	Good day, i would like to give a comment on the draft of the placement of the wind turbines. As seen on attached picture, why isnt there any turbines placed in the orange area on the attachment, it is one of the higher areas and easy to access. Please be so kind to respond on this comment.	Project Applicant: The higher-lying area located to the south of the R56 main road (depicted by the orange outline in the image provided by the stakeholder) is excluded from the proposed WEF development footprint following the Verreaux's Eagle Risk Assessment (VERA) assessment that was undertaken, and the presence of eagle nests (which require an appropriate buffer).

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NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
			
10.	<p>17/02/2023, Email, VulPro Rehabilitation (Kerri Wolter, Kate Webster and Kathryn Garder)</p>	<p>Please can we ask for an extension to comment as we only received this yesterday?</p> <p>VulPro would very much like to comment on this with through our colleague Kate Webster and staff Kathryn Gardner whom I am included in this request</p> <p>We look forward to your response</p>	<p>CSIR: VulPro has been registered as an I&AP on the I&AP project database and may exercise their rights in terms of Regulation 43 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended) during the EIA Phase.</p> <p>Note that BirdLife South Africa (i.e., the primary commenting authority with respect to Avifauna) has been included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of this S&EIA Process. Notification of the availability of the Draft Scoping Report (DSR) for comment (circulated on 14 January 2023) was</p>

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			shared by BirdLife South Africa with VulPro on 16 February 2023.

1.2. THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT (DFFE)

1.2.1. THE DIRECTORATE: INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	17/01/2023, Email, DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, EIAApplications)	<p>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE NEW APPLICATION FORM AND DRAFT SCOPING REPORT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE UP TO 510 MWAC ABO WIND INGWE WIND ENERGY FACILITY 2 (WEF) ABO WIND INGWE WEF 2), NEAR MOLTENO IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE.</p> <p>The Department confirms having received the Application Form and Draft Scoping Report for Environmental Authorisation for the abovementioned project on 16 January 2023. You have submitted these documents to comply with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended.</p> <p>Kindly note that your application for Environmental Authorisation falls within the ambit of an application applied for in terms of Part 3 of Chapter 4 of the</p>	<p>CSIR: The acknowledgement of receipt of the EA Application Form and Draft Scoping Report is noted.</p> <p>Responses are provided below to each comment raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The timeframes in Regulation 21 (1) have been adhered to in the submission of the Final Scoping Report. The Application Form for EA was submitted to the DFFE, together with the Draft Scoping Report for comment, on 14 January 2023. In line with Regulation 21 (1) of the 2014 EIA Regulations (as amended), the FSR needed to be submitted to the DFFE for decision-making within 44 days of receipt of the application by the Competent Authority.

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		<p>EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended. You are therefore referred to Regulation 21 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended.</p> <p>Please take note of Regulation 40(3) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states that potential Interested & Affected Parties, including the Competent Authority, may be provided with an opportunity to comment on reports and plans contemplated in Regulation 40(1) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, prior to the submission of an application but must be provided an opportunity to comment on such reports once an application has been submitted to the Competent Authority.</p> <p>Note that in terms of Regulation 45 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, this application will lapse if the applicant fails to meet any of the time-frames prescribed in terms of these Regulations, unless an extension has been granted by the Department in terms of Regulation 3(7) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.</p> <p>You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FSR complies with all the requirements in terms of the scope of assessment and content of Scoping Reports in accordance with Appendix 2 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). Refer to the Executive Summary of the FSR for additional information on compliance with Appendix 2. • The potential and registered I&APs were provided with an opportunity to comment on the Draft Scoping Report for a period of 30 days, i.e., from 14 January 2023 to 15 February 2023. The proof of correspondence, such as emails, text messages, letters, and newspaper advertisement, as well as relevant follow up emails sent in order to remind stakeholders of the comment period closure, in order to seek comments is included in Appendix D.3 of the Final Scoping Report. This complies with Regulation 40 (3) of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). • The reminder regarding failure to meet any timeframes stipulated in Regulation 45 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) is noted. • The Project Applicant is aware of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998, as amended).

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2.	14/02/2023, Letter (received via email on 14/02/2023), DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Milicent Solomons)	<p>COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT SCOPING REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE 510MW ABO WIND INGWE WIND ENERGY FACILITY 2 (WEF), NEAR MOLTENO IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE</p> <p>The Application for Environmental Authorisation and the draft Scoping Report (SR) dated January 2023 and received by the Department on 16 January 2023, refer.</p> <p>This letter serves to inform you that the following information must be included to the final SR:</p> <p>(a) Specific Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Please provide a concise, but complete, summary and bullet list of the project description and associated infrastructure (or project scope). This must include a list of all development components and associated infrastructure. ii. Kindly ensure the development footprints (hectares/square metres) and specifications of all proposed infrastructure and associated infrastructure during all phases are included in the final SR. iii. The co-ordinates must be specific to each activity and infrastructure that is proposed on the site. The co-ordinates for substations and the battery energy storage systems (BESS) must be included in the report, i.e., we require that you provide us with the specific development footprints for each development parameter, and not an area outlining the entire site. iv. Kindly take note that when finalising the layout plan the position of all proposed infrastructure and linear activities, which includes but not limited to the following must be illustrated: 	<p>CSIR: Comments received on the Draft Scoping Report (DSR) for the proposed Ingwe WEF 2 are noted.</p> <p>Responses are provided below to each comment raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Please refer to Chapter 1 of the FSR for a detailed, concise summary and bullet list of the development components and associated infrastructure of the proposed development, as requested. Although this information was provided in the DSR, it is made more succinct in the FSR. ii. The Ingwe WEF 2 project site covers approximately 8 821 ha in extent. Please refer to Chapter 1 and 2 of the FSR for further details and specifications of the proposed infrastructure and associated infrastructure (noting that this has been included in the DSR). iii. Please refer to Table 2.1 in Chapter 2 of the FSR, in which the coordinates of the on-site substation alternatives and the laydown and compound areas have been included. iv. Please note that based on specialist inputs received and considered during the Scoping Phase of this proposed WEF project, the Applicant will revise/refine the project infrastructure layout. The final revised layout

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wind turbines (the proposed 64 turbines should be numbered on the layout plan). ➤ Access roads and internal roads. ➤ Onsite substations. ➤ Battery energy storage systems (BESS). ➤ Operation and maintenance buildings; and ➤ Construction camp laydown areas. 	<p>plan will be taken forward into the EIA Phase for detailed specialist assessment. The requirement for the positions of project infrastructure to be illustrated is duly noted. Refer to Figure 2.4 in Chapter 2 of the FSR which illustrates the preliminary project infrastructure layout as assessed during the Scoping Phase.</p>
3.	<p>14/02/2023, Letter (received via email on 14/02/2023), DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Milicent Solomons)</p>	<p>(b) Listed Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Please ensure that all relevant listed activities are applied for, are specific and can be linked to the development activity or infrastructure as described in the project description. ii. If the activities applied for in the application form differ from those mentioned in the final SR, an amended application form must be submitted. Please note that the Department's application form template has been amended and can be downloaded from the following link https://www.dffe.gov.za/documents/forms. 	<p>CSIR: These comments are noted.</p> <p>Responses are provided below to each comment raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. All relevant listed activities are applied for, are specific and can be linked to the development activity as described in the project description. Refer to Chapter 4 of the FSR for detailed descriptions of the applicability of Listed Activities applied for. ii. An amended Application form based on the latest template has been submitted with the FSR to the DFFE for decision-making.
4.	<p>14/02/2023, Letter (received via email on 14/02/2023),</p>	<p>(c) Layout & Sensitivity Maps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The final SR must provide coordinate points for the proposed development site (note that if the site has numerous bend points, at 	<p>CSIR: These comments are noted.</p> <p>Responses are provided below to each comment raised:</p>

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	DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Milicent Solomons)	<p>each bend point coordinates must be provided) as well as the start, middle and end point of all linear activities.</p> <p>ii. All preferred turbine positions must be clearly numbered. The turbine position numbers must be consistently used in all maps to be included in the reports.</p> <p>iii. Please provide a layout map which indicates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The proposed position of the 64 wind energy turbines, laydown areas, internal and external roads, substations, BESS, operational and maintenance buildings etc. b. The proposed WEF and associated infrastructure, overlain by the sensitivity map. c. All supporting onsite infrastructure e.g., roads (existing and proposed). d. The location of sensitive environmental features on site e.g., CBAs, heritage sites, wetlands, drainage lines etc. that will be affected. e. Buffer areas; and f. All “no-go” areas. <p>iv. The above map must be overlain with a sensitivity map and a cumulative map which shows neighbouring renewable energy developments and existing grid infrastructure.</p> <p>v. Google maps will not be accepted.</p>	<p>i. Please refer to Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 in Chapter 2 of the FSR, in which the coordinates of the proposed development site and associated project infrastructure have been included.</p> <p>ii. Please refer to Figure 2.4 in Chapter 2 of the FSR which displays the preliminary, numbered turbine layout for the proposed WEF. The turbine position numbers are used consistently in all relevant maps in the FSR. This map, illustrating the preliminary project infrastructure layout as assessed during the Scoping Phase, also includes the information as requested by DFFE, where relevant.</p> <p>iii. The FSR contains all maps as requested, and maps are also included throughout the document, where applicable (refer to the list of figures upfront in each of the chapters of the FSR). Chapter 3 of the FSR also includes relevant environmental features identified by the Specialists. All maps are also included in Appendix G of the FSR. It must be noted that specialists’ interpretation of a “no-go” and buffer area differ depending on the nature of each specialist’s assessment criteria and sensitivity ratings i.e., “no-go” areas and buffers differ for different components of the</p>

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			<p>proposed development (e.g., a wind turbine would require a larger buffer for a bird nest or roosting area than perhaps a road). What is assigned as a “no-go” area for wind turbines doesn’t necessarily mean a road or laydown area cannot be developed in that area. It is also the Applicant’s preference to avoid “no-go” areas as far as possible and aim to place infrastructure components such as access roads along or as close as possible to existing road infrastructure on the proposed project site, where practical.</p> <p>iv. Refer to Chapter 3 of the FSR for the relevant sensitivity maps based on scoping level specialist inputs. Please note that the fine scale sensitivities mapped by the specialists within the proposed project development area, and the fine scale project infrastructure layout cannot be easily seen when combined with a 30 km radius cumulative map. Scale needs to be considered in terms of the 30 km radius cumulative map. Preliminary combined feature- and sensitivity maps have been provided in Chapter 3 and 5 of the FSR to cover these points. These maps are also included in Appendix G of the FSR. A separate cumulative map is also provided in Chapter 7 (i.e., Figure 7.1) of the FSR, as well as in the</p>

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			relevant specialist scoping input reports included in Appendix F of the FSR. v. Maps compiled by the CSIR in the FSR are not produced using Google Maps.
5.	14/02/2023, Letter (received via email on 14/02/2023), DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Milicent Solomons)	(d) Alternatives i. Please provide a description of any identified alternatives for the proposed activity that are feasible and reasonable, including the advantages and disadvantages that the proposed activity or alternatives will have on the environment and on the community that may be affected by the activity as per Appendix 2 of GN R.982 of 2014 (as amended). ii. Alternatively, you should submit written proof of an investigation and motivation if no reasonable or feasible alternatives exist in terms of Appendix 2.	CSIR: These comments are noted. Refer to Chapter 5 of the FSR which includes detailed descriptions of the identified alternatives for the proposed activities as per Appendix 2 of GN 982 of 2014 (as amended). Therefore, where no further alternatives were considered, a motivation has been provided in Chapter 5 of the FSR.
6.	14/02/2023, Letter (received via email on 14/02/2023), DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Milicent Solomons)	(e) Public Participation Process i. The newspaper advertisement attached under Appendix D is deemed inadequate. Kindly include an actual copy of the newspaper advertisement that formed part of the public participation process for this project in the final SR. The newspaper advert provided should depict the name of the newspaper and date of publication of the advert. It should also be clear and legible. ii. Comments must be obtained from this Department's Biodiversity Conservation Directorate at BCAdmin@dffe.gov.za. iii. Please ensure that all issues raised, and comments received during the circulation of the SR from registered I&APs and organs of state which have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are adequately	CSIR: These comments are noted. Responses are provided below to each comment raised: i. An advertisement was placed in the Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa languages in a regional newspaper, 'The Representative' prior to the commencement of the 30-day comment period for the DSR (i.e., 13 January 2023). A copy of the content and proof of placement of the advertisement in this

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		<p>addressed in the final SR, including comments from this Department, and must be incorporated into a Comments and Response Report (CRR).</p> <p>iv. Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders must be included in the final SR. Should you be unable to obtain comments, proof should be submitted to the Department of the attempts that were made to obtain comments.</p> <p>v. The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended.</p> <p>vi. A comments and response trail report (C&R) must be submitted with the final SR. The C&R report must incorporate all historical comments for this development. The C&R report must be a separate document from the main report and the format must be in the table format as indicated in Annexure 1 of this comments letter. Please refrain from summarising comments made by I&APs. All comments from I&APs must be copied verbatim and responded to clearly. Please note that a response such as “Noted” is not regarded as an adequate response to I&AP’s comments.</p> <p>vii. The final SR must provide evidence that all identified and relevant competent authorities have been given an opportunity to comment on the proposed development.</p>	<p>regional newspaper is included in Appendix D.2 of the FSR.</p> <p>ii. The Biodiversity and Conservation Directorate was included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of the S&EIA Process. Comments received from the Biodiversity and Conservation Directorate has been included in Section 2.2 of this CRR.</p> <p>iii. All issues raised and comments received on the DSR from registered I&APs and Organs of State (including the DFFE Biodiversity and Conservation Directorate) which have jurisdiction in terms of the proposed activity, have been adequately addressed and incorporated into this CRR, as well as the FSR, where applicable and necessary. Copies of all comments received during the 30-day comment period of the DSR have been captured in Appendix D.4 of the FSR.</p> <p>iv. Proof of correspondence with various stakeholders such as letters received from various DFFE Directorates, Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority, BirdLife South Africa and the Endangered Wildlife Trust is included in Appendix D.4 of the FSR. Appendix D.3 includes the necessary proof of correspondence sent to registered</p>

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			<p>I&APs, such as emails, text messages and letters. It also shows relevant follow up emails sent in order to remind stakeholders of the comment period closure, in order to elicit comments.</p> <p>v. The Public Participation Process (PPP) is being conducted in terms of Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). Refer to Chapter 4 of the FSR for background on the PPP, including feedback on compliance with the regulations relating to Public Participation.</p> <p>vi. A detailed CRR (i.e., this Report) is included as part of the FSR. This CRR includes all comments received during the public comment period on the DSR, as well as responses provided to all these comments and issues raised. Comments received from the DFFE have been included in this section as well. All comments received have been duly considered and adequately addressed in this CRR and the FSR, where relevant and applicable.</p> <p>vii. Proof of correspondence with various stakeholders such as letters received from various DFFE Directorates, Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority, BirdLife South Africa and the Endangered</p>

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			Wildlife Trust is included in Appendix D.4 of the FSR. Appendix D.3 includes the necessary proof of correspondence sent to registered I&APs, such as emails, text messages and letters. It also shows relevant follow up emails sent in order to remind stakeholders of the comment period closure, in order to seek comments.
7.	14/02/2023, Letter (received via email on 14/02/2023), DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Milicent Solomons)	(f) Specialist Assessments <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The specialists undertaking the Final Bat Monitoring Report (Appendix F4) and the Visual Impact Assessment (Appendix F8) failed to submit signed Specialist Declaration of Interest forms. All Specialist Declaration of Interest forms must be signed by the relevant specialists and attached to the final SR. The forms are available on the Department's website (please use the Department's template). ii. The EAP must ensure that the terms of reference for all the identified specialist studies include the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A detailed description of the study's methodology; indication of the locations and descriptions of the development footprint, turbine positions and all other associated infrastructures that they have assessed and are recommending for authorisation. b. Provide a detailed description of all limitations to the studies. All specialist studies must be conducted in the right season and providing that as a limitation will not be allowed. c. Please note that the Department considers a 'no-go' area, as an area where no development of any infrastructure is allowed; therefore, no development of associated 	CSIR: These comments are noted. Responses are provided below to each comment raised: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Specialist Declarations forms (downloaded from the DFFE's website) which indicate the scientific organisation registration/member number and status of registration/membership for each specialist (including the Bats and Visual specialists), have been appended to the relevant specialist scoping input reports. Refer to Appendix F of the FSR for the specialist scoping inputs reports, in which these declarations are included. ii. The scoping level specialist inputs (provided in Appendix F of the FSR) aimed at capturing high-level assessments and the identification of any potential issues or fatal flaws, provide possible mitigation measures as well as to capture the

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		<p>infrastructure including access roads is allowed in the 'no-go' areas.</p> <p>d. Should the specialist definition of 'no-go' area differ from the Department's definition; this must be clearly indicated. The specialist must also indicate the 'no-go' area's buffer if applicable.</p> <p>e. All specialist studies must be final, and provide detailed/practical mitigation measures for the preferred alternative and recommendations, and must not recommend further studies to be completed post EA.</p> <p>f. Bird and Bat specialist studies must have support from Birdlife South Africa and SABAA.</p> <p>g. Should a specialist recommend specific mitigation measures, these must be clearly indicated.</p> <p>iii. Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations, the EAP must clearly indicate the most reasonable recommendation and substantiate this with defensible reasons; and where necessary, include further expert advice.</p> <p>iv. Please ensure that all mitigation recommendations are in line with applicable and most recent guidelines.</p> <p>v. It is further brought to your attention that Procedures for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting on identified Environmental Themes in terms of Sections 24(5)(a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998, when applying for Environmental Authorisation, which were promulgated in Government Notice No. 320 of 20 March 2020 (i.e. "the Protocols"), and in Government Notice No. 1150 of 30 October 2020 (i.e. protocols for terrestrial plant and animal species), have come into effect. Please note</p>	<p>findings of the Site Sensitivity Verifications and in line with the Environmental Assessment Protocols of GN 320 and GN 1150 (as applicable). It must be noted that in terms of Appendix 2, Regulation 2 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended), it is not required for specialist assessments to be final with detailed mitigation measures at scoping level; however, the FSR includes cross-referencing to the inclusion of preliminary impacts that may be anticipated as well as some possible mitigation measures where these could be provided at this stage in the S&EIA Process. The <u>detailed</u> specialist impact assessments to be undertaken during the EIA Phase will comply with Appendix 6 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) and/or the Assessment Protocols published in March 2020 (GN 320) and October 2020 (GN 1150), where relevant. The full assessments will therefore be provided in the DEIR, which will each include (a) a detailed description of the study's methodology, indication of the locations and descriptions of the development footprint, turbine positions and all other associated infrastructure locations that have been assessed and are being recommended for authorisation; (b) a detailed description of all limitations to the assessment,</p>

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		<p>that specialist assessments must be conducted in accordance with these protocols.</p> <p>vi. As such, the Specialist Declaration of Interest forms must also indicate the scientific organisation registration/member number and status of registration/membership for each specialist.</p> <p>vii. Please also ensure that the final SR includes the Site Verification Report as required by the relevant environmental themes and assessments.</p> <p>viii. Please note further that the protocols, if applicable, require certain specialists' to be SACNASP registered. Please ensure that the relevant specialist certificates are attached to the relevant reports.</p> <p>ix. We note that the screening tool indicates that seventeen specialist studies need to be undertaken or conducted. We note that the SR does not include seventeen specialist reports. Please kindly peruse the protocols and provide in the SR site sensitivity reports for each theme/study listed, as well as compliance statements for assessments not needed to be conducted based on your site sensitivity verification.</p>	<p>(c) clarification as to the specialist's definition of "no-go" areas and buffers; (d) detailed cumulative impact assessment, (e) detailed, practical and appropriate mitigation measures and management actions; as well as (f) an assessment of the "no-go" alternative. These EIA Phase specialist assessments will be considered final and will not recommend further studies to be undertaken post EA (should EA be granted), except for recommended monitoring requirements during construction, operations and decommissioning of the proposed WEF. The Terms of Reference for all identified specialist assessments to be conducted during the EIA Phase are included in Chapter 7 of the FSR. Furthermore, all specialists have complied with the protocols in terms of the undertaking of the field surveys in the correct season. Details on the suitability of the season for fieldwork will be provided in the specialist assessments during the EIA Phase. In addition, officials from BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) and the SABAA were included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of the S&EIA Process. BLSA and SABAA were given the opportunity to comment on the DSR. Comments received from BLSA on the DSR are</p>

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			<p>included in Section 5 of this CRR. SABAA neglected to comment on the DSR, despite regular follow-up; however, they will be provided with the FSR for their records and afforded the opportunity to comment on the DEIR. Note that EWT has provided some comment on bats (see Section 6 of the FSR).</p> <p>iii. Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations in their Impact Assessment reports during the EIA Phase, the EAP will ensure that the most reasonable recommendations will be provided and substantiated with defensible reasons; and where necessary will include further expertise advice.</p> <p>iv. The EAP will ensure that all mitigation recommendations made by specialists in their Impact Assessment reports during the EIA Phase are in line with the applicable and most recent guidelines.</p> <p>v. Site Sensitivity Verifications in accordance with Part A and Part B of GNR 320 of 20 March 2020, have been included in the specialist scoping inputs reports, where relevant and applicable (Refer to Appendix F of the FSR). As stated above, the detailed specialist impact assessments to be undertaken during the EIA Phase will comply with the Assessment</p>

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			<p>Protocols published in March 2020 (GN 320) and October 2020 (GN 1150), where relevant.</p> <p>vi. Specialist Declarations forms which indicate the scientific organisation registration/member number and status of registration/membership for each specialist have been appended to the specialist scoping input reports, where relevant (Refer to Appendix F of the FSR).</p> <p>vii. Site Sensitivity Verifications in accordance with Part A and Part B of GNR 320 of 20 March 2020, have been included in the specialist scoping inputs reports, where relevant and applicable (Refer to Appendix F of the FSR).</p> <p>viii. In line with the Assessment Protocols (GN 320 and GN 1150), the following specialist assessments require specialists to be SACNASP registered of which valid certificates have been included in Appendix F of the FSR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agriculture ○ Aquatic Biodiversity ○ Terrestrial Biodiversity ○ Avifauna <p>ix. All specialist assessments, as identified by the Screening Tool have been considered and are included and addressed in the FSR. Note that the following specialist assessments have been combined:</p>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flicker and Landscape is incorporated into the Visual Assessment. <p>Terrestrial Animal Species and Terrestrial Plant Species are incorporated into the Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment.</p> <p>Note that a Radio Frequency Interference (RFI) study will not be undertaken as part of this S&EIA Process, and motivation for not undertaking this study is discussed in Section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4 of the FSR. In addition, a desktop Geotechnical Assessment has not been undertaken during the Scoping Phase but will be included in the DEIR based on the Terms of Reference included in the Plan of Study for EIA.</p> <p>All other identified Environmental Themes / Studies (i.e., 11) are included as standalone scoping input reports in Appendix F of the FSR.</p>
8.	14/02/2023, Letter (received via email on 14/02/2023), DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Milicent Solomons)	<p>(g) Cumulative Assessment</p> <p>i. There is currently one (1) operational WEF located within 30km of the proposed ABO Wind Ingwe WEF projects. The wake effect should be investigated as the surrounding Wind Energy Facility may impact on the energy production of the proposed ABO Wind Ingwe WEF projects or the proposed ABO Wind Ingwe WEF projects may impact on the energy production of the surrounding Wind Energy Facilities. Investigating the potential impacts of the wake effect are imperative to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of WEF's.</p>	<p>Project Applicant: These comments are noted.</p> <p>Responses are provided below to the comments raised:</p> <p>i. The wake effect will be addressed in the EIA Phase and further information on the impact/significance thereof will be provided in the DEIR.</p>

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		<p>ii. Should there be any other similar projects within a 30km radius of the proposed development site, the cumulative impact assessment for all identified and assessed impacts must be refined to indicate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identified cumulative impacts must be clearly defined, and where possible the size of the identified impact must be quantified and indicated, i.e., hectares of cumulatively transformed land. b. Detailed process flow and proof must be provided, to indicate how the specialist's recommendations, mitigation measures and conclusions from the various similar developments in the area were taken into consideration in the assessment of cumulative impacts and when the conclusion and mitigation measures were drafted for this project. c. The cumulative impacts significance rating must also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development. d. A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed. 	<p>CSIR: These comments are noted.</p> <p>Responses are provided below to the comments raised:</p> <p>ii. Refer to Chapter 7 of the FSR and the sub-sections of each specialist scoping level input report in Appendix F of the FSR, where a high-level cumulative impact assessment is included. The approach for the cumulative impact assessment will include all renewable energy and EGI projects within a 30 km radius that received an EA and/or have an EIA Process underway at the time of starting this S&EIA Process (i.e., by 1 December 2022).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The specialists have identified high-level cumulative impacts as per the above approach, and such impacts have been clearly defined. Where possible the size of the identified impact will be quantified and indicated, i.e., hectares of cumulatively transformed land in the detailed cumulative impact assessments to be undertaken during the EIA Phase. It is also important to note that in some cases the actual development footprint of the nearby Renewable Energy developments

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			<p>cannot always be easily quantified or accessed spatially. For example, the National Renewable Energy EIA Application Database contains the land parcels, and not the actual development footprint. Nonetheless, it is believed that the high-level assessment of cumulative impacts has been adequately captured in the FSR. With regards to the levels of transformation, the current state of the affected area must also be taken into consideration.</p> <p>b. The assessment of cumulative impacts is based on the specialists and EAP's knowledge of similar approved Renewable Energy and EGI projects. The list of Renewable Energy and EGI projects identified during the Scoping Phase was also supplemented by the National Renewable Energy EIA Applications (REEA) database and the Eskom's Generation Connection Capacity Assessment (GCCA) (2022). The projects located within the 30 km radius from this proposed WEF development will be considered in the detailed cumulative impact assessments in the EIA Phase.</p>

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			<p>c. Note that the scoping level specialist inputs report on the assessment of potential cumulative impacts (see Appendix F of the FSR). The specialists assessed such impacts based on their expertise and knowledge of similar projects and management actions. Furthermore, the assessment of cumulative impacts is not necessarily solely focused on an assessment of impacts linked to previously authorised similar developments and consideration of their mitigation measures, but also about the sensitivities of the land on which the projects are proposed. For example, from a heritage point of view, it is also about other heritage resources, the type of locations they could occur in, and any other developments that may have impacted on the heritage resources. A concerted effort will be made to ensure that cumulative impacts significance rating will inform the need and desirability of the proposed development.</p> <p>d. The cumulative impacts significance rating which informs the need and desirability of this proposed WEF will be included in the EIA Phase.</p>

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			e. A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed will be included in the EIA Phase.
9.	14/02/2023, Letter (received via email on 14/02/2023), DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Milicent Solomons)	<p>General</p> <p>You are further reminded to comply with Regulation 21(1) of the NEMA EIA Regulations 2014, as amended, which states that:</p> <p>“If S&EIR must be applied to an application, the applicant must, within 44 days of receipt of the application by the competent authority, submit to the competent authority a scoping report which has been subjected to a public participation process of at least 30 days and which reflects the incorporation of comments received, including any comments of the competent authority”.</p> <p>You are further reminded that the final SR to be submitted to this Department must comply with all the requirements in terms of the scope of assessment and content of Scoping reports in accordance with Appendix 2 and Regulation 21(1) of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended.</p> <p>Further note that in terms of Regulation 45 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended, this application will lapse if the applicant fails to meet any of the timeframes prescribed in terms of these Regulations, unless an extension has been granted in terms of Regulation 3(7).</p> <p>You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.</p>	<p>CSIR: These comments are noted.</p> <p>Responses are provided below to the comments raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The timeframes in Regulation 21 (1) have been adhered to in the submission of the FSR. The Application Form for EA was submitted to the DFFE, together with the Draft Scoping Reports for comment, on 14 January 2023. In line with Regulation 21 (1) of the 2014 EIA Regulations (as amended), the FSR needed to be submitted to the DFFE for decision-making within 44 days of receipt of the application by the Competent Authority. • The FSR complies with all the requirements in terms of the scope of assessment and content of Scoping Reports in accordance with Appendix 2 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). Refer to the Executive Summary of the FSR for additional information on compliance with Appendix 2 of the EIA Regulations 2014 (as amended).

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reminder regarding failure to meet any timeframes stipulated in Regulation 45 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) is noted. • The Applicant is aware of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998, as amended).

1.2.2. THE DIRECTORATE: BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

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1.	16/02/2023 Email, DFFE, The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation (MMatlala Rabothata)	Please receive the attached comments from Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation for your attention and implementation. Apologies for late submission, I encountered problem with my internet.	CSIR: The comments received from the Biodiversity Conservation Directorate have been included and addressed below.
2.	15/02/2023 Letter (received via email on 16/02/2023), DFFE, The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation (MMatlala Rabothata, Seoka Lekota)	<p>COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT SCOPING REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE UP TO 307.5 MWAC AND 510 MWAC ABO WIND INGWE WIND ENERGY FACILITY 1 & 2 AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR MOLTENO IN THE EASTERN CAPE</p> <p>The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation reviewed and evaluated the draft reports.</p> <p>Based on the information provided in the report, the proposed projects does not fall within any of the Renewable Energy Development Zones (REDZs), In addition, the proposed ABO Wind Ingwe WEF 1 & 2 project site is located approximately 15,5 km and 20 km respectively away (at its closest point) from the Eastern Strategic Transmission Corridor. Based on the scoping report, the potential negative impacts associated with the ABO Wind Ingwe WEFs projects are anticipated to mainly be of Moderate to Low significance after mitigation.</p> <p>The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation does not have any objections on the proposed developments proceeding to the next phase of EIA, provided that it complies with the procedures for the assessment and</p>	<p>CSIR: The exact location of the proposed project and its proximity in relation to the REDZ and Strategic Transmission Corridors are noted and described throughout the FSR.</p> <p>This Directorate's support of the proposed WEF proceeding to the EIA Phase is duly noted.</p> <p>Note that the following specialist assessments are being conducted in adherence to the Procedures for the Assessment and Minimum Requirements for Reporting on identified Environmental Themes in terms of Sections 24(5) (a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 as published in Government Notice 320 in March 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for environmental impacts on agricultural resources by onshore wind energy generation facilities where the electricity output is 20 megawatts or more;

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		<p>minimum criteria for reporting on identified environmental themes in terms of sections 24(5) (A) and (H) as well as 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 and all the relevant National and Provincial biodiversity guidelines are considered.</p> <p>In addition, details of the specialist studies required to be undertaken to assess the significance of those impacts identified within the scoping study must be prepared, considered and submitted with the final scoping report and the final updated layout map overlaid with biodiversity sensitivities must be submitted.</p> <p>The final report must comply with all the requirements as outlined in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guideline for renewable energy projects and the Best Practice Guideline for Birds & Solar Energy for assessing and monitoring the impact of solar energy facilities on birds in Southern Africa.</p> <p>All Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA review and any other Biodiversity EIA queries must be submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation at Email: BCAdmin@environment.gov.za for attention of Mr Seoka Lekota.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avifauna – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for environmental impacts on avifaunal species by onshore wind and/or solar photovoltaic energy generation facilities where the electricity output is 20 megawatts or more; • Biodiversity – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for environmental impacts on Terrestrial Biodiversity; • Biodiversity – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for environmental impacts on Aquatic Biodiversity; • Noise – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for noise impacts; • Defence – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for impacts on defence installations; and • Civil Aviation – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for impacts on civil aviation installations.

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			<p>Note that the Terrestrial Biodiversity Specialist Assessment undertaken as part of this S&EIA Process also complies with the Terrestrial Animal Species and Terrestrial Plant Species Protocols (Government Notice No. 1150 of 30 October 2020) as confirmed with DFFE in the pre-application consultation process during which no objections to this approach were noted. Refer to Appendix E of the FSR for a copy of the pre-application consultation correspondence with DFFE, as well as Appendix F.6 for a copy of the Terrestrial Biodiversity and Species scoping input report provided for this project.</p> <p>It must be noted that specialist scoping level inputs have been provided to inform the high-level assessment of potential impacts by the proposed development and as a result not all the specialist scoping input reports, provided and included in Appendix F of the FSR, contain impact significance ratings. The specialists will prepare, consider and submit their detailed impact assessments and significance ratings based on a revised and refined project infrastructure layout during the EIA Phase.</p> <p>Also note that throughout this S&EIA Process relevant best practice guidelines including any other applicable guidelines have been applied and will continue to be applied in the specialist assessments during the EIA Phase.</p>

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			The email addresses BCAdmin@dffe.gov.za and BCAdmin@environment.gov.za were included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of the S&EIA Process and will receive future communication regarding the proposed WEF. Refer to Appendix C of the FSR for a copy of the I&AP database.

1.2.3. THE DIRECTORATE: PROTECTED AREAS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	14/02/2023, Email, DFFE, The Directorate: Protected Areas Planning and Management Effectiveness (Thivhulawi Nethononda, Karl Naude, Lindokuhle Vilakati)	<p>The Directorate: Protected Areas Planning and Management Effectiveness, would like to thank you for the opportunity to review the scoping report and supporting documents for the construction and operation of the two ABO Wind Ingwe WEFs, namely the up to 307.5 MWac ABO Wind Ingwe WEF 1 and the up to 510 MWac ABO Wind Ingwe WEF 2.</p> <p>After conducting the review of the submitted documents, we have noted that the proposed developments will not take place within any kind of protected areas in terms of Section 9 of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (NEMPAA), Act No. 57 of 2003. Subsequently, this directorate provides comments or input on the projects which are affecting the protected areas.</p>	<p>CSIR: This comment is noted, particularly the confirmation that no Protected Areas would be affected. The Biodiversity and Conservation Directorate was included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of the S&EIA Process. Comments received from the Biodiversity and Conservation Directorate has been included in Section 2.2 of this CRR.</p> <p>Specialist: The confirmation that the proposed development would have no impact on Protected Areas is noted.</p>

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		<p>Further it is very much concerning that the Avifauna specialist studies estimate that “approximately 40.03 fatalities could be recorded at the project per year across the 29 target bird species recorded flying on site (Table 6). This includes the following regionally Red Listed species fatalities: 14.88 Blue Cranes; 7.42 Cape Vultures; 2.24 Verreaux’s Eagles; 1.2 Black Harriers; 0.76 Grey Crowned Cranes; 0.28 Secretary birds; 0.18 Ludwig’s Bustards; 0.16 Lanner Falcons; 0.15 Martial Eagles; 0.03 African Marsh-Harriers; 0.02 Black Storks; and 0.02 Burchell’s Coursers. Species for which these estimated fatality rates are of particular concern include Cape Vulture, Blue Crane and Black Harrier”.</p> <p>The EAP must consult and get comments (if not yet consulted) from the Biodiversity and Conservation Directorate of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) which can be contacted at BCAdmin@environment.gov.za for the attention of Mr. Seoka Lekota.</p> <p>Further, also notify the provincial departments, local municipality, and other associated entities for comments.</p>	<p>The comment regarding the potential fatalities calculated neglects to acknowledge the preceding contextual explanation contained in the Avifaunal specialist scoping inputs report, notably that describing the low level of confidence in such calculations given the highly conservative and high-level approach adopted. The report explains that the estimated fatality rates calculated represent a worst-case scenario given the following key assumptions (which are exceptionally conservative):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flights of all heights above ground were included, whereas in reality some flights would be below or above rotor zone; • no consideration is given to actual turbine locations relative to actual flight path positions; • a relatively conservative avoidance rate of 98% was used; and • These estimates are also <u>pre-mitigation</u>. <p>Although the calculations made are not a Collision Risk Model (CRM-Scottish Natural Heritage) some of the principles and assumptions made are similar. In South Africa, one of the main reasons CRM is not often used is that accurate species-specific avoidance rates have not been established yet, and the model is highly sensitive to these avoidance rates. For example, if we used a 99% avoidance rate (and not the 98% explained</p>

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			<p>above) it would <i>halve</i> the estimated number of fatalities calculated as described. Specialist confidence in these estimates is therefore low, but the exercise is worthwhile, nonetheless.</p> <p>The Avifaunal Impact Assessment report to be compiled during the EIA Phase will assess the impact of the proposed development on bird fatalities (refer to Chapter 7 of the FSR for the scope of assessment in this regard). Furthermore, the Biodiversity and Conservation Directorate of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) has been included as a registered I&AP on the database and has been provided with an opportunity to comment on the DSR and will be afforded the opportunity to comment on the DEIR during the EIA Phase.</p>

1.3. THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DALRRD)

1.3.1. THE DIRECTORATE: LAND AND SOIL MANAGEMENT

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	15/02/2023, Email, DALRRD, The Directorate: Land and Soil Management (Nomantombazana Gazi)	Please receive the attached comment for your application. WEF 307.5 WEF 510	CSIR: The letters with comments from the Land and Soil Management Directorate were well received. However, it was noted that the comment letters attached to the email were not signed or dated. The Directorate was subsequently requested to resend signed and dated letters.
2.	15/02/2023, Letter, DALRRD, The Directorate: Land and Soil Management (Nomantombazana Gazi)	NOTIFICATION OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT SCOPING AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE UP TO 510 MWac ABO WIND INGWE WIND ENERGY FACILITY 2 AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR MOLTENO IN THE EASTERN CAPE We acknowledge the receipt of the Draft Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment Report dated 14 January 2023 for comments. This office follows the comprehensive study regarding the EIA document submitted to this office. The Directorate Land and Soil Management is responsible for the administration of Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act 43 of 1983 (Act no. 43 of 1983). CARA seeks to provide for the provision of conservation of the natural agricultural resources of the country through the following objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the production potential of the land • Combating and preventing erosion 	CSIR: Specialist scoping level inputs on the agricultural potential, soils and land capability classification of the affected study area (i.e., Agricultural Compliance Statement) are included in Appendix F.1 of the FSR. This addresses the requirement for agricultural potential and land capability classification reports. The Agricultural Compliance Statement that has been compiled in adherence to the Assessment Protocol in GN 320 detailing all required objectives as per the comments received from the Directorate: Land and Soil Management will be included in the DEIR and circulated to the Directorate for further comment during the EIA Phase. Note that an Alien Invasive Vegetation Management Plan, a Stormwater Management Plan, a Soil Erosion management plan and an Environmental Awareness

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing the weakening or destruction of water resources • Protection of natural vegetation and • Combating declared weeds and invader plants. <p>The implementation of the stipulated procedures as per the EIA provided to this Department should be always adhered to as they ensure maximum protection of natural resources to the area where development will be taking place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed development will not change the agricultural character of the area. The loss of agricultural land will be insignificantly. The carrying capacity of the proposed area is 7.5 ha per LSU. • Control soil erosion plan during the construction phase should be prioritized because the soils are vulnerable to soil erosion. Possible impact would be the increased danger of erosion of the topsoil when vegetation cover is removed. This would be especially relevant for the construction of access roads, turbine sites and other associated infrastructure. • Weeds control management plan must be developed and maintained to control the alien plants that can possibly result from the soil disturbance that will occur during the construction phase. • Natural drainage or waterways should be excluded from any form of disturbance during construction and maintenance phase. • The office will also request the applicant to provide an agricultural potential and land capability classification reports 	<p>and Fire Management Plan will be included with the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) in the DEIR, all of which would address the required plans indicated in the comment.</p> <p>It must be noted that due to the necessary placement of certain associated project infrastructure such as roads, it is not always possible to completely avoid all waterways or drainage areas on site. Sometimes there is a road or electrical cabling that would need to cross such an area, and even though the Applicant will take great care in attempting to avoid such areas as far as practically possible, where such crossings will be necessitated, the specialists will assess potential impacts and provide appropriate mitigation measures associated with these specific instances where it cannot be avoided. These recommendations for mitigation measures and management actions will also be included in the EMPr during the EIA Phase. It is however worth noting that, for most cases, the routing or siting of these project components has been intentionally devised to align with existing roads or crossings to purposefully limit the potential adverse impacts on drainage lines and waterways. In addition, the Applicant will obtain the required water use authorisation in terms of the National Water Act (Act 39 of 1998) should such crossings not be avoided.</p>

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		conducted on the areas that will be affected by the proposed WEF.	
3.	20/02/2023, Email, DALRRD, The Directorate: Land and Soil Management (Nomantombazana Gazi)	Kindly accept my apology, I was out of office in the field so couldn't print and scan the letters. Please receive the signed letters.	CSIR: The signed and dated letters as received from this Directorate have been included in Appendix D.4 of the FSR.

1.4. THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL HERITAGE RESOURCES AUTHORITY (ECPHRA)

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	07/02/2023 Email, Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority: Archaeologist (Ayanda Mncwabe-Mama)	Please find attached the comment from ECPHRA (Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority) regarding the above-mentioned project which was tabled on the 23rd of January 2023 APM meeting, for your records and or actioning.	CSIR: The comments received from the ECPHRA have been included and addressed below.
2.	06/02/2023 Letter (received via email on 07/02/2023) Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority: Archaeologist (Ayanda Mncwabe-Mama)	BACKGROUND: ABO Wind Ingwe Wind Energy Facility 2 (Pty) Ltd is proposing the construction and operation of a commercial Wind Energy Facility (WEF) and associated infrastructure approximately 8 km northwest of the town of Molteno located in the Chris Hani District Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province. The proposed ABO Wind Ingwe WEF 2 will have up to 64 turbines and a permanent development footprint of up to 153 hectares, approximately 1.7% of the total assessed study area. This excludes access roads leading to the site. The proposed project will make use of wind technology to generate electricity from wind energy.	CSIR: The requirement for the inclusion of a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) which comprises of an AIA (Archaeological Impact Assessment) and a PIA (Paleontological Impact assessment) in the EIA Phase is duly noted and same will be included in the DEIR.

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		<p>Once a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) is awarded, the proposed WEF will generate electricity for a minimum period of 20 years. The construction phase for the proposed project is expected to extend approximately 18 to 24 months.</p> <p>ECPHRA FINAL COMMENTS: ECPHRA (Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Authority) formally acknowledges receipt of the DSR (Draft Scoping Report).</p> <p>We request the following documentation, for your next phase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIA (Heritage Impact Assessment) which comprises of an AIA (Archaeological Impact Assessment) and a PIA (Paleontological Impact assessment) as the application triggers Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA 25 of 1999). 	

1.5. THE SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (SACAA)

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	17/02/2023 Email South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA): Obstacles Inspector (Simphiwe Masilela, Lizell Stroh, Doris Khoza)	<p>SACAA has no objection to the proposed development, however, a formal obstacle assessment must be conducted in order to determine whether or not the proposed will affect the safety of flights in any way.</p> <p>Kindly note that the SACAA has transferred the assessments of Windfarms and Solar applications to Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS) as published on the SACAA website.</p> <p>Their responsibility would pertain to the assessments, maintenance, and all other related matters in respect to Windfarms and Solar assessments</p> <p>The contact details for ATNS is: Obstacle Evaluator ATNS Head Office Tel: +2711 6071000 (Ask for Obstacle Evaluators) Email: Obstacles@atns.co.za</p> <p>For any other obstacles, kindly find below the current obstacle application procedures and processes to follow, as per the SACAA website:</p> <p>Additional information required for the application (i.e., Monitoring Mast):</p>	<p>CSIR: The no-objection is noted. The Applicant has been informed of the requirement to undertake a formal obstacle assessment.</p> <p>Project Applicant: Application for the obstacle assessment, and approval from the CAA, is required in terms of the Civil Aviation Act (No. 13 of 2009). This application is necessitated outside of the NEMA process and will be carried out by the Applicant, accordingly, noting that it is not part of the S&EIA Process.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a .kml/kmz (Google Earth) file reflecting the footprint of the proposed i.e. Mast • Required to provide coordinates (Deg, min and Sec), Height and Elevation • Also indicate the height to the top of structure <p>Find attached an extract from the SACAA Regulation as guidance towards Obstacle developments. Assessments will commence upon receipt of payment.</p> <p>Should you require more information please contact the inspectorate at obstacles@caa.co.za</p>	

1.6. BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA (BLSA)

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	17/02/2023, Email, BirdLife South Africa (BLSA): Birds and Renewable Energy Project Manager (Sam Ralston)	Our comments on the draft Scoping Reports are attached. Thank you for accepting our later comments.	CSIR: All comments received from BLSA have been captured and addressed in this CRR.
2.	17/02/2023, Letter,	Draft Scoping Reports for comment for the proposed ABO Wind Ingwe Wind Energy Facilities 1 and 2, and its associated infrastructure, near Molteno, Eastern Cape.	Specialist: We have noted the strong objection by BLSA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guidelines for the Verreaux's Eagle, Black Harrier and Cape Vulture and wind energy have been adhered to by the specialist, as described in

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	BirdLife South Africa (BSA): Birds and Renewable Energy Project Manager (Sam Ralston)	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above draft Scoping Reports. BirdLife South Africa supports the responsible development of renewable energy. However, we cannot support the development of renewable energy infrastructure that will pose a significant and potentially irreversible threat to biodiversity. We would, therefore, like to register our strong objection to these two proposed wind energy facilities.</p> <p>We recognise South Africa is facing an electricity crisis and acknowledge the need to transition from fossil fuels. Yet, we are fortunate to have excellent wind and solar resources throughout much of the country. This, combined with a large number of projects with existing environmental authorisations, implies that we have plenty of opportunity to avoid placing infrastructure where there is a high risk to biodiversity.</p> <p>Please note the following: BirdLife South Africa has guidelines for Verreaux's Eagle, Black Harrier and Cape Vulture and wind energy to help ensure impacts on the</p> <p>f. se species are robustly assessed, avoided and mitigated. We request recommendations in these documents be considered part of BirdLife South Africa's submission to these EIA processes. These resources are available on our website (https://www.birdlife.org.za/what-we-do/landscape-conservation/what-we-do/birds-renewable-energy/)</p>	<p>Section 2 of the specialist scoping input report (Appendix F.3 of the FSR).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The specialist Avifauna Impact Assessment Report will comply with the latest edition of the abovementioned guidelines as well as any other avifauna guidelines that may become applicable during the EIA Phase, where relevant. Nest buffers (both High and Medium risk areas) identified by the VERA (Verreaux's Eagle Risk Assessment) model will be applied and adhered to and updated according to the newer edition of said guidelines. • The Cape Vulture utilisation distribution model recently published by Cervantes et al. (2023) will be considered in the specialist Avifauna Impact Assessment Report during the EIA Phase. • During the EIA Phase, the avifaunal impact will be assessed in the context of national and international commitments to conserve species (e.g., Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), CMS Multi-Species Action Plan for Vultures, draft National Multi-species Action Plan). • The findings of Cervantes et al. 2022 will be consulted and considered in the specialist Avifauna Impact Assessment Report. • An area larger than the 30 km radius i.e., at an appropriate biologically meaning scale will be considered in the cumulative impact assessment specifically for Cape Vulture.

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		<p>g. Please note that a second edition of the Verreux's Eagle guidelines is available, and the buffer recommendations reflected in the Scoping Report should be updated accordingly.</p> <p>h. We strongly encourage the use of the Verreux's Eagle Risk Assessment (VERA) model, to complement the avifaunal surveys (Murgatroyd et al. 2021) and data analysis.</p> <p>i. We also draw your attention to the Cape Vulture utilisation distribution model recently published by Cervantes et al. (2023), which should complement the impact assessment for Cape Vultures.</p> <p>j. The impacts of the proposed developments should be assessed in the context of national and international commitments to conserve species (e.g. Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), CMS Multi-Species Action Plan for Vultures, draft National Multi-species Action Plan).</p> <p>k. When assessing cumulative impacts, please consider the findings of Cervantes et al. 2022, which highlight the risk of irreversible impacts on Black Harrier if fatality rates increase by just 3-5 adults a year.</p> <p>l. When assessing cumulative impacts, we also strongly recommend that the assessment is not restricted to 30km from the proposed development site. The cumulative assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The specialist Avifauna Impact Assessment Report will include an assessment of the management and likelihood of residual impacts occurring post mitigation. <p>It must be noted that the DSR and FSR emphasise the preliminary nature of the avifauna data included in the Scoping Phase, and that the project infrastructure layout for the impact assessment will be refined to avoid very high sensitivity areas.</p>

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		<p>should rather be based on a biologically meaningful scale appropriate for the species at risk.</p> <p>m. Operational-phase mitigation is unlikely to be completely effective. We, therefore, suggest that biodiversity offsets should be considered to address residual negative impacts. However, we question whether it is appropriate to consider offsets in this context, given the availability of alternatives and the potential for the significance of impacts.</p> <p>Please do not hesitate to contact us if anything is unclear.</p>	

1.7. THE ENDANGERED WILDLIFE TRUST (EWT)

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	20/01/2023 Email, EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	Please find attached comments and concerns from the Endangered Wildlife Trust related to the ABO Wind Ingwe Wind Energy Facilities 1 and 2, and its associated infrastructure, near Molteno, Eastern Cape. We trust that these will be duly considered and addressed to avoid the prospective impacts of this proposed development.	CSIR: The comments received from the EWT have been included and addressed below.
2	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	As a first step we strongly recommend that the mitigation hierarchy be followed with avoidance being prioritized to avoid ongoing mortalities over the life of the WEF.	<p>CSIR and Project Applicant: The mitigation hierarchy has been employed in both the creation of the proposed project layout as well as the environmental impact assessment process through avoidance of the most sensitive habitats, followed by the requirements for implementation of mitigation measures. The mitigation hierarchy is discussed in Section 7.5.1 of Chapter 7 of the FSR.</p> <p>Note that the project layout will be updated and refined following the outcomes of the Scoping Phase, in response to the environmental sensitivities identified by the specialist team during their scoping level assessments.</p> <p>Specialist: The application of the mitigation hierarchy has been explained in Section 3.6. of the Avifaunal Specialist Scoping Inputs Report. In our view extensive avoidance has been applied throughout the development of the project infrastructure layout. Refer to Appendix F.3 of the FSR for the Avifaunal scoping inputs report.</p>

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	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	Only if avoidance is not possible, and we would like to emphasise that avoidance should be possible, we then highly recommend a shut down on demand system is implemented, either through on the ground observers, or automated systems, to shut down turbines when collision prone birds enter wind farms and are heading within rotor sweep zones	CSIR: The Avifaunal Scoping Inputs Report states that a “shutdown on demand (SDOD) programme should be seriously considered as an additional mitigation measure for several species, where the above spatial protection does not completely mitigate the risk”. The Applicant is aware of this recommendation. Refer to Appendix F.3 of the FSR for the Avifaunal Scoping Inputs Report. Specialist: As noted above, the Avifaunal Scoping Inputs Report made the necessary recommendation. The Avifaunal Specialist Impact Assessment Report (to be included in the DEIR) will insist that this be done from the outset of WEF operations, where necessary.
3.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	It is critical that no human disturbance associated with any construction activity occurs within the buffers near active breeding eagle nests in the peak breeding period between May and September, i.e. construction vehicles, labourers on foot, etc. All other human disturbance should also be minimized or avoided during this breeding period.	CSIR, Project Applicant and Specialist: A high use area at Vegkoppies has been mapped based on flight data recorded during the pre-construction avifauna monitoring. The Avifauna Scoping Inputs Report further states that the avoidance measures (in the form of large no-go buffers for wind turbines) already taken to protect the various eagle nests and their breeding have reduced the significance of this impact to Low negative significance pre-mitigation and it will remain Low post-mitigation. No infrastructure is proposed to be placed in areas identified as no-go/very high sensitivity. Disturbance at breeding sites will therefore be completely avoided. Please refer to Appendix F.3 of the FSR for the Avifaunal Scoping Input Report.
4.	20/01/2023	Although the power line design will minimise bird electrocution incidents due to satisfactory phase clearances, collisions with	CSIR and Project Applicant: The specialist has provided specifications for mitigating potential bird electrocutions on

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	Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	shield wires or conductors are still likely to occur. With regards to the transmission lines fitting Bird Flight Diversers (BFDs) may mitigate collisions involving large raptors but it will not mitigate (at all) collisions by Ludwig's Bustard. Due to the fact that lines are likely to be handed over to Eskom (for long term management as per standard power purchase agreements), they need to be constructed to specification as determined by Eskom and fitted with approved BDFs at the Eskom recommended intervals	power lines (e.g., "all overhead conductors or earth wires should be fitted with an Eskom approved anti bird collision line marking device to make cables more visible to birds in flight and reduce the likelihood of collisions"). Note, however, that the Electrical Grid Infrastructure (EGI) component of this project would be the subject of a separate environmental assessment process and does not form part of this S&EIA Process. Specialist: We recorded Ludwig's Bustard infrequently on site. For example, 11 bustards were recorded flying during 576 hours of vantage point observation on site. We ranked all Red Listed species according to their risk (Severity of impact x probability of impact) and despite Ludwig's Bustard scoring high for severity (on account of having Endangered status) it was rated as Low risk overall due to the low probability of impact. We have recommended mitigation for collision of birds with overhead lines but do not believe Ludwig's Bustard requires more attention at this site.
5.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	New power lines need to be placed, as far as possible, in areas where linear infrastructure already exists and ideally as close to the existing lines as possible.	CSIR and Project Applicant: Every effort has been made to ensure that power line infrastructure will be placed in areas where linear infrastructure such as other power lines and/or roads already exists, and where possible, as close to the existing power lines as possible or adjacent to roads. It is proposed that all medium voltage cables required within the WEF development footprint will be installed underground (where practical), and where possible along internal service roads. The exact placement of power line infrastructure within the approved development footprint will be confirmed by the

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			<p>Project Applicant during the detailed engineering design phase prior to construction, post-EA (should such EA be granted).</p> <p><u>Note</u> that a separate environmental assessment process in terms of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations including specialist assessment undertaken in terms of all relevant and applicable protocols, guidelines, etc. will be undertaken for the EGI component of this proposed WEF project, and therefore does not form part of this S&EIA Process currently being undertaken for the proposed WEF project.</p> <p>Specialist: We have recommended that none of the internal medium voltage collector lines are installed above ground. As explained by the EAP, the grid connection power line will be a separate application and we will address this aspect there.</p>
6.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	Should new, more effective BDFs come available the developer needs to be ready to procure and fit these. The EWT is in the process of expanding its current long-term line marking experiment near De Aar where a further 4 BFD designs will be tested, specifically to reduce Ludwig's Bustard collisions. If this development proceeds, we urge the developer to contact the EWT Wildlife and Energy programme directly and to participate in this important and ongoing research. In the event that a more effective BFD is identified and approved, this must be applied to the line. Possibly including the replacement of old BFDs where possible.	<p>Project Applicant: Mitigation measures provided by the specialist include the requirement for sufficient financial provision for mitigation.</p> <p>Specialist: We recorded Ludwig's Bustard infrequently on site. For example, 11 bustards were recorded flying during 576 hours of vantage point observation on site. We ranked all Red Listed species according to their risk (Severity of impact x probability of impact) and despite Ludwig's Bustard scoring high for severity (on account of having Endangered status) it was rated as Low risk overall due to the low probability of impact. We have recommended mitigation for collision of birds with overhead lines but do not believe Ludwig's Bustard requires more attention at this site.</p>

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			<p>CSIR: Note that a separate environmental assessment process in terms of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations including specialist assessment undertaken in terms of all relevant and applicable protocols, guidelines, etc. will be undertaken for the EGI component of this proposed WEF project, and therefore does not form part of this S&EIA Process currently being undertaken for the proposed WEF project.</p>
7.	<p>20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)</p>	<p>Lines need to be seasonally monitored (according to the ESKOM/EWT partnership protocol) for fatalities and these fatalities should be reported to the Eskom/EWT Strategic partnership</p>	<p>CSIR: It is proposed that the internal medium voltage cables linking turbines with the on-site substation hub at each WEF will comprise of power lines placed underground, where practical.</p> <p>Note, however, that the overhead power lines proposed to facilitate the connection of the proposed WEF project with the national electrical grid network, will likely comprise of a new loop-in loop-out (LILO) connection into the existing Beta-Delphi 400 kV overhead power line, and a new LILO connection into the existing Dorper-Stormberg 132 kV overhead power line, at the point where these existing lines cross the project site. Therefore, a separate environmental assessment process will be undertaken for the EGI component of this proposed WEF project, and therefore does not form part of this S&EIA Process currently being undertaken for the proposed WEF project.</p> <p>Note that this comment has been recorded and will be included in the power line EMP, if found to be applicable by the specialists.</p>

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8.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	While the turbine design has not yet been finalised, we recommend that minimum blade tip height be set as high as is possible (even more than the 25 m recommended).	CSIR: This recommendation will be considered in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment during the EIA Phase and specialist findings will be published in the DEIR.
9.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	Cape Vultures are known to frequent the landscape within the proposed wind farm envelopes, thus it is recommended that a carcass management system is implemented on site to remove food sources that will certainly attract birds to the site, even from extensive distances away	CSIR and Project Applicant: This recommendation will be included in the operational specifications of the EMPr during the EIA Phase.
10.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	The current Cape Vulture and Windfarms guidelines recommend that a buffer of approximately 50 km around all colonies, and regular or seasonal/occasional roosts should be considered as high to very high sensitivity (with sensitivity influenced by distance from the roost/colony, as well as its size and location). A buffer of approximately 18 km around breeding colonies should be considered as very high sensitivity	Project Applicant: The avifaunal scoping inputs report has considered the Cape Vulture colonies, Cape Vulture roosting behaviour in the area, as well as the best practice guidelines. These sensitivities and buffers have been intentionally safe guarded in devising the proposed layout. Specialist: Based on data collected to date we believe the site is high risk for Cape Vulture. The requirements set out in the BirdLife South Africa/EWT Best Practice Guidelines (Jenkins et al. 2015) were satisfied and triggered a second year of pre-construction monitoring (i.e., an additional 12 months) on site in accordance with these best practise guidelines. The findings from the two years of pre-construction bird monitoring undertaken on site will be presented in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report during the EIA Phase.
11.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023),	Bats are particularly susceptible to anthropogenic changes because of their low reproductive rate, longevity, and high metabolic rates, limiting their ability to recover from declines	Project Applicant: Specialist assessment has been undertaken in this regard and the bat monitoring data suggest that bat activity is predominantly Low at the proposed site. The areas

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	EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	and to maintain sustainable populations. Bat fatalities due to wind turbines raise serious concerns about population-level impacts. The main documented direct impacts of wind energy on bats includes fatality via mainly direct collision with turbine blades or less likely by barotrauma. Indirect impacts include roost disturbances and/or destruction (if construction, operational or decommissioning activities occur close to bat roosts), destruction of foraging habitat (due to WEF construction and habitat change), displacement of bats from their foraging habitat (bats avoid the WEF area) and obstruction of movement paths to drinking, foraging, roosting and migration sites.	that have been ground-truthed as sensitive would not have wind turbines placed therein.
12.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	We recommend that this WEF not be approved unless all Cape Vulture collisions can be confidently and entirely avoided or mitigated through-out the life of the WEF.	<p>Project Applicant: Please refer to the above responses regarding the assessment of impacts (and inclusion of mitigation measures) for the Cape Vulture at the proposed site. The areas that have been ground-truthed as sensitive would not have wind turbines placed therein.</p> <p>Specialist: The Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report (to be included with the DEIR) will detail the impact assessment and the various mitigation measures that will be required to manage the risk of bird collisions.</p>
13.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	We further recommend a comprehensive, long-term avifaunal and terrestrial monitoring programme be implemented by an independent qualified service provider. Little is known about terrestrial impacts of large wind developments and as such this project, if approved, will provide an opportunity to measure baselines and changes over time for terrestrial species.	CSIR and Project Applicant: Twelve (12) months of bats pre-construction monitoring and 24 months of avifauna pre-construction monitoring have been undertaken on site. A terrestrial biodiversity baseline assessment has also been included in the Scoping Report and a Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment (including Terrestrial Animal Species and Terrestrial Plant Species) will be included in the DEIR.

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			<p>Specialist: Specialist Impact Assessment Reports to be included with the DEIR will include a framework for any operational phase monitoring programmes required as per best practice, where relevant.</p>
14.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	Avifaunal impacts need to be closely monitored with seasonal line surveys and surveys in the vicinity of turbines	<p>CSIR and Project Applicant: The avifaunal pre-construction monitoring has been undertaken and has informed the location of the various components of the preliminary layout. Please note that based on specialist inputs received and considered during the Scoping phase of this proposed WEF project, the Project Applicant will revise the project infrastructure layouts to ensure that all wind turbines and associated infrastructure will avoid highly sensitive areas.</p> <p>Specialist: The Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report to be included with the DEIR will include a framework for operational phase monitoring programmes required as per best practice.</p>
15.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	The developments will constitute an additional pressure on biodiversity in the area. This runs against the purpose of the conservancies and formal protected areas in the region, that have taken many years of conservation investment to get off the ground. Therefore, the EWT would like to see a commitment to conservation from the developer. A variety of options are available and the developer is welcome to contact the EWT to discuss these.	<p>Project Applicant: Conservation areas are honoured through the crafting of the project infrastructure layouts to avoid Protected Areas and CBAs. The proposed project site is not located within any Protected Area, conservancy area, or Critical Biodiversity Area. Some minor components (or parts thereof) are located within what is mapped as an ESA 1; however, these are confirmed through ground-truthing to be fallow land and that development therein would not have unacceptable adverse environmental impacts.</p>

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			Specialist: If the detailed Avifauna Impact Assessment during the EIA Phase judges the residual impacts to be moderate or high, this will trigger the need to further manage these residual impacts. Broader conservation aspects, such as possibly the Vulture Safe Zone initiative may become relevant at that point.
16.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	Significant adverse impacts can be expected during the construction phase including vehicular collisions with wildlife, collection and cutting of shrubs for firewood, potential snaring, pollution, etc., and as such strict controls and protocols are required during this phase.	CSIR and Project Applicant: Construction phase impacts would be assessed in detail in the EIA Phase, and appropriate mitigation measures will be included as specifications within the EMP. Specialist: It is believed that this would be the role of the Environmental Control Officers (ECO) during construction.
17.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	We strongly advise the appointment of an independent consultant to monitor activities during the construction phase and to report issues and non-compliance to the authorities and developer.	CSIR: This recommendation is duly noted and will be included in the EMP during the EIA Phase.
18.	20/01/2023 Letter (received via email on 20/01/2023), EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	There is seldom evidence of sufficiently robust implementation of the mitigation hierarchy in the process of site selection. Avoidance, which is the first and most important step, must be duly considered as the first priority irrespective of budget constraints, REDZ status or grid access.	Project Applicant: Refer to the above response regarding the implementation of the mitigation hierarchy in the creation of the proposed layout as well as the environmental impact assessment process. Specialist: The application of the mitigation hierarchy has been explained in Section 3.6. of the Avifaunal Specialist scoping inputs report. In our view extensive avoidance has been applied throughout the development of the project infrastructure layout. Refer to Appendix F.3 of the FSR for the Avifaunal Specialist scoping inputs report.

1.8. VULPRO

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	17/02/2023 (16:02) Email, VulPro (Kate Webster, Kerry Wolter)	<p>To the CSIR team</p> <p>I have a couple of comments to make with regard to the above proposed development.</p> <p>Firstly I find it very poor that VulPro were not alerted to this development (as vulture specialists). It is fortunate that the Scoping report was forwarded to us after the closing date however!!</p> <p>I have briefly read through the avian scoping report (time is limited considering this input might be still considered).</p> <p>The following I have extracted and would like to comment on. "The focal sites include three Verreaux's Eagle nests, thirteen damsimportant for waterfowl counts, one Secretarybird nest and eight Cape Vulture roosts. Breeding has taken place at all three of the Verreaux's Eagle nests in the 2020 breeding season and appeared to be in progress for the 2021 breeding season. The Secretarybird nest appeared to be inactive. The eight Cape Vulture roost sites were either known or suspected approximately 50 km from the proposed project site boundary. Three of the eight roosts were confirmed to be active with the most important of these roosts being the Donkerhoekberg and Waaikraalberg roosts, both located 27 km from the proposed</p>	<p>CSIR: VulPro has been registered as an I&AP on this project and late comment has been accepted. The email addresses provided will be used for future correspondence. Refer to Appendix C of the FSR for a copy of the I&AP database.</p> <p>Note that the Public Participation Process as part of this S&EIA Process is being undertaken in compliance with Chapter 6 – Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended i.e., GN R326). As noted in Chapter 4 of the FSR, the Department of Environmental Affairs (2017), Public Participation Guideline in terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations is also being considered during this S&EIA Process.</p> <p>Also, note that BirdLife South Africa (i.e., the primary commenting authority with respect to Avifauna) has been included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of this S&EIA Process. Notification of the availability of the DSR for comment (circulated on 14 January 2023) was shared by BirdLife South Africa with VulPro on 16 February 2023.</p> <p>Specialist: The following should be noted in response to the comments received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The avifaunal species risk assessment provided at the Scoping Phase is <u>pre-mitigation</u>. The detailed

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		<p>project site. These roosts appeared to be occupied roughly between October and April annually with very few birds, if any, using these roosts in the winter months. A total of 121 and 56 vultures were recorded at Donkerhoekberg and Waaikraal, respectively. "</p> <p>This is the first red flag especially with regard to the Cape vulture presence and roost sights. However, I would also like to know if any effort was made to ascertain if the vultures roost temporarily on the distribution line that is just off/on the boundary of this WF zone? I personally have seen them roost on the Lalisa/Stormberg line. They may not roost there for the year but certainly use it as a temporary roost.</p> <p>VulPro also has evidence of tracked birds utilizing the area quite extensively.</p> <p>I also have confirmed evidence of injured Cape Vultures which I have collected from the area over a period of time.</p> <p>"More specifically, two species were classified as high risk and seven species were classified as medium risk (Table 3.2). "</p> <p>My second red flag. How on earth can development (no matter how much mitigation will take placethere will be huge losses) can take place when there are NINE avian species at high to medium risk in this area!!!!</p> <p>I would like to ask that VulPro be registered and as I&AP immediately.</p>	<p>Avifauna Impact Assessment based on a revised and refined project infrastructure layout of the proposed WEF will be undertaken during the EIA Phase and be reported on in the DEIR. The recommendations for implementation of appropriate mitigation measures (post-mitigation) will reduce the level of risk to these high and medium risk avifaunal species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The temporary roosts on the Eskom Distribution power line, particularly sections of both the Lalisa/Stormberg and the Dorper/Stormberg power lines were monitored specifically during the second year of pre-construction avifaunal monitoring. The findings from the 24 months of Avifaunal pre-construction monitoring will be presented in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment report during the EIA Phase. • It is worth noting that the 24 months of pre-construction Avifaunal monitoring data recorded on site during 2020 – 2022 is likely to be the most recent ground-truthed data available for this area. However, if VulPro could share relevant tracking data from this area with the specialist to consider during the EIA Phase that would be appreciated. • The cumulative impact of wind farms on Cape Vulture will be considered in the EIA Phase and appropriate mitigation measures will be provided in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report which will be included in the DEIR.

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		<p>Persons to register are Kerri Wolter (0828085113) CEO VulPro - kerri@vulpro.co.za</p> <p>Kate Webster (0827025942) VulPro representative E Cape - kate@lcom.co.za</p> <p>Thank you</p>	<p>Project Applicant: The S&EIA Process remains underway and is being conducted in adherence to the requirements of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) and in accordance with associated and applicable Environmental Assessment Protocols (i.e., GN 320 and GN 1150) as well as relevant Best Practice Guidelines. The Scoping Phase has been undertaken to identify and publish knowledge of key issues and sensitivities related to the project site and proposed development thereon. Scoping is now complete, and the project infrastructure layout, taking into consideration mapped “no-go” areas and required buffers is being revised and refined based on sensitivities identified and assessed during the Scoping Phase. From an avifaunal perspective, there are sensitive species which have been identified. It is however too early in the process to confirm the anticipated extent of losses (as alluded to in the comment); however, the anticipated impacts will be assessed in detail in the EIA Phase and VulPro will be afforded an opportunity to comment on those reports during the EIA Phase.</p>
2.	17/02/2023 (16:34) Email, VulPro (Kate Webster, Kerry Wolter)	<p>To the CSIR team</p> <p>I would like to make two comments on the Draft Scoping report that was forwarded to me (after the closing date).</p> <p>I would like to enquire as to why VulPro was not consulted or approached as vulture specialists as well.</p>	<p>CSIR: VulPro has been successfully registered as an I&AP on this project and late comment has been accepted. The email addresses provided will be used for future correspondence. Refer to Appendix C of the FSR for a copy of the I&AP database.</p> <p>Note that the Public Participation Process as part of this S&EIA Process is being undertaken in compliance with Chapter 6 – Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended i.e., GN R326). As noted in Chapter 4</p>

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		<p>I have briefly looked through the avian report (considering my limited time) and would like state the following.</p> <p>I have extracted from the Avian Scoping section as follows;</p> <p>1. "The focal sites include three Verreux's Eagle nests, thirteen dams important for waterfowl counts, one Secretarybird nest and eight Cape Vulture roosts. Breeding has taken place at all three of the Verreux's Eagle nests in the 2020 breeding season and appeared to be in progress for the 2021 breeding season. The Secretarybird nest appeared to be inactive. The eight Cape Vulture roost sites were either known or suspected approximately 50 km from the proposed project site boundary. Three of the eight roosts were confirmed to be active with the most important of these roosts being the Donkerhoekberg and Waaikraalberg roosts, both located 27 km from the proposed project site. These roosts appeared to be occupied roughly between October and April annually with very few birds, if any, using these roosts in the winter months. A total of 121 and 56 vultures were recorded at Donkerhoekberg and Waaikraal, respectively "</p> <p>My first red flag. How can this immediately not be of concern. Was any effort made to observe the temporary roosts that the Cape vulture uses on the Lalisa/Stormberg distribution line? I know for a fact they use these structures as a roost. We also have tracking data that indicates the Cape vultures use this area.</p>	<p>of the FSR, the Department of Environmental Affairs (2017), Public Participation Guideline in terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations is also being considered during this S&EIA Process.</p> <p>Also, note that BirdLife South Africa (i.e., the primary commenting authority with respect to Avifauna) has been included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of this S&EIA Process. Notification of the availability of the DSR for comment (circulated on 14 January 2023) was shared by BirdLife South Africa with VulPro on 16 February 2023.</p> <p>It should be further noted that this WEF project is proposed and being assessed separately and on its own merits in adherence to the requirements of current and applicable environmental legislation, regulations and guidelines, where relevant.</p> <p>The DSR and FSR have provided motivation for the promotion of renewable energy development as a positive contribution towards mitigating climate change as opposed to the impact of coal mining (refer to Chapter 1, 3 and 5 of the FSR). Note that coal mining is not the subject of this S&EIA Process.</p> <p>Specialist: The following should be noted in response to the comments received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The avifaunal species risk assessment provided at the Scoping Phase is <u>pre-mitigation</u>. The detailed Avifauna Impact Assessment based on a revised and

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		<p>I furthermore have enough data and evidence of injured Cape vultures that I have collected from this area over a period of time.</p> <p>2. " More specifically, two species were classified as high risk and seven species were classified as medium risk (Table 3.2). "</p> <p>.</p> <p>How on earth can any development be considered when there are NINE avian species already listed as high to medium risk in this area???? Mind boggling.</p> <p>3. " A total of 32 species were recorded on the site as Incidental Observations. The most abundant species (by a significant margin) recorded by this method was Blue Crane, with 84 records of 1 296 birds. Cape Vulture, Grey-winged Francolin and Blue Korhaan were also abundant. Nine of the species recorded by this method are regionally Red Listed and include five Endangered species including Cape Vulture, Grey Crowned Crane, Black Harrier, Ludwig's Bustard, and Martial Eagle; three Vulnerable species including Verreaux's Eagle, Lanner Falcon and Secretarybird; and one Near-threatened species including the Blue Crane."</p> <p>So even if the Cape Vulture and the francolin/korhaan are abundant on incidental observations.....this should also ring alarm bells.</p> <p>We are fully aware of the number of Cape vulture collisions with wind turbines (some hidden data of course) that are taking place in the Eastern Cape.</p>	<p>refined project infrastructure layout of the proposed WEF will be undertaken during the EIA Phase and be reported on in the DEIR. The recommendations for implementation of appropriate mitigation measures (post-mitigation) will reduce the level of risk to these high and medium risk avifaunal species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The temporary roosts on the Eskom Distribution power line, particularly sections of both the Lalisa/Stormberg and the Dorper/Stormberg power lines were monitored specifically during the second year of pre-construction avifaunal monitoring. The findings from the 24 months of Avifaunal pre-construction monitoring will be presented in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment report during the EIA Phase. • It is worth noting that the 24 months of pre-construction Avifaunal monitoring data recorded on site during 2020 – 2022 is likely to be the most recent ground-truthed data available for this area. However, if VulPro could share relevant tracking data from this area with the specialist to consider during the EIA Phase that would be appreciated. • The cumulative impact of wind farms on Cape Vulture will be considered in the EIA Phase and appropriate mitigation measures will be provided in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report which will be included in the DEIR.

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		<p>Considering the Cape Vulture is an endemic species and the ONLY remaining vulture species in this province, I still cannot understand this dogmatic approach to development.</p> <p>It must be remembered that the Cape Vulture favours the escarpments of which the Stormberg range is one. The Cookhouse Redz zone and subsequent WF developments that have taken place there have already 'intruded' into the Cape Vulture zone and resultant losses are taking place (and NO mitigation will prevent this!).. Why would this development be allowed to proceed. Please note the nearby Dorper WF has also killed Cape Vultures!</p> <p>Added to this there is a constant threat of coal mining hanging over this region presently and our president did state we would not be able to move away from coal.</p> <p>I think that this area is doomed to become destroyed if all these developments take place.</p> <p>Please can the following be registered as I&AP immediately.</p> <p>Kerri Wolter (VulPro CEO) kerri@vulpro.com Kate Webster (VulPro rep E Cape) kate@lcom.co.za</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that the specialist is investigating the possibility to use bird fatality data recorded from the nearby existing Dorper Wind Farm. Should this data become available during the EIA Phase, the findings will be considered in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report. <p>Project Applicant: The S&EIA Process remains underway and is being conducted in adherence to the requirements of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) and in accordance with associated and applicable Environmental Assessment Protocols (i.e., GN 320 and GN 1150) as well as relevant Best Practice Guidelines. The Scoping Phase have been undertaken to identify and publish knowledge of key issues and sensitivities related to the project site and proposed development thereon. Scoping is now complete, and the project infrastructure layout, taking into consideration mapped “no-go” areas and required buffers has been revised and refined based on sensitivities identified and assessed during the Scoping Phase. From an avifaunal perspective, there are sensitive species which have been identified. It is however too early in the process to confirm the anticipated extent of losses (as alluded to in the comment); however, the anticipated impacts will be assessed in detail in the EIA Phase and VulPro will be afforded an opportunity to comment on those reports during the EIA Phase.</p>

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3.	17/02/2023 (16:51) Email, VulPro (Kate Webster, Kerry Wolter)	<p>I would like to know why was VulPro not considered and consulted and asked for comments as vulture specialists in this potential development?</p> <p>Considering the time frame for comments is limited and I have had a brief look at the scoping report (I was only forwarded this information AFTER the closing date!)</p> <p>I have the following comments to make;</p> <p>Considering there are already NINE avian species that fall into the high to medium risk category, I consider it ludicrous to consider even progressing on development.</p> <p>I notice too they refer to the roosts of the Cape Vultures but was the temporary roost of these birds on the Lalisa/Stormberg Eskom distribution line taken into consideration?</p> <p>I also know we have tracking data of the Cape vultures using this area quite extensively which the incidental report also confirms. I also have enough evidence of Cape vultures from the number of injured birds I have collected from this area.</p> <p>The Cape vulture favours the escarpments and the Stormberg range is one of them. We know from experience and evidence (albeit some of it still not readily available) that the Cookhouse Redz zone of which there are numerous WFS are already having a huge negative impact on Cape vultures. No amount of mitigation is going to change this in the Stormberg range!!</p>	<p>CSIR: VulPro has been successfully registered as an I&AP on this project and late comment has been accepted. The email addresses provided will be used for future correspondence. Refer to Appendix C of the FSR for a copy of the I&AP database.</p> <p>Note that the Public Participation Process as part of this S&EIA Process is being undertaken in compliance with Chapter 6 – Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended i.e., GN R326). As noted in Chapter 4 of the FSR, the Department of Environmental Affairs (2017), Public Participation Guideline in terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations is also being considered during this S&EIA Process.</p> <p>Also, note that BirdLife South Africa (i.e., the primary commenting authority with respect to Avifauna) has been included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of this S&EIA Process. Notification of the availability of the DSR for comment (circulated on 14 January 2023) was shared by BirdLife South Africa with VulPro on 16 February 2023.</p> <p>It should be further noted that this WEF project is proposed and being assessed separately and on its own merits in adherence to the requirements of current and applicable environmental legislation, regulations and guidelines, where relevant.</p> <p>The DSR and FSR have provided motivation for the promotion of renewable energy development as a positive contribution</p>

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		<p>This area is under tremendous pressure from the threat of coal mining as well (remember our president did state we would not get away from coal mining) so development like this will just add to the destruction of the area ultimately.</p> <p>It must also be noted that the nearby Dorper WF has already had Cape Vulture and Verreaux's</p>	<p>towards mitigating climate change as opposed to the impact of coal mining (refer to Chapter 1, 3 and 5 of the FSR). Note that coal mining is not the subject of this S&EIA Process.</p> <p>Specialist: The following should be noted in response to the comments received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The avifaunal species risk assessment provided at the Scoping Phase is <u>pre-mitigation</u>. The detailed Avifauna Impact Assessment based on a revised and refined project infrastructure layout of the proposed WEF will be undertaken during the EIA Phase and be reported on in the DEIR. The recommendations for implementation of appropriate mitigation measures (post-mitigation) will reduce the level of risk to these high and medium risk avifaunal species. • The temporary roosts on the Eskom Distribution power line, particularly sections of both the Lalisa/Stormberg and the Dorper/Stormberg power lines were monitored specifically during the second year of pre-construction avifaunal monitoring. The findings from the 24 months of Avifaunal pre-construction monitoring will be presented in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment report during the EIA Phase. • It is worth noting that the 24 months of pre-construction Avifaunal monitoring data recorded on site during 2020 – 2022 is likely to be the most recent ground-truthed data available for this area. However,

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			<p>if VulPro could share relevant tracking data from this area with the specialist to consider during the EIA Phase that would be appreciated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cumulative impact of wind farms on Cape Vulture will be considered in the EIA Phase and appropriate mitigation measures will be provided in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report which will be included in the DEIR. • Note that the specialist is investigating the possibility to use bird fatality data recorded from the nearby existing Dorper Wind Farm. Should this data become available during the EIA Phase, the findings will be considered in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report. <p>Project Applicant: The S&EIA Process remains underway and is being conducted in adherence to the requirements of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) and in accordance with associated and applicable Environmental Assessment Protocols (i.e., GN 320 and GN 1150) as well as relevant Best Practice Guidelines. The Scoping Phase have been undertaken to identify and publish knowledge of key issues and sensitivities related to the project site and proposed development thereon. Scoping is now complete, and the project infrastructure layout, taking into consideration mapped “no-go” areas and required buffers has been revised and refined based on sensitivities identified and assessed during the Scoping Phase. From an avifaunal perspective, there</p>

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			are sensitive species which have been identified. It is however too early in the process to confirm the anticipated extent of losses (as alluded to in the comment); however, the anticipated impacts will be assessed in detail in the EIA Phase and VulPro will be afforded an opportunity to comment on those reports during the EIA Phase.
4.	17/02/2023 (18:36) Email, VulPro (Kate Webster, Kerry Wolter)	<p>I would like to make a couple of comments on the scoping report of the above potential WEF development.</p> <p>Firstly I find it very sad and shocking that VulPro (a leading vulture NGO in SA) were never consulted during this scoping report?</p> <p>I find it also shocking that Vulpro was to find out about this scoping report via other channels.</p> <p>This too is one of the reasons why comments can only be submitted after the closing date as I only received this late.</p> <p>To hopefully be considered for the comments, I have briefly scanned through the avian scoping report and would like to state the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how on earth can a WF development can even be considered when there are NINE avian species that already fall into the high to medium category? - with regard to the Cape Vulture (CV) roosts was the temporary roosts on the Lalisa/Stormberg Eskom line also taken into consideration ? 	<p>CSIR: VulPro has been successfully registered as an I&AP on this project and late comment has been accepted. The email addresses provided will be used for future correspondence. Refer to Appendix C of the FSR for a copy of the I&AP database.</p> <p>Note that the Public Participation Process as part of this S&EIA Process is being undertaken in compliance with Chapter 6 – Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended i.e., GN R326). As noted in Chapter 4 of the FSR, the Department of Environmental Affairs (2017), Public Participation Guideline in terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations is also being considered during this S&EIA Process.</p> <p>Also, note that BirdLife South Africa (i.e., the primary commenting authority with respect to Avifauna) has been included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of this S&EIA Process. Notification of the availability of the DSR for comment (circulated on 14 January 2023) was shared by BirdLife South Africa with VulPro on 16 February 2023.</p> <p>It should be further noted that this WEF project is proposed and being assessed separately and on its own merits in</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we have enough tracking data to support that this is a zone the CV uses - the incidental sightings also confirm strong presence of the CV in the area - I also have enough data with regards to injured birds that I have collected in that area - CVs like to use escarpments and sadly the Stormberg range is one of their strongholds in this case - CVs are endemic to SA but also the last of the vultures found in the E Cape - surely the evidence of what has happened (or is not enough data being supplied??) at the Cookhouse Redz to the CV species and wind turbines, should be a red flag - this we can support by some of our tracked birds being killed on turbines there - the Dorper WF within that area is also listed as having killed both CV and Verreaux's Eagles - not only does it look like CV will be affected but a number of the apex raptors which is alarming <p>My mind boggles at the dogged approach to WF development regardless of the huge negative impact it will have on the area not only on the avian species alone.</p> <p>This area is also under tremendous pressure for coal development (albeit not viable) and we know when it comes to all development it depends on who is going to give the thumbs up with the environment playing second fiddle. This pressure is real and the issue around 'creating employment' etc is often a</p>	<p>adherence to the requirements of current and applicable environmental legislation, regulations and guidelines, where relevant.</p> <p>In addition, note that the scoping-level Socio-Economic Assessment identifies Capital Investment (CapEX) and the contribution to the national, regional and local economy as a potential impact during the construction phase; and Operational investment (OpEx) contributing to the national, regional, and local economy as a potential impact during the operational phase. The management actions for such [positive] impacts will be included in the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr), as relevant, during the EIA Phase. These measures will deal with enhancing the investment in the local economy. Once approved, the EMPr becomes legally binding, therefore the Applicant will place a significant emphasis on ensuring compliance with the management measures included.</p> <p>Specialist: The following should be noted in response to the comments received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The avifaunal species risk assessment provided at the Scoping Phase is <u>pre-mitigation</u>. The detailed Avifauna Impact Assessment based on a revised and refined project infrastructure layout of the proposed WEF will be undertaken during the EIA Phase and be reported on in the DEIR. The recommendations for implementation of appropriate mitigation measures

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		<p>card used to push development. Dorper WF created very little employment. This does not go down well with the volatile Molteno community.</p> <p>I request that the following persons be listed as I&AP immediately Kerri Wolter (CEO VulPro) kerri@vulpro.com Kate Webster (Rep VulPro EC) kate@lcom.co.za</p>	<p>(post-mitigation) will reduce the level of risk to these high and medium risk avifaunal species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The temporary roosts on the Eskom Distribution power line, particularly sections of both the Lalisa/Stormberg and the Dorper/Stormberg power lines were monitored specifically during the second year of pre-construction avifaunal monitoring. The findings from the 24 months of Avifaunal pre-construction monitoring will be presented in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment report during the EIA Phase. • It is worth noting that the 24 months of pre-construction Avifaunal monitoring data recorded on site during 2020 – 2022 is likely to be the most recent ground-truthed data available for this area. However, if VulPro could share relevant tracking data from this area with the specialist to consider during the EIA Phase that would be appreciated. • The cumulative impact of wind farms on Cape Vulture will be considered in the EIA Phase and appropriate mitigation measures will be provided in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report which will be included in the DEIR. • Note that the specialist is investigating the possibility to use bird fatality data recorded from the nearby existing Dorper Wind Farm. Should this data become available during the EIA Phase, the findings will be

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			<p>considered in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report.</p> <p>Project Applicant: The S&EIA Process remains underway and is being conducted in adherence to the requirements of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) and in accordance with associated and applicable Environmental Assessment Protocols (i.e., GN 320 and GN 1150) as well as relevant Best Practice Guidelines. The Scoping Phase have been undertaken to identify and publish knowledge of key issues and sensitivities related to the project site and proposed development thereon. Scoping is now complete, and the project infrastructure layout, taking into consideration mapped “no-go” areas and required buffers has been revised and refined based on sensitivities identified and assessed during the Scoping Phase. From an avifaunal perspective, there are sensitive species which have been identified. It is however too early in the process to confirm the anticipated extent of losses (as alluded to in the comment); however, the anticipated impacts will be assessed in detail in the EIA Phase and VulPro will be afforded an opportunity to comment on those reports during the EIA Phase.</p>
5.	17/02/2023 (20:06) Email, VulPro (Kate Webster, Kerry Wolter)	<p>I would like to make a few comments with regards to this draft scoping report.</p> <p>As you can well see, I was only informed of this very late yesterday and of course submission date for comments was past.</p>	<p>CSIR: VulPro has been registered as an I&AP on this project and late comment has been accepted. The email addresses provided will be used for future correspondence. Refer to Appendix C of the FSR for a copy of the I&AP database.</p> <p>Note that the Public Participation Process as part of this S&EIA Process is being undertaken in compliance with Chapter 6 –</p>

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		<p>However, I appeal that you consider my comments as I feel this is important for the sake of a healthy environment.</p> <p>Firstly why was VulPro as vulture specialists never consulted in this process?</p> <p>I have briefly scanned the report due to lack of time and would like to make the following comments;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clearly by looking at the avian report there are HUGE red flags of which one is the presence of the Cape vultures (CV) as of the NINE avian species listed as high to medium risk - CV score 16 out of 16!!!! Immediately this should be a clear indicator of how fragile and environment one is invading!!!! - the issue around vulture roosts....was the temporary roost ever considered on the Lalisa/Stormberg Eskom line? The birds use this regularly to roost on at night time??? - there is enough tracking data (which was never requested from VulPro) on birds and their movements through the area - the comment that in incidentals CVs are regularly seen, indicates their presence as well - I have more than enough evidence of CVs that utilize this area with injured vultures that I have collected from the area 	<p>Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended i.e., GN R326). As noted in Chapter 4 of the FSR, the Department of Environmental Affairs (2017), Public Participation Guideline in terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations is also being considered during this S&EIA Process.</p> <p>Also, note that BirdLife South Africa (i.e., the primary commenting authority with respect to Avifauna) has been included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of this S&EIA Process. Notification of the availability of the DSR for comment (circulated on 14 January 2023) was shared by BirdLife South Africa with VulPro on 16 February 2023.</p> <p>It should be further noted that this WEF project is proposed and being assessed separately and on its own merits in adherence to the requirements of current and applicable environmental legislation, regulations and guidelines, where relevant. Also, the issue raised regarding the impact of renewable energy projects operating in the Cookhouse REDZ and the subsequent impact it would have on the wind industry in general (as alluded to in the comment) is noted but considered to be beyond the scoping of this S&EIA Process.</p> <p>The DSR and FSR have provided motivation for the promotion of renewable energy development as a positive contribution towards mitigating climate change as opposed to the impact of coal mining (refer to Chapter 1, 3 and 5 of the FSR). Note that coal mining is not the subject of this S&EIA Process.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - given that the Stormberg is an escarpment which is favoured by CVs this should be considered a no go area as the Cookhouse Redz zone is already having a hugely negative impact on CVs in this - province (and a lot of this is not being made public due to the negative impact it would have on the wind industry) - we are fully aware of these fatalities (which are so often hidden) due to the fact that we have lost tracked birds on turbines in this area - the nearby Dorper WF has also recorded fatalities on both CVs and Verreaux's Eagles. This alone should be ringing alarm bells. - the listed avian species include the apex raptors which are vital for a healthy eco system to function however, it seems as if it is 'ok' if they are present but mitigation will help - mitigation to me is a re-active process and if the approach BEFORE development is with mitigation we can limit the risks.....that is a very unhealthy approach and attitude - apex raptors and vultures do not breed prolifically and every single species lost takes years to replace - CVs are the only endemic vulture left in the Eastern Cape and they are undergoing a huge amount of pressure with the wind industry invading their spaces - furthermore this area is presently under huge pressure with potential coal mining (albeit not viable) with the 	<p>In addition, note that the scoping-level Socio-Economic Assessment identifies Capital Investment (CapEX) and the contribution to the national, regional and local economy as a potential impact during the construction phase; and Operational investment (OpEx) contributing to the national, regional, and local economy as a potential impact during the operational phase. The management actions for such [positive] impacts will be included in the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr), as relevant, during the EIA Phase. These measures will deal with enhancing the investment in the local economy, specifically within the nearby Molteno community. Once approved, the EMPr becomes legally binding, therefore the Applicant will place a significant emphasis on ensuring compliance with the management measures included. Again, this WEF project is proposed and being assessed separately and on its own merits in adherence to the requirements of current and applicable environmental legislation, regulations and guidelines, where relevant, and comparisons drawn to the successes and/or failures of other renewable energy developments are considered pre-mature.</p> <p>Specialist: The following should be noted in response to the comments received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The avifaunal species risk assessment provided at the Scoping Phase is <u>pre-mitigation</u>. The detailed Avifauna Impact Assessment based on a revised and refined project infrastructure layout of the proposed WEF will be undertaken during the EIA Phase and be

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		<p>right consultants, specialists who will tick the right boxes, destined to destroy the environment going forward. (I have seen documentation in this regard)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - added to this one has a very volatile Molteno community which despite huge promises made wrt Dorper WF and employment, very little if in fact no employment was created as so many of these developments promise (always the ill-informed used as the cannon fodder!). Drive through the town and on the adjacent roads and the decay of the rural area is so evident despite a WF on their doorstep. What will make this one any different. <p>I am so saddened to see how an area which shows so many red flags overall, can consider proceeding with the process.</p> <p>Can the following persons be registered as I&APs Kerri Wolter (CEO VulPro) kerri@vulpro.com Kate Webster (Rep VulPro EC) kate@lcom.co.za</p>	<p>reported on in the DEIR. The recommendations for implementation of appropriate mitigation measures (post-mitigation) will reduce the level of risk to these high and medium risk avifaunal species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The temporary roosts on the Eskom Distribution power line, particularly sections of both the Lalisa/Stormberg and the Dorper/Stormberg power lines were monitored specifically during the second year of pre-construction avifaunal monitoring. The findings from the 24 months of Avifaunal pre-construction monitoring will be presented in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment report during the EIA Phase. • It is worth noting that the 24 months of pre-construction Avifaunal monitoring data recorded on site during 2020 – 2022 is likely to be the most recent ground-truthed data available for this area. However, if VulPro could share relevant tracking data from this area with the specialist to consider during the EIA Phase that would be appreciated. • The cumulative impact of wind farms on Cape Vulture will be considered in the EIA Phase and appropriate mitigation measures will be provided in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report which will be included in the DEIR. • Note that the specialist is investigating the possibility to use bird fatality data recorded from the nearby existing Dorper Wind Farm. Should this data become

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			<p>available during the EIA Phase, the findings will be considered in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report.</p> <p>Project Applicant: The S&EIA Process remains underway and is being conducted in adherence to the requirements of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) and in accordance with associated and applicable Environmental Assessment Protocols (i.e., GN 320 and GN 1150) as well as relevant Best Practice Guidelines. The Scoping Phase have been undertaken to identify and publish knowledge of key issues and sensitivities related to the project site and proposed development thereon. Scoping is now complete, and the project infrastructure layout, taking into consideration mapped “no-go” areas and required buffers has been revised and refined based on sensitivities identified and assessed during the Scoping Phase. From an avifaunal perspective, there are sensitive species which have been identified. It is however too early in the process to confirm the anticipated extent of losses (as alluded to in the comment); however, the anticipated impacts will be assessed in detail in the EIA Phase and VulPro will be afforded an opportunity to comment on those reports during the EIA Phase.</p>

1.9. AVDS ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

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1.	17/02/2023 Email, AVDS Environmental Consultants (Andre van der Spuy)	<p>Below notice refers.</p> <p>Please note that AVDS Environmental Consultants have just become aware of this EIA process and proposed wind farm development today. We are busy accessing the project documentation for purposes of reviewing it and deliver our very brief preliminary and hastily prepared comment below at this time being the earliest possible opportunity. We trust that you will grant us this leniency and especially since we have just endured a 2.5 hour electrical outage which only ended at 4.30pm now. Please register us as an I&AP. We are surprised and concerned that Vulpro was not contacted for input and accordingly it would appear that the public participation process which requires that all potential I&APs be notified is fundamentally deficient. Especially so given the significant presence of Cape Vultures and other bird species which are extremely prone to destruction from WEFs and where mitigation has proven impossible (save location choice or “no go” option).</p> <p>We are advised by Vulpro that the area is entirely unsuitable for wind farm development on account of its avian character, principally Cape Vultures. Based on our knowledge and the hard evidence of the disastrous wind farm – vulture situation (for vultures) in the Cookhouse REDZ we can confidently say that the proposed ABO Ingwe wind farm development is fatally flawed. The evidence derived from the Cookhouse REDZ situation shows that the only effective impact mitigation in terms of vultures is</p>	<p>CSIR: The comments received have been recorded herein and responded to accordingly. Refer to the responses provided below.</p> <p><u>I&AP Registration, comment submission and VulPro consultation:</u></p> <p>The request to be registered on the project database is noted. This I&AP has been included on the I&AP database. The email address from which this comment was received will be used for future correspondence.</p> <p>The comments received from VulPro have been included and addressed in Section 7 of this CRR. In addition, two officials from VulPro have been included on the I&AP database and will receive future correspondence relevant to this project. Refer to Appendix C of the FSR for a copy of the I&AP database. Refer to the response provided to the comments raised by VulPro in Section 7 of this CRR.</p> <p><u>Note</u> that the Public Participation Process as part of this S&EIA Process is being undertaken in compliance with Chapter 6 Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended i.e., GN R326). As noted in Chapter 4 of the FSR, the Department of Environmental Affairs (2017), Public Participation Guideline in terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations is also being considered during this S&EIA Process.</p>

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		<p>the “no go” option (or , put otherwise, different , more suitable location away from vulture habitat). We are advised that Jon Smallie is the avian consultant on the ABO Ingwe wind farm and we are therefore not surprised that he fails to condemn the ABO Ingwe wind farm outright, as he is obliged to do based upon the existing information which is sufficiently informative. We say this since he and his company is responsible for the unacceptable vulture mortalities that are being manifest at the BioTherm energy Golden Valley WEF in the Cookhouse REDZ where he failed to condemn the project despite being directly advised by us (and others) of the significant presence and threat to vultures by that WEF. Based upon his track record as an avifaunal specialist who is directly accountable for knowingly endorsing (roundly acknowledged) predicted and unsustainable avifaunal impacts we have no hesitation is suggesting that he is unqualified to act as an avifaunal specialist and his advice and findings deserve to be discarded completely.</p> <p>Such statements as this below taken from the avifaunal report (Ingwe 2) strongly indicate that the location is unsuitable from a bird impact perspective and are sufficient to strongly direct that the WEF is fatally flawed (irrespective of the required “risk averse and cautious approach aside” prescribed under NEMA): “» The impact of bird collision with turbines is likely to be of High negative significance and must be effectively mitigated if the proposed projects are to proceed. Given the uncertainty around the effectiveness of the mitigation measures recommended, the significance is likely to remain at High post mitigation.</p>	<p>No-Go Alternative:</p> <p>As stated in Section 5.1.1 of Chapter 5 of the FSR, the no-go alternative assumes that the proposed WEF project will not go ahead i.e., it is the option of not constructing the proposed WEF. The no-go alternative would result in no additional environmental impacts on the site or surrounding local area as a result of the proposed WEF. However, as stated in Section 5.1.1 of Chapter 5 of the FSR, the no-go alternative will also have the following implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No benefits will be derived from the implementation of an additional land-use to agriculture in the area (i.e., Electricity generation from a wind resource); • No additional power will be generated or supplied through means of renewable energy resources by this project at this location; • The no-go alternative will not contribute to and assist the government in achieving its stated target of 17 742 MW total installed (i.e., including installed capacity; committed/already contracted capacity and new additional capacity) for Wind energy capacity by 2030 (Integrated Resource Plan-IRP, 2019); • Electricity generation on the proposed development site will remain at zero and as a result the local economy will not be diversified, while existing electricity generation sources nationally will further age and degrade over time, with maintenance requirements leading to outages;

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		<p>» Bird electrocution and collision on overhead power lines have the potential to be of High negative significance pre mitigation, particularly if the above ground power line is not designed bird friendly (for electrocution) or installed with line marking devices (for collision). These impacts can be mitigated to Low significance”.</p> <p>Implemented mitigation for the vulture impacts has failed in practice and the specialist should have acknowledged this more assertively and, most importantly, applied it to his findings by advising that the site is unsuitable and that the proposed development is fatally flawed . He did not do so and thus his findings and approach are irrational and incorrect. That said he must be credited for stating correctly yet weakly that the “No go” option is the PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE by a significant margin, per “The No-Go alternative therefore has much lower impacts on avifauna than the proposed projects, and would be preferred from an avifaunal perspective.”</p> <p>At the very least the second year of bird monitoring should be completed first before the Scoping Report is finalized as the findings of the former are critically important and informative to the scope of the Scoping Report. The presented findings from the first year of monitoring are (or should correctly be) damning to the proposed Ingwe WEFs.</p> <p>The apparent failure of the avifaunal report to consider (preliminary) cumulative impacts on all bird species and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be lost opportunity for skills transfer and education/training of local communities; • The positive socio-economic impacts likely to result from the project such as increased local spending and the creation of local employment opportunities will not be realized; • There will be no opportunity for additional employment in an area, where job creation is identified as a key priority; • Loss of economic benefit to participating landowners due to the revenue that will be gained from leasing the land to the Applicant; • The local economic benefits associated with the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP), or any other renewable energy generation program in which the project participates, will not be realized, and socio-economic contribution payments into the local community and associated trust will not be realized; • The development of WEFs instead of coal fired power stations can directly contribute to South Africa’s response to climate mitigation; and • Wind and solar energy are the cheapest source of electricity in South Africa. The development of the proposed WEF can contribute to the competitive nature of the REIPPPP to drive prices down even further to ensure that South Africans have access to affordable yet clean electricity.

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		<p>thereafter individual target species (e.g Cape Vulture) is telling and significant omission.</p> <p>The pre-screening tools indicate a plethora of high and very high negative impacts associated with the site. Very clearly the chosen site is unsuitable for WEF development.</p> <p>From the Executive Summaries the following statement is gleaned:</p> <p>“The effect of potential on-site impacts can be limited or reduced to acceptable levels through avoidance, minimisation and the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures and management actions during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of this proposed development. Therefore, based on the available high-level specialist input assessed and provided during the Scoping Phase, potential negative impacts associated with the proposed ABO Wind Ingwe WEF 1 project and the preliminary project infrastructure layout are anticipated to be generally of Moderate to Very Low significance after mitigation, whilst some positive socio-economic impacts of moderate significance are expected.”</p> <p>Above statement is non-complaint with NEMA as it fails to acknowledge the obligatory EQUAL consideration and assessment of the “no go” option. Furthermore, the preliminary information confidently indicates that the WEF site(s) are unsuitable and that unsustainable and unacceptable negative impacts will be delivered and which is contrary to the principles of sustainable development espoused under NEMA. All</p>	<p>The specialists will also consider and provide a statement on the no-go alternative during the EIA Phase. Therefore, additional information will be provided during the EIA Phase on the implications of not developing the proposed project, and this, along with many other factors, will be considered by the EAP in the overall reasoned opinion as to whether the proposed activity should or should not be authorised.</p> <p><u>Specialist Independence and Expertise:</u></p> <p>The comments regarding the operational WEF in the Cookhouse REDZ are acknowledged; however, this Ingwe WEF project is proposed on land well outside of the Cookhouse REDZ, being located at a distance of approximately 200 km north-north-east of said REDZ. Fatality data from operational WEFs anywhere within the range of the relevant species is relevant in allowing the specialist to judge the species’ general susceptibility to fatalities. Also, it should be noted that this Ingwe WEF project is proposed and being assessed separately and on its own merits in adherence to the requirements of current and applicable environmental legislation, regulations and guidelines, where relevant. The avifauna specialist appointed for the Ingwe WEF projects is considered to be suitably qualified and very experienced in the field and has the necessary and relevant expertise to compile the specialist report and undertake the required pre-construction monitoring. The specialist also complies with the professional registration requirements of the Assessment Protocols for</p>

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		<p>considered rationally and objectively, the indications are that the EAP is biased and is favoured towards the interests of the proponents and is even prepared to accommodate further consideration of Ingwe WEFs 1 and 2 despite the obvious significant negative impacts that can be confidently predicted to occur. The EAP is setting the grounds (in fact they have been set already) for a biased and subjective EIA that will , and does, favour the developer's interests. This is a fundamental violation of the NEMA.</p> <p>Furthermore, the EIA is required to consider ALL potential impacts not just "on-site impacts". Importantly this extends to the extends to the impact that wind farms in SA are having on the precious Cape Vulture and our rural landscapes which are a key national asset which produces sustainable and permanent flows of foreign tourist income and associated employment far in excess of that (exaggerated) of the fickle and flawed euphemistically-termed "green economy".</p> <p>Attached article is presented to you for consideration of the consequences of the typically exaggerated socio-economic impacts to which local communities are subjected to by biased EAPs and consultants and the DFFE. We take note of your introduction leading same exaggerations already at this early stage of the EIA (even actually scoping) process , per "some positive socio-economic impacts of moderate significance are expected". You fail to mention that it is required in law that the EIA consider all (+ and -) potential associated impacts but that without exception the associated impacts with any proposed</p>	<p>Birds in relation to Wind Energy Developments. Furthermore, this is substantiated by the signed declaration of interest, which is appended to the Scoping Level Assessment in Appendix F.3 of the FSR, which declares that the specialist is independent; will perform the assessment in an objective manner, even if this results in views and findings that are not favourable to the Applicant; and that there are no circumstances that may compromise the specialist's objectivity in performing the required assessment. Furthermore, the findings in Appendix F.3 of the FSR are only that of the Scoping Phase, and a more detailed impact assessment will be undertaken for avifauna in the EIA Phase.</p> <p><u>Status of Specialist Assessments and Fatal Flaw Consideration:</u></p> <p>It must be noted that the Scoping Level Specialist Assessments and Inputs (Appendix F of the FSR) are intended for the Scoping Phase only, and to capture high-level assessments and to identify if there are any fatal flaws, as well as to capture the findings of the Site Sensitivity Verifications of the proposed project site and a preliminary project infrastructure layout in line with the Environmental Assessment Protocols of GN 320 and GN 1150 (as applicable). However, the specialist studies to be undertaken by the independent specialists during the EIA Phase will comply with Appendix 6 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) and/or the Environmental Assessment Protocols published in March 2020 (GN 320) and October 2020 (GN 1150), where relevant. The specialist team will be provided with a refined project infrastructure layout</p>

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		<p>wind farm are 90 - 98% negative ones with the balance being “neutral” or “positive” (without exception exaggerated, H+) ones. The standard approach, as you will know as a proponent of same, is to manipulate the EIA so as to override this critically important fact through motivating the proclaimed “need and desire” of the proposed WEF as the most important factor – a factor which is typically gladly accepted by the politically dictated DFFE in its decision-making deliberations. The evidence of your embracement of this approach is clear to see at this early stage of even the scoping phase.</p> <p>The speculative and unsubstantiated claim of the EAP that “Moderate to Very Low significance after mitigation” is contrary to the preliminary and existing evidence (such as the pre-screening tool results) and is merely an example of the biased EAP “leading” the EIA findings from the very outset. In fact the evidence of a (potential) fatal flaw on the basis of bird impacts alone is clearly evident to the reasonable and objective person who is unswayed by interests outside of NEMA and who is respectful of a genuine concern for the protection of the SA public’s natural heritage and which is an issue that is given direct empowerment under the country’s constitution (and which the EAP is duty bound to respect, but has not done so in this instance).</p> <p>It is our respectful advice to the EAP that the proponent be honestly and correctly advised of the unsustainable nature of the Ingwe WEF 1 and 2 and the correct advice to abandon the</p>	<p>based on the outcomes of the scoping level assessments, and the full specialist impact assessments of this refined project-specific layout will therefore be provided in the EIA Phase, which will include detailed cumulative impact assessments. The alternatives, including the no-go option, will also be comparatively assessed in detail in the EIA Phase. Therefore, it is premature to categorically recommend that the proposed development should not take place and that it is fatally flawed, and that the findings of the avifauna specialist should be disregarded. Based on the high-level impact assessment and sensitivities identified during the Scoping Phase, there are no fatal flaws preventing the project from further assessment during the EIA Phase.</p> <p>At the end of the EIA Phase, as stipulated in the NEMA EIA Regulations, the EAP has to "provide a reasoned opinion as to whether the proposed activity should or should not be authorised, and if the opinion is that it should be authorised, any conditions that should be made in respect of that authorisation".</p> <p>In addition, at the end of the EIA Phase, as per the requirements of the NEMA EIA Regulations, the specialists have to provide "a reasoned opinion (i) whether the proposed activity, activities or portions thereof should be authorised; (ii) regarding the acceptability of the proposed activity or activities; and (iii) if the opinion is that the proposed activity, activities or portions thereof should be authorised, any avoidance, management and mitigation measures that should</p>

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		proposals (at these locations) which are doomed to fail ultimately.	<p>be included in the EMPr, and the closure plan in the case of a closure activity".</p> <p>These opinions will be provided by the EAP and specialists at the end of the EIA Phase, based on all the available information, including the full specialist impact assessments. Therefore, it is premature to make any opinions on the development progressing at this stage.</p> <p><u>Unsuitability of the proposed project location from a bird impact perspective:</u></p> <p>The need and desirability of the proposed project will be considered as part of the S&EIA Process as per the DEA Guidelines on Need and Desirability (2017). The need and desirability is discussed at the provincial and local context, and provides feedback on whether the proposed activity is being proposed at the right time and in the right place. Such an assessment has been undertaken at the Scoping Phase and is included in Chapter 1 of the FSR, and it will be confirmed and expanded on during the EIA Phase once the impact assessment is completed. This must be taken into consideration in the overall context of proposed developments in the region, and it can only be considered in the EIA Phase. Therefore, it is not possible for the EAP to confirm with certainty that the proposed project location is fatally flawed from an avifauna perspective, as detailed impact assessments still need to be undertaken during the EIA Phase.</p>

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			<p>With regards to the impact of bird collision with turbines, the Avifaunal scoping inputs report states that a “shutdown on demand (SDOD) programme should be seriously considered as an additional mitigation measure for several species, where the above spatial protection does not completely mitigate the risk”. The Applicant is aware of this recommendation. The Avifaunal Specialist Impact Assessment Report (to be included in the DEIR) will insist that this be done from the outset of WEF operations.</p> <p>With regards to bird electrocution and collision on overhead power lines, it is proposed that the internal medium voltage cables linking turbines with the on-site substation hub at each WEF will comprise of power lines placed underground, where practical. However, the overhead power lines proposed to facilitate the connection of the proposed WEF project with the national electrical grid network, will likely comprise of a new loop-in loop-out (LILO) connection into the existing Beta-Delphi 400 kV overhead power line, and/or a new LILO connection into the existing Dorper-Stormberg 132 kV overhead power line, at the point where these existing lines cross the project site. Therefore, a separate environmental assessment process will be undertaken for the EGI component of this proposed WEF project, and therefore does not form part of this S&EIA Process currently being undertaken for the proposed WEF project.</p> <p><u>National Web-Based Environmental Screening Tool:</u></p>

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			<p>GN 960 (dated 5 July 2019) published a notice of the compulsory requirement (as from 4 October 2019) to submit a report generated by the Screening Tool, when submitting an Application for Environmental Authorisation (EA). At commencement of the Scoping Phase, the proposed WEF project site has accordingly been run through the Screening Tool, and the associated report generated and attached to the Application for EA which has been submitted along with the FSR to DFFE for decision-making. It must be noted that the Screening Tool only presents a starting point for the S&EIA Process highlighting the potential environmental sensitivities mapped at a <u>high-level</u> for the proposed project site and surrounds, but it does not indicate impact significance. The Screening Tool therefore provides guidance as to the required specialist assessments to be undertaken for the proposed project in accordance with Appendix 6 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) and/or the Environmental Assessment Protocols published in March 2020 (GN 320) and October 2020 (GN 1150), where relevant. The project- and site-specific specialist impact assessments to be compiled by a team of qualified and independent specialists will be provided in the DEIR during the EIA Phase.</p> <p><u>Preliminary Scoping Impact Assessment Statement:</u></p> <p>At Scoping level, the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) states that the Scoping Report needs to include “a full description of the process followed to reach the proposed preferred activity, site and location of the development footprint within the site, including details of all the alternatives</p>

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			<p>considered". The 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended), defines alternatives as:</p> <p>"different means of meeting the general purpose and requirements of the activity which may include alternatives to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) property on which or location where the activity is proposed to be undertaken; (b) type of activity to be undertaken; (c) design or layout of the activity; (d) technology to be used in the activity; or (e) operational aspects of the activity; <p>and includes the option of not implementing the activity".</p> <p>Chapter 5 of the FSR includes a description of the alternatives considered, including the no-go alternative, as assessed during the Scoping Phase. The no-go alternative will be assessed in detail by all the specialists on the project team during the EIA Phase, and further feedback will be provided at that stage. The overall preliminary impact assessment highlighted in the Executive Summary of the FSR is only a high-level assessment based on the <u>available</u> high-level specialist input provided during Scoping, and it will still be detailed, finalised and expanded on during the EIA Phase. During Scoping, preliminary impact assessment tables were provided by the Aquatic Biodiversity, Terrestrial Biodiversity and Species, Heritage (Archaeology and Cultural Landscape), Avifauna and Traffic specialists. The remaining specialists will provide detailed impact assessments during the EIA Phase. Therefore, the</p>

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			<p>overall preliminary scoping impact assessment statement of <i>“Moderate to Very Low significance after mitigation [regarding negative impacts], whilst some positive socio-economic impacts of moderate significance are expected”</i> is only based on the specialist input available at the time, and a more complete and detailed overall statement will be provided in the EIA Phase, upon completion of all specialist assessments. The Scoping Level Socio-Economic Assessment notes that “the assessment of potential socio-economic impacts during construction, operations and decommissioning, including cumulative impacts, as identified in Section 5 above [of the Scoping Level Socio-Economic Assessment Report] will be included in the EIA Report”. The Scoping Level Socio-Economic Assessment does identify positive impacts; however, the impact assessment will only be included in the EIA Phase. The overall preliminary scoping impact assessment statement of <i>“whilst some positive socio-economic impacts of moderate significance are expected”</i> has been updated to acknowledge this. This was not an exaggeration of impacts, but rather a summary provided by the EAP based on previous experience on similar projects. Also note that the no-go alternative will be assessed and considered in detail during the EIA Phase. The overall preliminary scoping impact assessment statement now states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therefore, based on the available high-level specialist input assessed and provided during the Scoping Phase (i.e. Aquatic Biodiversity, Terrestrial Biodiversity and Species, Heritage (Archaeology and Cultural Landscape), Avifauna

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			<p>and Traffic), potential negative impacts associated with the proposed Ingwe WEF 2 project and the preliminary project infrastructure layout are anticipated to be generally of Moderate to Very Low significance after mitigation. Note that there are some impacts relating to avifauna that are rated with a High impact significance with mitigation. Specifically, as noted in the Scoping Level Assessment for Avifauna, the “impact of bird collision with turbines is likely to be of High negative significance and must be effectively mitigated if the project is to proceed. Given the uncertainty around the effectiveness of the mitigation measures recommended the significance is likely to remain at High post mitigation”. This will be further assessed in detail during the EIA Phase, and it will be considered in the overall environmental impact statement during the EIA Phase. With regards to positive impacts, some socio-economic impacts have been identified at the Scoping Phase, and the significance of these will be confirmed during the EIA Phase. The Agricultural Compliance Statement also discussed two potential mechanisms of positive agricultural impact i.e., increased financial security for farming operations, and improved security against stock theft and other crime. The Palaeontology Assessment also notes that in the case of the “No-Go Option (i.e., no WEF development), the possible loss of local heritage resources through construction of the proposed WEFs (negative impact) would be avoided while potential improvements in palaeontological understanding through professional</p>

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			<p>mitigation - i.e., recording and collection of palaeontological material and data (positive impacts) - would be lost". This will also be further discussed during the EIA Phase. Note that the no-go alternative will also be taken into consideration in the EIA Phase and captured in the overall environmental impact statement.</p> <p>Based on the high-level impact assessment and sensitivities identified during the Scoping Phase, there are no fatal flaws preventing the project from further assessment during the EIA Phase. None of the specialists involved in the S&EIA have stated that the proposed project is considered to be fatally flawed, nor have they stated that the WEF site(s) are unsuitable and that unsustainable and unacceptable negative impacts will occur. While the preliminary Scoping Level Impact Assessments do cite a medium to high confidence level, again, this is only a high-level scoping phase assessment, and it will still need to be assessed in more detail during the EIA Phase.</p> <p>Furthermore, NEMA states that some of the factors to consider for sustainable development are "that the disturbance of ecosystems and loss of biological diversity are avoided, or, where they cannot be altogether avoided, are minimised and remedied; and that negative impacts on the environment and on people's environmental rights be anticipated and prevented, and where they cannot be altogether prevented, are minimised and remedied". The EIA Phase of the project is imperative in order to adequately assess all the relevant issues raised by the stakeholders and I&APs during the Scoping</p>

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			<p>Phase, and to make a concerted effort to identify all potential negative impacts and adoption of the mitigation hierarchy. Such can only be done in the EIA Phase, as is the purpose of the EIA Phase. We need a fair opportunity to assess the project in detail and make an informed environmental impact statement, and we do not believe that we are fundamentally violating any provisions of NEMA as we are following due process, by scoping out issues during the Scoping Phase for detailed assessment during the EIA Phase. The EAP is committed to ensuring that all potential impacts are identified and assessed during the EIA Phase.</p> <p><u>Consideration of all potential impacts and not only those on-site:</u></p> <p>During the EIA Phase, the potential impact of the proposed project on Cape Vulture and rural landscapes and its contribution of foreign tourist income and associated employment will be investigated. The article provided by the stakeholder will be considered during the EIA Phase and has also been forwarded to the Socio-Economic Specialist for consideration. Again, the specialists that are involved in this S&EIA Process are all independent; they will perform the assessment in an objective manner, even if this results in views and findings that are not favourable to the Applicant; and they have declared that there are no circumstances that may compromise their objectivity in performing the required assessment. The Socio-Economic Specialist has signed this declaration and is therefore not biased and will not purposefully exaggerate socio-economic impacts.</p>

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			<p><u>EAP Independence:</u></p> <p>As captured in Appendix B of the FSR, the EAP has signed a declaration of independence, stating various declarations, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EAP acts as the independent EAP in this application; and • The EAP will perform the work relating to the application in an objective manner, even if this results in views and findings that are not favourable to the Applicant. <p>The opinion regarding the EAP being biased towards the Developer is noted with concern. The stakeholder can rest assured that the EAP is fully independent, as demonstrated above. In order to provide a reasoned opinion as to whether the proposed activity should or should not be authorised, the EAP needs all information in order to make an informed decision, especially with regards to the full and complete impact assessments, which will only be furnished during the EIA Phase.</p> <p>Furthermore, it must be re-iterated that the project layout currently shown in the FSR is only a preliminary indicative infrastructure layout. The specialist findings and sensitivities identified during the Scoping Phase will be taken into consideration during the EIA Phase, and avoided as best as possible, in order to develop the final revised layout.</p>

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			<p>Therefore, the layout will be refined during the EIA Phase, which will be guided by the mitigation hierarchy approach of firstly trying to avoid impacts through careful siting. As the EAP, we are committed to ensuring that an environmentally sustainable project is recommended for authorisation, and concerted efforts will be made to ensure this.</p> <p>Specialist: The avifauna specialist will complete the formal assessment of impact significance ratings and the design of mitigation measures in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report during the EIA Phase. We have acknowledged that there is uncertainty around the effectiveness of mitigation, but we do not agree that it can be concluded to have failed entirely elsewhere. The second year of monitoring data will be included in the Avifaunal Impact Assessment Report and therefore included in the DEIR. Cumulative impacts will be considered fully in the EIA Phase at a biologically meaningful scale. In addition, a larger area (i.e., large than 30 km) will be considered in the cumulative impact assessment for Cape Vulture specifically in accordance with recommendations made by BLSA (refer to Section 5 of this CRR).</p>

PART B: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PHASE

2. COMMENTS RECEIVED FOLLOWING THE SUBMISSION OF THE FINAL SCOPING REPORT TO THE DFFE FOR CONSIDERATION

The tables below include the comments and/or issues raised by stakeholders and registered Interested and/or Affected Parties (I&APs), together with the responses from the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) project team, following the submission of the Final Scoping Report to the DFFE for consideration. The DFFE accepted the Final Scoping Report of the proposed Ingwe WEF 2 on 14 April 2023. The tables below include the original comments received (emails and letters) as included in Appendix F.1 of the EIA Report. **Please note that the comments are taken verbatim from the comments provided by stakeholders and registered I&APs.**

The approach followed for this Comments and Responses Report (CRR) was guided by sections 3(3), 9, 12(1) and (2), 11 as well as 18 of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 14 of 2013) (POPIA). Note that in accordance with the POPIA, the CSIR conducts itself responsibly when collecting, processing, storing, and sharing any personal information collected for the purposes of Public Participation Processes (PPP) in terms of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). By registering as an I&AP and/or submitting information and comments, stakeholders consent to the collection, collation, processing, and storing of such information and the use and disclosure of such information for the aforementioned purpose (<https://www.csir.co.za/csir-privacy-notice>). Therefore, erring on the side of caution as recommended by the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), the names and affiliations of non-governmental I&APs are represented by an 'XXXX' in this CRR.

An integrated Public Participation Process was undertaken for the proposed Ingwe Wind Energy Facility (WEF) 1 and Ingwe WEF 2 projects. **The comments included in this CRR only apply to the proposed Ingwe WEF 2.** Comments relating to the Ingwe WEF 1 have been included for context or background purposes (where necessary). Comments and responses for the Ingwe WEF 1 project is included in the respective CRR. The comments received have been grouped per organisation, based on the structure recommended by the DFFE.

2.1. GENERAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROJECT NEEDS²

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	01/03/2023 Email, DFFE, The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation (Kamogelo Mathetja)	<p>DFFE Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation hereby acknowledge receipt of the invitation to review and comment on the project mentioned on the subject line. Kindly note that the project has been allocated to Mrs M Rabothata and Mr K Mathetja (Both copied on this email). In addition, kindly share the shapefiles of the development footprints/application site with the Case Officers.</p> <p>Please note: All Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA review and any other Biodiversity EIA queries must be submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation at Email: BCAdmin@environment.gov.za for attention of Mr Seoka Lekota</p>	<p>CSIR: Comment was received from this Directorate on 16 February 2023 and have been included in Section 1.2.2 of this CRR. BCAdmin@environment.gov.za and BCAdmin@dffe.gov.za were included on the project database of I&APs and Organs of State and will receive future communication regarding the proposed WEF projects. Refer to Appendix C of the EIA Report for a copy of the I&AP database. This also aligns with a recommendation made in this regard in the comment received from the DFFE. In addition, all Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA review and any other Biodiversity EIA queries will be submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation for comment during the EIA Phase.</p>

² This includes requests to register on and de-register from the project I&AP database.

2.2. THE ENDANGERED WILDLIFE TRUST (EWT)

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	07/03/2023 Email, EWT, (Dr Ian Little)	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment again on this proposed development. We have attached our comments again from the January comment period as the same concerns remain. This final scoping report does not identify any specific species of conservation concern nor any robust plans to avoid any impacts to these. We feel strongly that the developer must follow the mitigation hierarchy at this early stage of the assessment and hence avoidance, wherever possible, must be prioritized. This is especially relevant given that there is a known likelihood of turbine collision with Cape Vultures at the proposed site.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to again provide comment,</p>	CSIR: This comment is noted. Note that the comments received from the EWT on 20 January 2023 is included and addressed in Section 1.7 of this CRR.

2.3. THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT (DFFE)

2.3.1. THE DIRECTORATE: INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	28/02/2023, Email, DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, EIAAdmin)	<p>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE FINAL SCOPING REPORT AND AMENDED APPLICATION FORM FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE UP TO 510 MWAC ABO WIND INGWE WIND ENERGY FACILITY 2 (WEF) ABO WIND INGWE WEF 2), NEAR MOLTEN0 IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE.</p> <p>The Department confirms having received the Final Scoping Report and Amended Application Form for the abovementioned project on 28 February 2023. You have submitted these documents to comply with the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended.</p> <p>You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.</p>	<p>CSIR: The acknowledgement of receipt of the EA Application Form and Final Scoping Report is noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Final Scoping Report complies with all the requirements in terms of the scope of assessment and content of Scoping Reports in accordance with Appendix 2 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). Refer to the Executive Summary of the Final Scoping Report for additional information on compliance with Appendix 2. Note that the Project Applicant is aware of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998, as amended).
2.	14/04/2023 Email, DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Sabelo Malaza)	<p>Please find herein the attached letter for the above mentioned.</p> <p>Please do not respond to this mailbox with any queries related to the decision been issued. All queries on the attached decision must be directed to official whose contact details is listed as enquiries.</p> <p>I hope you find all in order.</p>	<p>CSIR: The letter of Acceptance of the Final Scoping Report for the proposed Ingwe WEF 2 development was well received.</p> <p>The responses are provided below for each comment raised.</p>

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		Thank you.	
3.	14/04/2023 Letter (received via email on 14/04/2023) DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Sabelo Malaza)	<p>ACCEPTANCE OF THE SCOPING REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE 510MW ABO WIND INGWE WIND ENERGY FACILITY 2 (WEF) NEAR MOLTENO IN THE ENOCH MGJIMA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, CHRIS HANI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE</p> <p>The final Scoping Report (SR) and the Plan of Study for Environmental Impact Assessment dated February 2023 and received by the Department on 28 February 2023, refer.</p> <p>The Department has evaluated the submitted final SR and the Plan of Study for Environmental Impact Assessment dated February 2023 and is satisfied that the documents comply with the minimum requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended. The final SR is hereby accepted by the Department in terms of Regulation 22(1)(a) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.</p> <p>You may proceed with the environmental impact assessment process in accordance with the tasks contemplated in the Plan of Study for Environmental Impact Assessment as required in terms of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.</p> <p>In addition, the following amendments and additional information are required for the EIAR:</p> <p><u>(a) Specific Comments</u></p>	<p>CSIR: The letter of Acceptance of the Final Scoping Report for the proposed Ingwe WEF 2 development was well received.</p> <p><u>(a) Specific Comments</u></p> <p>Responses are provided below to each comment raised:</p> <p>(i) It should be noted that the Draft Cape Vulture Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for environmental impacts on Cape Vultures by onshore wind energy generation facilities has not been gazetted yet and thus the compliance requirement to undertake said assessment is therefore challenged. Further, in terms of Regulation 16 (3) (a), the report and assessment overall does comply with “any protocol or minimum information requirements relevant to the application as identified and <i>gazetted</i> (own emphasis) by the Minister in a government notice”. However, the Avifaunal Specialist has pro-actively considered the contents of the Draft Cape Vulture Protocol in his assessment of any potential impact to any Cape Vultures that might</p>

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		<p>(i) According to the Avifaunal Specialist Study (Appendix F.3) “the endangered Cape Vulture was recorded flying on site regularly, with a peak in summer, and roosts on powerlines on site.” Therefore, a Cape Vulture Assessment must be done and included in the EIAR. Kindly take note the draft Cape Vulture Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for environmental impacts on Cape Vultures by onshore wind energy generation facilities, should be utilised to inform the Cape Vulture Assessment included in the EIAR.</p> <p>(ii) According to the Avifaunal Specialist Study, it is estimated that approximately 40.03 bird fatalities could be recorded at ABO Ingwe WEF per year across the 29 target bird species recorded flying on site. This includes the following regionally Red Listed species fatalities: 14.88 Blue Cranes; 7.42 Cape Vultures; 2.24 Verreaux’s Eagles; 1.2 Black Harriers; 0.76 Grey Crowned Cranes; 0.28 Secretary birds; 0.18 Ludwig’s Bustards; 0.16 Lanner Falcons; 0.15 Martial Eagles; 0.03 African Marsh-Harriers; 0.02 Black Storks. The above fatalities are of High significance for Cape Vulture, Black Harrier, and Verreaux’s Eagle. The diversity of Red Listed species at risk is also high and worthy of concern. These concerns should be addressed in the EIAR.</p> <p>(iii) The preliminary findings of the Avifaunal Specialist Study stipulate that “the impact of bird collision with turbines is likely to be of High negative significance and must be effectively mitigated if the proposed projects are to proceed. Given the uncertainty around the effectiveness of the mitigation measures recommended the significance is likely to remain at High post mitigation.” If the significance of bird collision with turbines is to remain High negative post mitigation, then the applicant must investigate and apply the mitigation hierarchy.</p>	<p>utilise the area, which is evident and confirmed by his findings resulting from the 24-month pre-construction monitoring programme conducted on site. The specialist report further states the following in this regard: “We have noted the requirements of this protocol, but note that it is not yet promulgated. The current project has gone to considerable lengths to assess, avoid and manage the risk to Cape Vulture, in compliance with all relevant published guidance”.</p> <p>(ii) The concerns of the avifaunal sensitivities on site are duly noted. The Project Applicant has subsequently taken a decision to refine the project infrastructure layout for the Ingwe WEF 2 project taking all environmental sensitivities and their “no-go” buffers into consideration. The revised and refined project infrastructure layout has been taken forward into the EIA Phase and was subjected to detailed specialist assessments. The findings of these specialist assessments are included in Chapters 6 to 18 of the EIA Report.</p> <p>(iii) The impact mitigation hierarchy has been employed in both the creation of the proposed WEF project as well as the environmental impact assessment process through avoidance of the most sensitive habitats, followed by the requirements for implementation of mitigation measures. The impact mitigation hierarchy is</p>

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		<p>(iv) The preliminary combined sensitivity map (Figure G.4) illustrates majority of the Wind Energy Facility is located within no-go areas. No infrastructure is to be located within no-go areas and the layout plan submitted in the EIAR should reflect as such.</p> <p>(v) The Final Bat Monitoring Report (Appendix F.4) does not include a Bat Sensitivity Map even though the report refers to this map as Figure 2. It is difficult to comment on the information regarding the bats on site, as one cannot not see the no-go areas or sensitive areas in relation to the proposed development. Kindly ensure the bat sensitivity map overlain by the proposed development is included in the EIAR.</p> <p>(vi) Overall, this Department urges the EAP and the applicant to evaluate whether the proposed development is suitable for this area considering the high avifaunal sensitivity.</p>	<p>discussed in Section 4.1 of the Avifauna Impact Assessment which is included in Chapter 8 of the EIA Report. Furthermore, the proposed development has been significantly reduced in footprint/extent following the Scoping Phase, particularly in response to the potential avifaunal impacts highlighted in the Scoping Phase. The impact of bird collisions with turbines of the reduced layout is not anticipated to be High, post-mitigation.</p> <p>(iv) As noted above, the project infrastructure layout has been revised and refined to avoid “no-go” areas as far as possible. The combined sensitivity mapping reflecting the refined project infrastructure layout that was assessed during the EIA Phase is included in Appendix G of the EIA Report.</p> <p>(v) The bat sensitivity map overlain by the proposed development is included in Chapter 9 of the EIA Report.</p> <p>(vi) Considering the high avifaunal sensitivity of the area, the Project Applicant and EAP has engaged with BirdLife South Africa (BLSA), the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and VulPro in a focus group meeting held on 16 May 2023 to discuss the avifaunal sensitivities associated with the proposed project site. Taking into consideration all suggestions and recommendations put</p>

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			forward by BLSA, EWT and VulPro, the Project Applicant has revised and refined the project infrastructure layout to further avoid avifaunal sensitivities and their "no-go" buffers as far as possible to significantly reduce the potential risk to avifauna by the proposed development. This mitigation resulted in two much smaller WEF projects; the proposed Ingwe WEF 1 now has a total generation capacity of 240 MWac consisting of 24 turbines (previously 307.5 MWac and 41 turbines as assessed during Scoping), while the proposed Ingwe WEF 2 now also has a total generation capacity of 240 MWac consisting of 24 turbines (previously 510 MWac and 64 turbines as assessed during Scoping).
4.	14/04/2023 Letter (received via email on 14/04/2023) DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Sabelo Malaza)	(b) Listed Activities (i) The EIAR must provide an assessment of the impacts and mitigation measures for each of the listed activities applied for. (ii) The listed activities represented in the EIAR and the application form must be the same and correct. (iii) The EIAR must assess the correct sub listed activity for each listed activity applied for.	CSIR: These comments are noted. (b) Listed Activities Responses are provided below to each comment raised: (i) The EIA Report will provide an assessment of the impacts and mitigation measures for each of the listed activities applied for. (ii) The listed activities represented in the EIA Report and the application form are the same and correct. Refer to Chapter 4 of the

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			EIA Report for detailed descriptions of the applicability of Listed Activities applied for. (iii) The EIA Report will assess the correct sub listed activity for each listed activity applied for.
5.	14/04/2023 Letter (received via email on 14/04/2023) DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Sabelo Malaza)	<p>(c) <u>Public Participation</u></p> <p>(i) Please ensure the language used to inform potential I&APs in the newspaper advertisement is not only communicated in the language English but should also utilise other dominant languages spoken in the study area. The EAP must ensure that the newspaper medium adequately caters for all potential I&APs in the study area. This should also apply to any site notification boards as well.</p> <p>(ii) Please ensure that comments from all relevant stakeholders are submitted to the Department with the EIAR. This includes but is not limited to the Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT), the Chris Hani District Municipality, the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality, the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency, the Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), BirdLife SA, the South African Bat Assessment Association (SABAA), the Endangered Wildlife Trust, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Directorate Biodiversity and Conservation.</p> <p>(iii) Please ensure that all issues raised and comments received during the circulation of the draft SR and draft EIAR from registered I&APs and organs of state which have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed</p>	<p>CSIR: These comments are noted.</p> <p>(c) <u>Public Participation</u></p> <p>Responses are provided below to each comment raised:</p> <p>(i) An advertisement was placed in the three dominant languages spoken in the study area, namely, Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa. The advertisement was placed in a regional newspaper, 'The Representative' on Friday, 16 June 2023, prior to the commencement of the 30-day review period on the DEIR. A copy of the content of the advertisement in this regional newspaper is included in Appendix F.2 of the EIA Report. Proof of placement of the advertisement in this regional newspaper will be included in the Final EIA Report (FEIR). Note that Site notice boards were placed at key locations in the Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa languages prior to the commencement of the Scoping Phase. Copies of the site notice boards, and proof of</p>

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		<p>activity are adequately addressed in the final EIAR. Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders must be included in the final EIAR. Should you be unable to obtain comments, proof should be submitted to the Department of the attempts that were made to obtain comments.</p> <p>(iv) A Comments and Response trail report (C&R) must be submitted with the final EIAR. The C&R report must incorporate all comments for this development. The C&R report must be a separate document from the main report and the format must be in the table format as indicated in Annexure 1 of this comments letter. Please refrain from summarising comments made by I&APs. All comments from I&APs must be copied verbatim and responded to clearly. Please note that a response such as “noted” is not regarded as an adequate response to I&AP’s comments.</p> <p>(v) Comments from I&APs must not be split and arranged into categories. Comments from each submission must be responded to individually.</p> <p>(vi) The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.</p>	<p>placement is included in Appendix D.1 of the EIA Report.</p> <p>(ii) Prior to the commencement of the S&EIA Processes (and advertising the Environmental Authorisation Processes in the local print media), an initial database of potential I&APs (including key relevant stakeholders and Organs of State) was developed based on research and interaction with the DFFE and Project Developer. A detailed copy of the I&AP database is included in Appendix C of the DEIR that has been released for a 30-day public review period, extending from 19 June 2023 to 19 July 2023, excluding public holidays. The database includes the names of the registered I&APs, as well as an indication of the interaction with registered I&APs, as well as all potential I&APs that have been added to the project database based on requests, submission of comments or based on research. This complies with Regulation 42 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). Comments will be sought from all relevant stakeholders and will be included in the CRR in the FEIR.</p> <p>(iii) Copies of all comments received from various stakeholders such as letters received from the DFFE during the 30-day review period on the Draft Scoping Report, which</p>

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			<p>extended from 14 January 2023 to 15 February 2023, excluding public holidays, are included in Appendix D.4 of the EIA Report. Copies of all comments received from various stakeholders such as letters received from the DFFE during the 30-day review period on the DEIR, extending from 19 June 2023 to 19 July 2023, will be included in Appendix F.7 of the FEIR. Proof of correspondence with various stakeholders is included in Appendix D of the EIA Report. The newspaper advertisement notifying stakeholders of the availability of the Draft Scoping Report for comment is included in Appendix D.2. Appendix D.3 includes the necessary proof of correspondence, such as emails, text messages, and letters and the executive summaries sent to stakeholders during the Scoping Phase. It also includes relevant follow-up emails sent in order to remind stakeholders of the comment period closure, in order to seek comments on the Draft Scoping Report. In addition, proof of correspondence with various stakeholders will be included in Appendix F of the FEIR. The newspaper advertisement notifying stakeholders of the availability of the DEIR for comment is included in Appendix F.2. Appendix F.6 will include the necessary proof of correspondence, such as emails, text messages, letters, and executive summaries sent to stakeholders during the EIA Phase. It</p>

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			<p>will also include relevant follow-up emails sent in order to remind stakeholders of the comment period closure, in order to seek comments on the DEIR.</p> <p>(iv) All issues raised and comments received during the review of the Draft Scoping Report from potential and registered I&APs and Organs of State, which have jurisdiction in terms of the proposed activity, were duly considered and addressed in the CRR, and the Final Scoping Report, where applicable and necessary. The detailed CRR inclusive of all comments received during the public review period on the Draft Scoping Report, as well as responses provided to all these comments and issues raised was included separately with the Final Scoping Report that was submitted to the DFFE for consideration. Copies of all comments received during the 30-day review period on the Draft Scoping Report is captured in Appendix D.4 of the EIA Report. In addition, all issues raised, and comments received during the review of the DEIR from potential and registered I&APs and Organs of State, which have jurisdiction in terms of the proposed activity, will be duly considered and addressed in this CRR, and the FEIR, where applicable and necessary. The detailed CRR inclusive of all comments received during the public review period on</p>

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			<p>the DEIR, as well as responses provided to all these comments and issues raised will be included separately with the FEIR that will be submitted to the DFFE for decision-making. Copies of all comments received during the 30-day review period on the DEIR will also be captured in Appendix F of the FEIR.</p> <p>(v) This comment is duly noted. Comments will not be split or arranged into categories, and each submission will be responded to individually in the CRR.</p> <p>(vi) The Public Participation Process (PPP) is being conducted in terms of Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). Refer to Chapter 4 of the EIA Report for background on the PPP, including feedback on compliance with the regulations relating to Public Participation.</p>
6.	<p>14/04/2023</p> <p>Letter (received via email on 14/04/2023)</p> <p>DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Sabelo Malaza)</p>	<p>(d) <u>Layout & Sensitivity Maps</u></p> <p>(i) The EIAR must provide coordinate points for the proposed development site and all proposed infrastructure (note that if the site has numerous bend points, at each bend point coordinates must be provided) as well as the start, middle and end point of all linear activities.</p>	<p>CSIR: These comments are noted.</p> <p>(d) <u>Layout & Sensitivity Maps</u></p> <p>Responses are provided below to each comment raised:</p> <p>(i) Please refer to Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 in Chapter 2 of the EIA Report, in which the coordinates of the proposed development</p>

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		<p>(ii) All preferred turbine positions must be clearly numbered. The turbine position numbers must be consistently used in all maps to be included in the reports.</p> <p>(iii) The EIAR must provide a copy of the final preferred layout map. All available biodiversity information must be used in the finalisation of the layout map. Existing infrastructure must be used as far as possible e.g., roads. The layout map must indicate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A clear indication of the envisioned area for the proposed wind energy facility; b) Position of the wind turbines; c) Internal roads; d) All supporting onsite infrastructure such as laydown area, guard house and control room etc.; e) Substations, transformers, switching stations and inverters; f) Battery Energy Storage System; g) Connection routes (including pylon positions) to the distribution/transmission network; h) All existing infrastructure on the site, especially railway lines and roads; and i) Buildings, including accommodation. <p>(iv) Please provide an environmental sensitivity map which indicates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The location of sensitive environmental features identified on site, e.g. CBAs, protected areas, heritage sites, wetlands, drainage lines, nest and roost sites, etc. that will be affected by the facility and its associated infrastructure; b) Buffer areas; and c) All “no-go” areas. 	<p>site and associated project infrastructure have been included.</p> <p>(ii) Please refer to Figure 2.4 in Chapter 2 of the EIA Report which displays the numbered turbine layout for the proposed WEF. The turbine position numbers are used consistently in all relevant maps in the EIA Report. Refer to Appendix G for all relevant maps.</p> <p>(iii) The main body of the EIA Report contains all maps as requested, and maps are also included throughout the document (refer to the list of figures upfront in the EIA Report). Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report also includes relevant features identified by the Specialists. All relevant maps have also been included in Appendix G of the EIA Report. All relevant maps indicate the WEF development footprint and have been updated to indicate the proposed positions of all key relevant project infrastructure including wind turbines and associated hardstand areas, access roads, laydown areas, construction camps, substation hub, BESS, operational and maintenance buildings, and concrete batching plants. The proposed internal access road network to be constructed was assessed in detail by the specialists and finalised during the EIA Phase and is included in the EIA Report.</p>

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		<p>(v) The above layout map must be superimposed (overlain) with the sensitivity map and a cumulative map which shows neighbouring and existing infrastructure.</p> <p>(vi) Google maps will not be accepted.</p>	<p>(iv) Please refer to Chapters 6 to 17 and Appendix G of the EIA Report for the relevant sensitivity maps which include the locations of all identified sensitive environmental features on-site as well as buffers and “no-go” areas, as per the specifications outlined by the DFFE, which have been informed by specialist’ inputs. It must be noted that specialists’ interpretation of a “no-go” and buffer area differ depending on the nature of each specialist’s assessment criteria and sensitivity ratings i.e., “no-go” areas and buffers differ for different components of the proposed development (e.g., a wind turbine would require a larger buffer for a bird nest or roosting area than perhaps a road). What is assigned as a “no-go” area for wind turbines doesn’t necessarily mean a road or laydown area cannot be developed in that area. It is also the Applicant’s preference to avoid “no-go” areas as far as possible and aim to place infrastructure components such as access roads along or as close as possible to existing road infrastructure on the proposed project site, where practical.</p> <p>(v) Please note that the fine scale sensitivities mapped by the specialists within the proposed project site area, and the fine scale project infrastructure layout cannot be easily</p>

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			<p>seen when combined with a 30 km radius cumulative map. Scale needs to be considered in terms of the 30 km radius cumulative map. Combined “no-go” environmental features maps and combined “no-go” sensitivity maps have been provided in Chapter 5 and Appendix F of the EIA Report to cover these aspects. A separate cumulative map is also provided in the relevant specialist assessments included in Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report.</p> <p>(vi) All maps compiled by the CSIR in the EIA Report are <u>not</u> produced using Google Maps.</p>
7.	<p>14/04/2023</p> <p>Letter (received via email on 14/04/2023)</p> <p>DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Sabelo Malaza)</p>	<p>(e) Specialist assessments</p> <p>(i) The EAP must ensure that the terms of reference for all the identified specialist studies must include the following:</p> <p>a) A detailed description of the study’s methodology; indication of the locations and descriptions of the development footprint, and all other associated infrastructures that they have assessed and are recommending for authorisation.</p> <p>b) Provide a detailed description of all limitations to the studies. All specialist studies must be conducted in the right season and providing that as a limitation will not be allowed.</p> <p>c) Please note that the Department considers a ‘no-go’ area, as an area where no development of any infrastructure is allowed; therefore, no development of associated</p>	<p>CSIR: These comments are noted.</p> <p>(e) Specialist assessments</p> <p>Responses are provided below to each comment raised:</p> <p>(i) Detailed specialist impact assessments were undertaken during the EIA Phase and comply with Appendix 6 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) and/or the gazetted Assessment Protocols published in March 2020 (GN 320) and October 2020 (GN 1150), where relevant. The full assessments are provided in the EIA Report, which each include (a) a detailed description of the</p>

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		<p>infrastructure including access roads is allowed in the 'no-go' areas.</p> <p>d) Should the specialist definition of 'no-go' area differ from the Department's definition; this must be clearly indicated. The specialist must also indicate the 'no-go' area's buffer if applicable.</p> <p>e) All specialist studies must be final, and provide detailed/practical mitigation measures for the preferred alternative and recommendations, and must not recommend further studies to be completed post EA.</p> <p>f) Bird and bat specialist studies must have comments from Birdlife South Africa and SABAA.</p> <p>g) Should a specialist recommend specific mitigation measures, these must be clearly indicated.</p> <p>(ii) Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations, the EAP must clearly indicate the most reasonable recommendation and substantiate this with defensible reasons; and where necessary, include further expertise advice.</p> <p>(iii) It is further brought to your attention that Procedures for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting in identified Environmental Themes in terms of Sections 24(5)(a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998, when applying for Environmental Authorisation, which were promulgated in Government Notice No. 320 of 20 March 2020 (i.e. "the Protocols") and in Government Notice No. 1150 of 30 October 2020 (i.e. protocols for terrestrial plant and animal species), have come into effect. Please note that specialist assessments must be conducted in accordance with these protocols.</p>	<p>study's methodology, indication of the locations and descriptions of the development footprint, turbine positions and all other associated infrastructure locations that have been assessed and are being recommended for authorisation; (b) a detailed description of all limitations to the assessment, (c) clarification as to the specialist's definition of "no-go" areas and buffers; (d) detailed cumulative impact assessment, (e) detailed, practical and appropriate mitigation measures and management actions; as well as (f) an assessment of the "no-go" alternative. These specialist assessments are considered final and do not recommend further studies to be undertaken post EA (should EA be granted), except for recommended monitoring requirements during construction, operations and decommissioning of the proposed WEF. The Terms of Reference for all identified specialist assessments conducted during the EIA Phase are included in Chapter 4 of the EIA Report. Furthermore, all specialists have complied with the protocols in terms of the undertaking of the field surveys in the correct season. Details on the suitability of the season for fieldwork will</p>

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		<p>(iv) Please also ensure that the EIAR includes the Site Verification Report and Compliance Statements (where applicable) as required by the relevant themes.</p> <p>(v) Please note further that the protocols, if applicable, require certain specialists' to be SACNASP registered in the field of expertise of the specialist study being undertaken e.g. An aquatic assessment must be prepared by a specialist registered with SACNASP, with expertise in the field of aquatics sciences. Please ensure that the relevant specialist certificates are attached to the relevant reports.</p> <p>(vi) <u>As such, the Specialist Declaration of Interest forms must also indicate the scientific organisation registration/member number and status of registration/membership for each specialist.</u></p> <p>(vii) The following Specialist Assessments will form part of the EIAR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Agriculture and Soils Compliance Statement; ➤ Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment ; ➤ Avifauna Impact Assessment ; ➤ Bats Impact Assessment; ➤ Heritage Impact Assessment; ➤ Noise Impact Assessment; ➤ Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment; ➤ Visual Impact Assessment; ➤ Socio-Economic Impact Assessment; ➤ Traffic Impact Assessment; ➤ Geotechnical Desktop Assessment; ➤ Geohydrology Impact Assessment; ➤ High-level Safety, Health, and Environment Risk Assessment for the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) 	<p>are provided in the specialist assessments, included in Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report. In addition, officials from BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) and the SABAA were included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of the S&EIA Process. BLSA and SABAA were given the opportunity to comment on the Draft Scoping Report. Comments received from BLSA on the Draft Scoping Report are included in Section 1.6 of this CRR and Appendix D.4 of the EIA Report and a Focus Group Meeting was held regarding avifaunal issues which BLSA attended. No comments were received from SABAA on the Draft Scoping Report, despite regular follow-up; however, they were provided with the Final Scoping Report for their records and have been afforded the opportunity to comment on the DEIR. Also, SABAA was invited to a Focus Group Meeting to be held on 18 May 2023 to discuss potential impact to bats by the proposed project, but no response was received, and the meeting did not take place. Note that EWT has also provided some comment on bats (refer to Sections 1.7 and 2.2 of this CRR, as well as Appendix D.4 and F.1 of the EIA Report).</p>

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		<p>(viii) Please ensure that each specialist study has the correct and same project description and layout to assess.</p> <p>(ix) Please include a table that shows the proposed studies and the relevant specialists carrying out the study. In addition, a summary should be included of the specialist's recommendations in terms of the alternatives that are preferred based on the findings of their study.</p>	<p>Subsequent to the acceptance of the Final Scoping Report, a Focus Group Meeting was held on 16 May 2023 with BLSA, EWT, and VulPro in order to discuss the avifaunal sensitivities associated with the proposed projects. Refer to Appendices F.3, F.4, and F.5 of the EIA Report for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copies and proof of correspondence with stakeholders regarding the Avifaunal Focus Group Meeting; - Avifaunal Focus Group Meeting Presentation; and - Avifaunal Focus Group Meeting Notes. <p>(ii) Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations in their Impact Assessment reports during the EIA Phase, the EAP will ensure that the most reasonable recommendations will be provided and substantiated with defensible reasons; and where necessary will include further expertise advice.</p> <p>(iii) Specialist Site Sensitivity Verifications were conducted in accordance with Part A of the Government Gazette 43110, GN R320, where required. The gazetted procedures for the assessment and minimum requirements for reporting on identified environmental themes in terms of Sections 24(5) (a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental</p>

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			<p>Management Act, 1998, when applying for environmental authorisation (GG 43110 / GN R320, 20 March 2020) was adhered to in terms of the minimum report requirements for the Scoping Phase, and have been complied with, as applicable, during the EIA Phase. Please refer Chapters 6 to 21 of the EIA Report for the specialist assessments.</p> <p>(iv) Site Sensitivity Verifications and Compliance Statement in accordance with Part A and Part B of GNR 320 of 20 March 2020, have been included in the specialists' chapters, where relevant and applicable (Refer to Chapters 6 to 21 of the EIA Report).</p> <p>(v) In line with the Assessment Protocols (GN 320 and GN 1150), the following specialist assessments require specialists to be SACNASP registered of which valid certificates have been included in the following chapters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agriculture (Chapter 6) ○ Aquatic Biodiversity (Chapter 10) ○ Terrestrial Biodiversity (Chapter 11) ○ Avifauna (Chapter 8) <p>(vi) Specialist Declarations of Interest have been included in each of the specialist impact assessment chapters included in Chapters 6 to 21 of the EIA Report.</p>

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			<p>(vii) All 13 specialist assessments are included in the EIA Report, as per the DFFE's requirements. Refer to Chapters 6 to 21 for the relevant specialist assessments.</p> <p>(viii) All specialists have been provided with an up-to-date project description and project infrastructure layout to assess.</p> <p>(ix) Please refer to Table 1.1 in Chapter 1 for a table indicating the proposed studies and the relevant specialists appointed to conduct each of the studies. Each specialist has provided a summary in terms of the alternatives that are preferred based on the findings of their study.</p>
8.	<p>14/04/2023</p> <p>Letter (received via email on 14/04/2023)</p> <p>DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Sabelo Malaza)</p>	<p>(f) Cumulative Assessment</p> <p>(i) A cumulative impact assessment for all identified and assessed impacts must be conducted to indicate the following:</p> <p>a) Identified cumulative impacts must be clearly defined, and where possible the size of the identified impact must be quantified and indicated, i.e., hectares of cumulatively transformed land.</p> <p>b) Detailed process flow and proof must be provided, to indicate how the specialist's recommendations, mitigation measures and conclusions from the various similar developments in the area were taken into consideration in the assessment of cumulative impacts and when the conclusion and mitigation measures were drafted for this project.</p>	<p>CSIR: These comments are noted.</p> <p>(f) Cumulative Assessment</p> <p>Responses are provided below to the comments raised:</p> <p>(i) refer to the specialist chapters of the EIA Report for high-level cumulative impact assessments. The approach for the cumulative impact assessment includes all renewable energy and EGI projects within a 30 km radius that received an EA and/or have an EIA Process underway at the time of</p>

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		<p>c) The cumulative impacts significance rating must also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development.</p> <p>d) A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed.</p>	<p>starting this S&EIA Process (i.e., by 1 December 2022).</p> <p>a) The specialists have identified high-level cumulative impacts as per the above approach, and such impacts have been clearly defined. Where possible the size of the identified impact has been quantified and indicated, i.e., hectares of cumulatively transformed land in the detailed cumulative impact assessments. It is also important to note that in some cases the actual development footprint of the nearby Renewable Energy developments cannot always be easily quantified or accessed spatially. For example, the National Renewable Energy EIA Application Database contains the land parcels, and not the actual development footprint. Nonetheless, it is believed that the high-level assessment of cumulative impacts is adequately captured in the EIA Report. With regards to the levels of transformation, the current state of the affected area must also be taken into consideration.</p> <p>b) The assessment of cumulative impacts is based on the specialists and EAP's knowledge of similar approved Renewable Energy and EGI projects. The</p>

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			<p>list of Renewable Energy and EGI projects was also supplemented by the National Renewable Energy EIA Applications (REEA) database and the Eskom's Generation Connection Capacity Assessment (GCCA) (2022). The projects located within the 30 km radius from this proposed WEF development are considered in the detailed cumulative impact assessments sections in the relevant specialist chapters. Detailed process flow and proof indicating how the specialist's recommendations, mitigation measures and conclusions from the various similar developments in the area were taken into consideration in the assessment of cumulative impacts are included in Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report.</p> <p>c) Note that the specialists assessed cumulative impacts based on their expertise and knowledge of similar projects and management actions. Furthermore, the assessment of cumulative impacts is not necessarily solely focused on an assessment of impacts linked to previously authorised similar developments and consideration of their mitigation measures, but also about the sensitivities of the land on which the projects are proposed. For example, from a heritage point of view,</p>

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			<p>it is also about other heritage resources, the type of locations they could occur in, and any other developments that may have impacted on the heritage resources. A concerted effort has been made to ensure that cumulative impacts significance rating inform the need and desirability of the proposed development.</p> <p>d) The cumulative impacts significance ratings are discussed in the specialist assessments included in Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report and have informed the need and desirability of the proposed development.</p> <p>e) The specialist assessments included in Chapters 6 to 15 of the EIA Report also include cumulative impact environmental statements on whether the proposed development can proceed.</p>
9.	<p>14/04/2023</p> <p>Letter (received via email on 14/04/2023)</p> <p>DFFE (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, Sabelo Malaza)</p>	<p>(g) General</p> <p>(i) The EIAR must provide the technical details for the proposed facility in a table format as well as their description and/or dimensions. A sample for the minimum information required is listed under Annexure 2 below.</p> <p>(ii) The EAP must provide landowner consent for all farm portions affected by the proposed project i.e., all farm portions where the</p>	<p>CSIR: These comments are noted.</p> <p>Responses are provided below to the comments raised:</p> <p>(i) A detailed project description including a summary of the key components and associated infrastructure for the proposed project, based on the format stipulated by</p>

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		<p>access road, wind turbines and associated infrastructure are to be located.</p> <p>(iii) A construction and operational phase EMP that includes mitigation and monitoring measures must be submitted with the final EIAR, including the Generic EMP for substations.</p> <p>The applicant is hereby reminded to comply with the requirements of Regulation 45 of GN R982 of 04 December 2014, as amendment, with regard to the time period allowed for complying with the requirements of the Regulations.</p> <p>You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an environmental authorisation being granted by the Department.</p>	<p>the DFFE, is included in Table 1.1 of Chapter 1 of the EIA Report.</p> <p>(ii) Landowner consent has been obtained for all affected farm portions and are included in Appendix 3 of the Amended EA Application Form.</p> <p>(iii) An EMP compliant with Appendix 4 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) has been compiled for the proposed WEF and is included in Appendix I of the EIA Report). A Generic EMP for the on-site substation hub which is compliant with the Generic EMP published for substation development (Government Gazette 42323, GN 435, dated 22 March 2019) has also been compiled and is included in Appendix J of the EIA Report.</p> <p>The timeframes referred to in Regulation 45 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) are being adhered to, as the FEIR will be submitted within 106 days of the acceptance of the Final Scoping Report.</p> <p>The Project Applicant is aware of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998, as amended).</p>

2.4. THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL HERITAGE RESOURCES AUTHORITY (ECPHRA)

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	25/04/2023 Email, Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority: Archaeologist (Ayanda Mncwabe-Mama)	Were the studies uploaded on SAHRIS?	CSIR: This email was received in response to the CSIR EIA Project Team's inquiries on the 13 th and 25 th of April 2023 as to whether the Palaeontologists' Scoping Phase findings are acceptable (included in Appendix F of the EIA Report). The Palaeontologist's Site Sensitivity Verification and Scoping level assessment found the entire study area pertaining to the aforementioned two WEF projects to be of low to very low palaeontological sensitivity. As a result, based on the Scoping level palaeontological assessments, the Palaeontologist has concluded that no further impact assessment (i.e., PIA) is required. The CSIR informed the ECPHRA that no heritage documents for the proposed Ingwe WEF projects were uploaded to the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS) as it was understood that documents only needed to be uploaded onto SAHRIS when the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) is the commenting authority. However, in the case of the proposed Ingwe WEF projects that are located near Molteno in the Eastern Cape province, the ECPHRA is the commenting authority.
2.	08/05/2023 Email, Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority:	ECPHRA would like to make use of the SAHRIS system for our records hence the request for all documentation to be uploaded, as it also assists in swift referencing.	CSIR: The CSIR EIA Project Team informed ECPHRA that all heritage reports will be uploaded to SAHRIS in future, where the ECPHRA is the commenting authority.

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	Archaeologist (Ayanda Mncwabe-Mama)		<u>Note</u> that at commencement of the EIA Phase, a case has been registered with SAHRA (Case ID: 21563) and the DEIR along with all its associated appendices will be uploaded to SAHRIS for ECPHRA's review and comment.
3.	09/05/2023 Email, Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority: Archaeologist (Ayanda Mncwabe-Mama)	Noted, thanks.	CSIR: This email was received in response to the CSIR EIA Project Team's previous response, which stated that heritage reports will be uploaded onto SAHRIS in future.
4.	08/06/2023 Email, Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority: Archaeologist (Ayanda Mncwabe-Mama)	As of the 1st of June, there are fees applicable for EC PHRA applications as well. Please refer to the attachment.	CSIR: This email was received in response to the CSIR EIA Project Team's Inquiry on 07 June 2023 as to whether it is correct that the SAHRA application fee is not applicable for the proposed WEFs, as the ECPHRA is the provincial heritage resources authority that is responsible for issuing a comment. The CSIR subsequently informed the ECPHRA that a case will be registered on SAHRIS (ID Case No. 21563) and payment of the application fee has been made to the ECPHRA as required (Refer to Appendix F.1 of the EIA Report).

2.5. GENERAL STAKEHOLDERS AND I&APs

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	08/05/2023 Email, Open Serve (Stefan Geldenhuys)	Please send KMZ file and coordinates for me to do a wayleave if required.	CSIR: Composite KMZ files of the two proposed Ingwe WEF projects and associated infrastructure were sent to this stakeholder on 10 May 2023 via email.
2.	10/05/2023 Email, Open Serve (Stefan Geldenhuys)	Please send KMZ file for me to do the wayleave Send responds to Stefang@openserve.co.za	CSIR: Composite KMZ files of the two proposed Ingwe WEF projects and associated infrastructure were sent to this stakeholder on 10 May 2023 via email.
3.	10/05/2023 Email, Open Serve (Stefan Geldenhuys)	Thank you	CSIR: This email was received in response to the CSIR EIA Project Team's previous email in which the KMZ files were sent to the stakeholder.
4.	11/05/2023 Email, Open Serve (Stefan Geldenhuys)	<p>Please find attached your approved Openserve wayleave.</p> <p>Please note: Our area representative as listed on the wayleave should be contacted at least 48 hours prior to commencement of construction in order to show services out on site, as our services on the attached plan(s) are APPROXIMATE ONLY.</p> <p>Please note, wayleave applications will NOT be accepted by this mailbox. Please send all wayleave requests to wayleaveswr@telkom.co.za</p> <p>Please ensure that the Openserve service plan(s) are printed in colour (if applicable) and on the correct page size as indicated in the bottom right corner, in order to ensure that services can be seen clearly.</p>	CSIR: The approved Openserve wayleave was well received. These comments were duly noted and were shared with the Project Applicant for their information and consideration.

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5.	<p>11/05/2023 Letter (received via email on 11/05/2023) Open Serve (Stefan Geldenhuys and XXXX)</p>	<p>I hereby inform you that Openserve approves the proposed work indicated on your drawing in principle. This approval is valid for 06 MONTHS ONLY, after which reapplication must be made if the work has not been completed.</p> <p>Any changes or deviations from the original planning during or prior to construction must immediately be communicated to this office.</p> <p>Approval is granted, subject to the following conditions.</p> <p>As per the drawing supplied, Openserve infrastructure WILL BE AFFECTED, consequently the conditions below and on the attached legend will apply.</p> <p>At points of crossing, the overhead power lines should cross above the overhead communication lines in accordance with, and clearances stipulated in the Occupational Health and Safety Act no 85 of 1993, Electrical Machinery Regulations 20 - Crossings, and Electrical Machinery Regulations 15 – Clearances of Power Lines. If the specifications could not be met, all deviation costs will be for the applicant's account.</p> <p>We also refer to Section 25 of the Electronic Communication Act 36 of 2005.</p> <p>In case where an underground power cable will run parallel with an existing or projected underground communication cable, a separation as great as possible should be maintained with a minimum separation of 600mm. Should the separation be less than</p>	<p>CSIR: This approval in terms of Section 25 of the Electronic Communications Act (Act 36 of 2005, as amended) is duly noted and these recommendations were shared with the Project Applicant for their attention and further action.</p>

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		<p>600mm and the power cable are not enclosed in a suitable pipe, a concrete slab must be provided immediately above the power cable for the length of the parallelism. If the separation is less than 300mm, additional protection is required by placing concrete slabs between the Openserve cables/pipes and the power cables.</p> <p>At points where this Company's existing or proposed underground communications cable will be crossed by an underground cable, the latter should be laid at a depth of at least 300mm below the communication cable – normally laid at a depth of 600mm. If the power cable is not enclosed in a suitable pipe, protection in the form of a concrete slab should be provided immediately above the power cable for a minimum of 2 (two) meters on either side of the crossing. Please notify this office within 21 working days from this letter of acceptance and if any alternative proposal is available or if a recoverable work should commence.</p> <p>It would be appreciated if this office can be notified within 30 days of completion of the construction work. Confirmation is required on completion of construction as per agreed requirements.</p> <p>Should Openserve infrastructure be damaged while work is undertaken, kindly contact our representative immediately.</p> <p>All Openserve rights remain reserved.</p>	
6.	11/05/2023 Front Sheet (received via email on 11/05/2023) Open Serve	This wayleave, Reference Number SWIP_EMTO0385_23 valid for 06 months from date here of and is subject to the following conditions:	

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	(Stefan Geldenhuys)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No mechanical plant or vibrator type compactors may be used within three metres of any Openserve plant (I.E. any Telecommunication equipment above or below ground level). 2. The position of our plant affected by the proposal is indicated as approximate and XXXX must be contacted at least 48 hours prior to commencement of the work, upon which the actual location of Openserve Plant will be indicated on site. 3. A written request must be submitted to Openserve for consideration should the applicant require our plant to be relocated. The cost of such relocation will be recoverable from the applicant. 4. It is the responsibility of the applicant to verify the existence of the indicated plant and to notify Openserve immediately should the applicant locate any Openserve plant which is not indicated on the plans. 5. Should the applicant expose any Openserve plant, the safeguard thereof will be the applicant's full responsibility. 6. Failing to comply with the above conditions or any special conditions addendum hereto will be regarded as gross negligence and the applicant will be held responsible for the damage or loss as a result thereof. 	

2.6. AVDS ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	11/05/2023 Email, AVDS Environmental Consultants (Andre van der Spuy)	Below notification of 4/4/2023 refers. Please could you provide us with the DFFE's letter(s) of acceptance of the FSRs and any other associated records.	CSIR: This request was duly noted. The CSIR EIA Project Team indicated that the Acceptance of the Final Scoping Reports for the proposed Ingwe WEF 1 and 2 and any other associated records will be appended to the DEIRs which will be made available to all registered I&APs for review during the next legislated public review period. The CSIR EIA Project Team further noted that the stakeholder will be afforded the opportunity to comment thereon, in line with the requirements of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended).
2.	12/05/2023 Email, AVDS Environmental Consultants (Andre van der Spuy)	Below refers. The decision of the EIA Team to refuse our request is duly noted.	CSIR: This email was received in response to the CSIR EIA Project Team's previous response, which stated that the stakeholder will be afforded the opportunity to comment on the acceptance of the Final Scoping Reports, as well as any other associated records, during the next legislated review period. The request was, therefore, not refused, but rather Mr. van der Spuy was informed of when documents would be available as part of the legislated process.
3.	19/05/2023 Email, AVDS Environmental Consultants (Andre van der Spuy)	Please kindly send us without delay the I&AP database and contact details, including those for I&AP's who are considered to be "occupiers" and those without electronic means or ability to communicate, in order that we are able to fully exercise our legislated rights as a registered I&AP in below EIA processes.	CSIR: This request was duly noted. However, the CSIR EIA Project Team's duties as EAP in terms of Section 11(1)(b) of the POPI Act and its applicability to the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) prohibits sharing of personal information unless the registered I&APs, specifically those registered I&AP's who are considered to be "occupiers" and those without electronic means

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			or ability to communicate, have granted their written consent that such personal information may be made available to the requester. It was unclear as to the requestor's reasons for requesting this personal information of registered I&APs at this time as there was no appealable decision issued by the Competent Authority that could warrant this request for personal information.

3. COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE 30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD, WHICH EXTENDED FROM 19 JUNE 2023 TO 19 JULY 2023 (EXCLUDING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS)

The tables below include the comments and/or issues raised by stakeholders and registered Interested and/or Affected Parties (I&APs), together with the responses from the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) project team, following the release of the Draft EIA Report (DEIR) and associated specialist impact assessment reports for a 30-day review period, which extended from 19 June 2023 to 19 July 2023 (excluding public holidays). The tables below include the original comments received (emails and letters) as included in Appendix F.4 of the EIA Report. **Please note that the comments are taken verbatim from the comments provided by stakeholders and registered I&APs.**

The approach followed for this Comments and Responses Report (CRR) was guided by sections 3(3), 9, 12(1) and (2), 11 as well as 18 of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 14 of 2013) (POPIA). Note that in accordance with the POPIA, the CSIR conducts itself responsibly when collecting, processing, storing, and sharing any personal information collected for the purposes of Public Participation Processes (PPP) in terms of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). By registering as an I&AP and/or submitting information and comments, stakeholders consent to the collection, collation, processing, and storing of such information and the use and disclosure of such information for the aforementioned purpose (<https://www.csir.co.za/csir-privacy-notice>). Therefore, erring on the side of caution as recommended by the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), the names and affiliations of non-governmental I&APs are represented by an 'XXXX' in this CRR.

An integrated Public Participation Process was undertaken for the proposed Ingwe Wind Energy Facility (WEF) 1 and Ingwe WEF 2 projects. **The comments included in this CRR only apply to the proposed Ingwe WEF 2.** Comments relating to the Ingwe WEF 1 have been included for context or background purposes (where necessary). Comments and responses for the Ingwe WEF 1 project is included in the respective CRR. The comments received have been grouped per organisation, based on the structure recommended by the DFFE.

3.1. GENERAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROJECT NEEDS³

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	20/06/2023, Email, Mulilo Renewable Project Developments (Pty) Ltd (XXXX)	We understand that ABO Wind is developing the Ingwe 1 and Ingwe 2 WEFs near Molteno. Please could you register Mulilo, represented by myself and XXXX (XXXX) as an I&AP. I have copied in your EAPs, as I found the scoping report Exec summary online. Please can you advise where in the EIA process the projects are currently at, and please provide a link to the available public documentation.	CSIR: This request was noted. These stakeholders were subsequently registered on the I&AP project database for the two proposed Ingwe WEF projects. Refer to Appendix C of the EIA Report for a copy of the I&AP database.
2.	20/06/2023, Email, Eastern Cape Development Corporation (Rory Haschick)	Good day, please register me as I&AP	CSIR: This request was noted. This stakeholder was subsequently registered on the I&AP project database for the two proposed Ingwe WEF projects. Refer to Appendix C of the EIA Report for a copy of the I&AP database.
3.	21/06/2023 Email, The DFFE Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation (Kamogelo Mathetja)	<p>DFFE Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation hereby acknowledge receipt of the invitation to review and comment on the project mentioned on the subject line. Kindly note that the project has been allocated to Mrs M Rabothata and Mr K Mathetja (Both copied on this email). In addition, kindly share the shapefiles of the development footprints/application site with the Case Officers.</p> <p>Please note: All Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA review and any other Biodiversity EIA queries must be submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation at Email: BCAdmin@environment.gov.za for attention of Mr Seoka Lekota</p>	CSIR: Composite KML files of the two proposed Ingwe WEF projects were sent to this stakeholder on 26 June 2023 via email. In addition, BCAdmin@environment.gov.za and BCAdmin@dffe.gov.za were included on the project database of I&APs and Organs of State and will receive future communication regarding the proposed WEF projects. Refer to Appendix C of the EIA Report for a copy of the I&AP database. In addition, all Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA review were made available to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation for comment during the EIA Phase. Refer to Section 3.4.2 of this CRR as well as Appendix F.4 of the EIA Report for the

³ This includes requests to register on and de-register from the project I&AP database.

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NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
			comments received from the DFFE Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation.

3.2. GENERAL STAKEHOLDERS AND I&APs

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	20/06/2023, Email, Openserve (Stefan Geldenhuys)	Please send KMZ files for me to locate the site, to do the wayleave Send the respond to Stefang@openserve.co.za	CSIR: Composite KML files of the two proposed Ingwe WEF projects were sent to this stakeholder on 20 June 2023 and 28 June 2023 via email.
2.	29/06/2023, Email, Openserve (Stefan Geldenhuys)	Please find attached your approved Openserve wayleave. Please note: Our area representative as listed on the wayleave should be contacted at least 48 hours prior to commencement of construction in order to show services out on site, as our services on the attached plan(s) are APPROXIMATE ONLY. Please note, wayleave applications will NOT be accepted by this mailbox. Please send all wayleave requests to wayleaveswr@telkom.co.za Please ensure that the Openserve service plan(s) are printed in colour (if applicable) and on the correct page size as indicated in the	CSIR: The approved Openserve wayleave was well received. These comments were duly noted and were shared with the Project Applicant for their information and consideration.

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		bottom right corner, in order to ensure that services can be seen clearly.	
3.	29/06/2023, Letter (sent via email on 29/06/2023), Openserve (Stefan Geldenhuis)	<p>I hereby inform you that Openserve approves the proposed work indicated on your drawing in principle. This approval is valid for <u>06 MONTHS ONLY</u>, after which reapplication must be made if the work has not been completed.</p> <p>Any changes or deviations from the original planning during or prior to construction must immediately be communicated to this office.</p> <p>Approval is granted, subject to the following conditions.</p> <p>As per the drawing supplied, Openserve infrastructure <u>WILL BE AFFECTED</u>, consequently the conditions below and on the attached legend will apply.</p> <p>At points of crossing, the overhead power lines should cross above the overhead communication lines in accordance with, and clearances stipulated in the Occupational Health and Safety Act no 85 of 1993, Electrical Machinery Regulations 20 - Crossings, and Electrical Machinery Regulations 15 – Clearances of Power Lines. If the specifications could not be met, all deviation costs will be for the applicant's account.</p> <p>We also refer to Section 25 of the Electronic Communication Act 36 of 2005.</p>	CSIR: This approval in terms of Section 25 of the Electronic Communications Act (Act 36 of 2005, as amended) is duly noted and these recommendations were shared with the Project Applicant for their attention and further action.

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		<p>In case where an underground power cable will run parallel with an existing or projected underground communication cable, a separation as great as possible should be maintained with a minimum separation of 600mm. Should the separation be less than 600mm and the power cable are not enclosed in a suitable pipe, a concrete slab must be provided immediately above the power cable for the length of the parallelism. If the separation is less than 300mm, additional protection is required by placing concrete slabs between the Openserve cables/pipes and the power cables.</p> <p>At points where this Company's existing or proposed underground communications cable will be crossed by an underground cable, the latter should be laid at a depth of at least 300mm below the communication cable – normally laid at a depth of 600mm. If the power cable is not enclosed in a suitable pipe, protection in the form of a concrete slab should be provided immediately above the power cable for a minimum of 2 (two) meters on either side of the crossing.</p> <p>Please notify this office within 21 working days from this letter of acceptance and if any alternative proposal is available or if a recoverable work should commence.</p> <p>It would be appreciated if this office can be notified within 30 days of completion of the construction work. Confirmation is required on completion of construction as per agreed requirements.</p>	

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		<p>Should Openserve infrastructure be damaged while work is undertaken, kindly contact our representative immediately.</p> <p>All Openserve rights remain reserved.</p>	
4.	<p>29/06/2023, Letter (sent via email on 29/06/2023), Openserve (Stefan Geldenhuys)</p>	<p>This wayleave, Reference Number SWIP_EMTO0507_23 valid for 06 months from date here of and is subject to the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No mechanical plant or vibrator type compactors may be used within three metres of any Openserve plant (I.E. any Telecommunication equipment above or below ground level). 2. The position of our plant affected by the proposal is indicated as approximate and XXXX must be contacted at least 48 hours prior to commencement of the work, upon which the actual location of Openserve Plant will be indicated on site. 3. A written request must be submitted to Openserve for consideration should the applicant require our plant to be relocated. The cost of such relocation will be recoverable from the applicant. 4. It is the responsibility of the applicant to verify the existence of the indicated plant and to notify Openserve immediately should the applicant locate any Openserve plant which is not indicated on the plans. 5. Should the applicant expose any Openserve plant, the safeguard thereof will be the applicant's full responsibility. 6. Failing to comply with the above conditions or any special conditions addendum hereto will be regarded as gross 	

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		negligence and the applicant will be held responsible for the damage or loss as a result thereof.	
5.	19/07/2023 Email, Mulilo Renewable Project Developments (Pty) Ltd (XXXX)	RE: REMINDER OF THE AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORTS FOR A 30-DAY COMMENT PERIOD FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE UP TO 240 MWac INGWE WEF 1 (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2275) AND THE UP TO 240 MWac INGWE WEF 2 (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2276) AND THEIR ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR MOLTENO IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE Please see the attached comment for the proposed construction and operation of the up to 240 MWac Ingwe WEF 1 (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2275) and the up to 240 MWac Ingwe WEF 2 (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2276) and their associated infrastructure.	CSIR: These comments were well received and duly noted. Responses are provided below to the comments raised.
6.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Mulilo Renewable Project Developments (Pty) Ltd (XXXX)	RE: REMINDER OF THE AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORTS FOR A 30-DAY COMMENT PERIOD FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE UP TO 240 MWac INGWE WEF 1 (DFFE REF: 1411211613131212275) AND THE UP TO 240 MWac INGWE WEF 2 (DFFE REF: 1411211613131212276) AND THEIR ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR MOLTENO IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE	
7.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023),	With reference to the aforementioned proposal, Mulilo Renewable Energy Projects (Pty) Ltd ("Mulilo") recently concluded an agreement with Raimaker Energy to co-develop the three authorised wind energy facilities (namely, the Spreukloof,	APPLICANT: The wake loss assessments were addressed to the contact person of the holder of the respective EA's. A separate

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	Mulilo Renewable Project Developments (Pty) Ltd (XXXX)	<p>Loperberg and Malabar WEFs) and consequently Mulilo would like to be registered as an I&AP.</p> <p>We acknowledge the Draft EIAR. With specific reference to Chapter 19: Description of the Wake Effect Report undertaken by CSIR, the following is noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is noted on page 19-2, the DFFE has advised that investigating the potential impacts of the wake effect are imperative to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of Wind Energy Facilities. Mulilo concurs with DFFE's advice and has therefore opted to amicably participate in the public participation process undertaken by the Applicant. • It is noted on page 19-2, that the Applicant states, "Due to the fact that none of the Rainmaker Energy projects are operational, and that an approved final layout is yet to be issued for the Project Applicant. It can be noted that the project was BID in REIPPP round 6 and was unsuccessful due to grid constraints. • As per page 19-3, it is noted that the Applicant acknowledges that there is a potential for a reduction of yield impacting upon the socio-economic and enterprise development funding, although small. • As per page 19-3, Table 19.1 relating to the "Potential reduction in yield caused by wake loss from Ingwe WEF 1 on the nearby operational and authorised WEF projects", the calculated yield is noted. However, according to page 19-19 	response regarding wake loss has been provided directly to Rainmaker regarding the projects in question.

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		<p>this is based on a hub height of 105m and a rotor diameter of 150m's. The Draft EIAR infrastructure description for approval, is related to turbines of up to 180m's in height with a rotor diameter of up to 190m's (Table D of the Draft EIAR, Executive Summary). Based on professional experience, the difference in turbine specifications has the potential to increase the yield reduction on the adjacent, approved WEF's.</p>	
8.	<p>19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Mulilo Renewable Project Developments (Pty) Ltd (XXXX)</p>	<p>It is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The yield reduction may be calculated based on the proposed specifications stated in the Draft EIAR, as this has the potential to differ from the current report results. 	<p>APPLICANT:</p> <p>The description of the wake effect in the EIA Report acknowledges that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The wake loss assessment done at this stage is subject to various, high-level assumptions and is not necessarily a true representation of the final wake loss impact that could be expected, as confirmed in the letter to Rainmaker. 2) The maximum parameters in terms of hub height and rotor diameter are a theoretical maximum to allow for future changes in technology. For the purpose of the current assessment, we have selected a turbine model which provides realistic potential based on wind conditions and manufacturer availability. <p>Further, the Applicant has confirmed in the wake loss letter to Rainmaker that they are happy to engage as necessary to further deal with the issue of wake loss as may be required.</p>

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9.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Mulilo Renewable Project Developments (Pty) Ltd (XXXX)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFFE request that a Wake Agreement (or at the very least a Memorandum of Understanding committing to the establishment of a Wake Agreement) be established by the Applicant prior to EA approval, to circumvent any potential negative impacts. 	<p>APPLICANT:</p> <p>The Applicant is happy to commit to the establishment of a wake agreement between the parties. The wake agreement itself is, however, a commercial aspect not linked to environmental factors and the Applicant is of the view that it should not be linked to Environmental Authorisation (if granted). Detail design and final turbine selection would follow EA; therefore, conclusion of a Wake Agreement prior to EA is premature and would be based on a level of information that is insufficiently detailed to inform commercial terms.</p> <p>The potential social impacts are, however, viewed by the Applicant as being environmentally relevant, and these are addressed fully by the wake loss assessment and cumulative impact assessments described in Chapter 19 and Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report, respectively.</p> <p>In order to ensure that the matter of the Wake Agreements is addressed, it is suggested that a condition of EA (if granted) could require that Mulilo (and/or any other nearby Developer/ Wind Energy Facility which is operational, within 30 km) be engaged for a Wake Agreement prior to commencement of construction.</p>
10.	19/07/2023 Email,	After further discussion, we have decided to raise the attached objection.	CSIR: These comments were well received and duly noted. The CSIR EIA Project Team acknowledged receipt of these

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	Dorper Wind Farm (RF) Proprietary Limited (XXXX)	Kindly acknowledge receipt.	comments on 24/07/2023. Refer to Appendix F.4 of the EIA Report for proof thereof.
11.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Dorper Wind Farm (RF) Proprietary Limited (XXXX)	<p>RE: OBJECTION TO DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORTS FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE UP TO 240 MWac INGWE WEF 1 (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2275) AND THE UP TO 240 MWac INGWE WEF 2 (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2276) AND THEIR ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR MOLTENO IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE</p> <p>Dear Sirs,</p> <p>I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to formally express my objection to the ongoing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the proposed wind farm construction near Molteno, conducted by ABO Wind. As an operational wind energy facility, we are concerned about the potential impact to the operational efficiency that this development may have on our facility.</p> <p>I would like to bring to your attention several significant concerns and potential negative impacts associated with the proposed wind farm construction project, specifically focusing on the wake effects:</p>	Responses are provided below to the comments raised.
12.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Dorper Wind Farm (RF) Proprietary Limited (XXXX)	<p>1. Wind Farm Efficiency: Wake effects from wind turbines can reduce the overall efficiency of the wind farm. Depending on the choice in turbine technology, the downstream turbines may experience decreased wind speeds and turbulent airflows, resulting in reduced energy production for our facility. This</p>	<p>APPLICANT:</p> <p>1. The wake affect is acknowledged in the EIA Report and Chapter 19 of the EIA Report includes a technical statement regarding potential wake effect, as well as the potential social impacts.</p>

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		inefficiency needs to be carefully assessed and considered in the EIA process.	
13.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Dorper Wind Farm (RF) Proprietary Limited (XXXX)	2. Social impact: the losses in the wind farm efficiency may result in reduction in the expected community investment and negatively affecting the social impact in the community of Molteno.	APPLICANT: 2. The potential social impact is also acknowledged in the technical statement issued to Dorper Wind Farm.
14.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Dorper Wind Farm (RF) Proprietary Limited (XXXX)	Given the above concerns, I request a comprehensive reassessment of the EIA process to address the potential operational and social impacts adequately, particularly focusing on wake effects. This reassessment should include an agreement that will enable detailed wake modeling studies, to ensure that the proposed wind farm takes into account the potential wake effects and mitigates any negative consequences for our operation. It is my considered view that any such agreement (should it be deemed necessary based on the outcomes of the reassessment and wake modelling studies) be negotiated and concluded between the parties prior to the granting of an environmental authorization.	APPLICANT: The technical statement included in the EIA Report considers wake loss at the level of detail that is presently available at this stage of planning and design. A more comprehensive assessment at this stage would not provide useful information. The issue of wake loss is acknowledged and intentions to address it in an ongoing manner have been documented in the S&EIA Process. The description of the wake effect in the EIA Report acknowledges that: a) The wake loss assessment done at this stage is subject to various, high-level assumptions and is not necessarily a true representation of the final wake loss impact that could be expected, as confirmed in the letter to Dorper WEF. b) The maximum parameters in terms of hub height and rotor diameter are a theoretical maximum to allow for

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			<p>future changes in technology. For the purpose of the current assessment, we have selected a turbine model which provides realistic potential based on wind conditions and manufacturer availability and for the Dorper WEF, the as-built turbines have been selected.</p> <p>Further, the Applicant has confirmed in the wake loss letter to Dorper WEF that we are happy to engage as necessary to further deal with the issue of wake loss as may be required.</p> <p>Therefore, any negative consequences on the Dorper WEF operation would be understood, addressed and need to be agreed between parties.</p> <p>The Applicant is happy to commit to the establishment of a wake agreement between the parties. The wake agreement itself is, however, a commercial aspect not linked to environmental factors and the Applicant is of the view that it should not be linked to Environmental Authorisation (if granted). Detail design and final turbine selection would follow EA; therefore, conclusion of a Wake Agreement prior to EA is premature and would be based on a level of information that is insufficiently detailed to inform commercial terms.</p>

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			Should approval be granted, it is suggested that the EA require a condition that Dorper WEF be engaged for a Wake Agreement prior to commencement of construction.
15.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Dorper Wind Farm (RF) Proprietary Limited (XXXX)	We kindly request that you take our objections into serious consideration and act in the best interest of our community and our operation. Please keep me informed of any further developments in the EIA process and any measures taken to address these concerns. I am willing to participate constructively in any discussion related to this matter. Thank you for your attention and we I look forward to a timely response addressing our concerns.	APPLICANT: This objection has been included in the Final EIA Report and would form part of the information put forward to the CA for decision-making.
16.	19/07/2023 Email, Rainmaker Energy Projects (Pty) Ltd (XXXX)	Please find attached. Kindly acknowledge receipt.	CSIR: These comments were well received and duly noted. The CSIR EIA Project Team acknowledged receipt of these comments on 24/07/2023. Refer to Appendix F.4 of the EIA Report for proof thereof.
17.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Rainmaker Energy Projects (Pty) Ltd (XXXX)	Re: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORTS FOR A 30-DAY COMMENT PERIOD FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE UP TO 240 MWac INGWE WEF 1 (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2275) AND THE UP TO 240 MWac INGWE WEF 2 (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2276) AND THEIR ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR MOLTENO IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE	Responses are provided below to the comments raised.

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		<p>With reference to the aforementioned proposal, Rainmaker Energy Projects Pty Ltd ("Rainmaker Energy") hereby places the following on record:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rainmaker Energy has, since 2009, been developing a number of wind projects in the area between the towns of Molteno and Sterkstroom and their surrounds. The first of these projects being the now-operational 100MW Dorper Wind Farm, which was awarded a PPA under round 1 of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme ("REIPPPP"). The second, third and fourth projects are respectively: the 199.9 MW Loperberg Wind Farm, 212.4MW Malabar Wind Farm and 62.4 MW Spreeukloof Wind Farm. These three Rainmaker Energy projects are collectively known as the 'Stormberg Cluster'. 	
18.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Rainmaker Energy Projects (Pty) Ltd (XXXX)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The Stormberg Cluster was bid under round 6 of REIPPPP in 2022. It has been well publicised that no wind projects were awarded preferred bidder status under round 6 of REIPPPP due to a 'lack of grid availability' in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and Northern Cape Provinces. Furthermore, Rainmaker Energy is (and has been since July 2015) developing the Molteno Wind Farm on agricultural land adjacent to the proposed Ingwe 1 and 2 WEF. 	<p>APPLICANT:</p> <p>2. There is no Molteno Wind Farm registered with the DFFE and there is no evidence on the site of any intention to develop that we are aware of.</p>
19.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023),	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The general manager of Applicant (the developer of the proposed Ingwe 1 and 2 WEF) - Mr R Invernizzi - was previously employed by Rainmaker Energy in the role of Project Manager 	<p>APPLICANT:</p>

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	Rainmaker Energy Projects (Pty) Ltd (XXXX)	from November 2010 to April 2017, during which time Mr R Invernizzi was responsible for various and wide-ranging aspects relating to the development of Rainmaker Energy's wind projects (including Dorper Wind Farm, the Stormberg Cluster and the Molteno Wind Farm).	3. Please note that, in terms of timing, the application for the proposed Ingwe WEF development was submitted to the National DFFE on 14 January 2023.
20.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Rainmaker Energy Projects (Pty) Ltd (XXXX)	4. By virtue of the employment of Mr Invernizzi by Rainmaker Energy, as aforementioned, not only was the Applicant unequivocally aware of Rainmaker Energy's pre-existing development activities in the Molteno area, they had (and continue to have) intimate knowledge of Rainmaker Energy's particular projects (i.e. landowners, permitting, wind data etc).	<p>APPLICANT:</p> <p>4. Rainmaker's activities in terms of secured land, wind farm layouts and permits are known through publicly available documents including the EA's and related EA amendment applications for the Stormberg Cluster, and in particular the Motivation for amendment of EA's dated July 2021.</p> <p>The availability and details of this new information is unrelated to any previous employment relationship. ABO Wind has received these documents through being a registered I&AP with Savannah, the EAP for these projects. The source of information was explained in the EIA Report.</p> <p>Neither ABO Wind nor its employees have access to Rainmaker's wind data. The wind conditions in the area which has informed the wake loss assessment presented to Rainmaker through the EIA Process have been determined using wind data recorded at ABO's own 2 x met masts which are installed on land secured by ABO Wind, with the data extrapolated across the larger area.</p>

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		<p>5. Rainmaker Energy (as developer of the wind projects aforementioned) is clearly an interested and affected party (I&AP) vis-à-vis the present application in respect of the proposed Ingwe 1 and 2 WEF. Despite this, no contact was made by, or noticed received from, the Applicant or its consultants prior to June 2023.</p>	<p>APPLICANT:</p> <p>5. Contact was made directly in terms of potential wake effect in order to initiate a dialogue between parties. The EAP also notified Rainmaker of the availability of the DEIR for review and comment, therefore engagement took place at a time where there was sufficient use-able information for Rainmaker to consider.</p> <p>Furthermore, evidence of notification (site notice boards) dated 5th and 6th December 2022 is included in Appendix D of the EIA Report.</p> <p>Rainmaker was also established as an I&AP as indicated in Appendix C of the EIA Report.</p>
21.	<p>19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Rainmaker Energy Projects (Pty) Ltd (XXXX)</p>	<p>Be that as it may, Rainmaker Energy would like to to be registered as an I&AP and would recommend that the DFFE request that a Wake Agreements in respect of Rainmaker Energy's aforementioned wind projects (or at the very least a Memorandum of Understanding committing to the establishment of a Wake Agreement) be established by the Applicant prior to EA approval, to circumvent any potential negative impacts.</p>	<p>APPLICANT:</p> <p>Rainmaker is already registered, as shown in Appendix C of the EIA Report and demonstrated through initiation of engagement as mentioned above.</p> <p>The Applicant is happy to commit to the establishment of a wake agreement between the parties. The wake agreement itself is, however, a commercial aspect not linked to environmental factors and the Applicant is of the view that it should not be linked to Environmental Authorisation (if granted). Detail design and final turbine selection would follow EA; therefore, conclusion of a Wake Agreement prior to EA is premature and would be based on a level of</p>

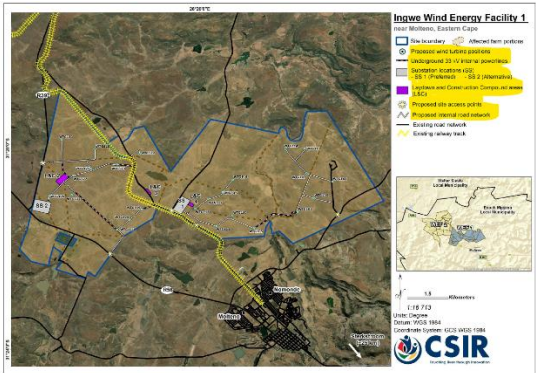
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			<p>information that is insufficiently detailed to inform commercial terms.</p> <p>The potential social impacts are, however, viewed by the Applicant as being environmentally relevant, and these are addressed fully by the wake loss assessment and cumulative impact assessments described in Chapter 19 and Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report, respectively.</p> <p>In order to ensure that the matter of the Wake Agreements is addressed, it is suggested that a condition of EA (if granted) could require that Rainmaker (and/or any other nearby Developer/ Wind Energy Facility which is operational, within 30km) be engaged for a Wake Agreement prior to commencement of construction.</p>

3.3. TRANSNET

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	20/06/2023, Email, Transnet (Riaan Karriem)	Hi Annedene For your Depot's attention.	CSIR: This comment is noted. The email correspondence together with the cover letter to I&APs and the executive summaries of the proposed Ingwe WEF 1 and Ingwe WEF 2 projects were shared internally within Transnet by this Stakeholder on 20 June 2023.
2.	12/07/2023, Email, Transnet (Annelize Harmse)	Dear Mrs Manyathi The attached EIA is for your further attention, please.	CSIR: This comment is noted. The email correspondence reminding Stakeholders of the availability of the DEIRs for the proposed Ingwe WEF 1 and Ingwe WEF 2 projects for comment was shared internally within Transnet by this Stakeholder on 12 July 2023.
3.	19/07/2023 Email, Transnet (Chantell Bruintjies)	Hi Siba /Sam For your attention.	CSIR: This comment is noted. The email correspondence reminding Stakeholders of the closure of the comment period on the DEIRs for the proposed Ingwe WEF 1 and Ingwe WEF 2 projects and was shared internally within Transnet by this Stakeholder on 19 July 2023.
4.	19/07/2023 Email, Transnet (Riaan Karriem)	Hi Chantell For your depot's attention.	CSIR: This comment is noted. The email correspondence reminding Stakeholders of the closure of the comment period on the DEIRs for the proposed Ingwe WEF 1 and Ingwe WEF 2 projects and was shared internally within Transnet by this Stakeholder on 19 July 2023.
5.	19/07/2023 Email, Transnet (Mark Moodaley)	Could we kindly get KMZ files of the development footprint and gridline crossings etc.	CSIR: This request was noted. Composite KMZ files showing the development footprints of the two proposed Ingwe WEF projects were sent to this stakeholder via email on 19 July 2023.

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6.	19/07/2023 Email, Transnet (Chantell Bruintjies)	Hi XXXX See email below for your attention.	CSIR: This comment is noted. The email correspondence reminding Stakeholders of the closure of the comment period on the DEIRs for the proposed Ingwe WEF 1 and Ingwe WEF 2 projects and was shared internally within Transnet by this Stakeholder on 19 July 2023.
7.	19/07/2023 Email, Transnet (Mark Moodaley)	Many thanks for the prompt reply and for availing the KMZ file. Could we possibly get KMZ files of the layers highlighted in yellow in the screenshot below? 	CSIR: This request was noted. Composite KMZ files showing the development footprints inclusive of the project infrastructure relative to the two proposed Ingwe WEF projects were sent to this stakeholder via email on 19 July 2023.

3.4. THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT (DFFE)

3.4.1. THE DIRECTORATE: INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	20/06/2023, Email, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Ephron Maradwa)	<p>14/12/16/3/3/2/2276</p> <p>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION FOLLOWING A SCOPING ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE UP TO 510 MWAC ABO WIND INGWE WIND ENERGY FACILITY 2 (WEF) ABO WIND INGWE WEF 2), NEAR MOLTENO IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE.</p> <p>The Department confirms having received the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Amended Application Form for the abovementioned project on 19 June 2023. You have submitted these documents to comply with the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended.</p> <p>Please take note of Regulation 40(3) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states that "Potential or registered interested and affected parties, including the competent authority, may be provided with an opportunity to comment on reports and plans contemplated in subregulation (1) prior to submission of an application but must be provided with an opportunity to comment</p>	<p>CSIR: The acknowledgement of receipt of the Amended EA Application form and DEIR is noted.</p> <p>The subsequent comments are noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential and registered I&APs were provided with an opportunity to comment on the DEIR for a period of 30 days, i.e., from 19 June 2023 to 19 July 2023. The proof of correspondence, such as emails, text messages, letters, and newspaper adverts, as well as the relevant follow-up emails sent in order to remind stakeholders of the comment period closure, in order to seek comments is included in Appendix F.3 of this Final EIA Report. This complies with Regulation 40(3) of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). The reminder regarding failure to meet any timeframes stipulated in Regulation 45 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) is noted. The Project Applicant is aware of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998, as amended).

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		<p>on such reports once an application has been submitted to the competent authority.”</p> <p>Further note that in terms of Regulation 45 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, this application will lapse if the applicant fails to meet any of the time-frames prescribed in terms of these Regulations, unless an extension has been granted in terms of Regulation 3(7) of these Regulations.</p> <p>You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.</p> <p>Kindly quote the abovementioned reference number in any future correspondence in respect of the application.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reference number as allocated by the Directorate was noted and was used in all correspondence in respect of the application.
2.	19/07/2023, Email, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Lydia Kutu, Trisha Rene Pillay, Salome Mambane, EIAAdmin)	<p>Good day.</p> <p>Please find herein the attached letters for the above mentioned.</p> <p>Please do not respond to this mailbox with any queries related to the decision been issued. All queries on the attached decision must be directed to official whose contact details is listed as enquiries.</p> <p>I hope you find all in order.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	<p>CSIR: The Department’s comments on the Ingwe WEF 1 DEIR were well received and duly noted.</p> <p>The responses are provided below to each comment raised.</p> <p><u>(a) Specific comments</u></p> <p>(i) It should be noted that the Draft Cape Vulture Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for environmental impacts on Cape Vultures by onshore wind energy generation</p>

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3.	20/07/2023, Email, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Trisha Rene Pillay, Muhammad Essop, Coenrad Agenbach)	Please find attached email sent through on the 19 July 2023, attached are the comments on the draft EIAr for both Ingwe Wind Energy Facility (WEF) 1 and Ingwe Wind Energy Facility (WEF) 2.	facilities has not been gazetted yet and thus the compliance requirement to undertake said assessment is therefore challenged. Further, in terms of Regulation 16 (3) (a), the report and assessment overall does comply with “any protocol or minimum information requirements relevant to the application as identified and gazetted (own emphasis) by the Minister in a government notice”. However, the Avifaunal Specialist has pro-actively considered the contents of the Draft Cape Vulture Protocol in his assessment of any potential impact to any Cape Vultures that might utilise the area, which is evident and confirmed by his findings resulting from the 24-month pre-construction monitoring programme conducted on site. The specialist report further states the following in this regard: “We have noted the requirements of this protocol but note that it is not yet promulgated. The current project has gone to considerable lengths to assess, avoid and manage the risk to Cape Vulture, in compliance with all relevant published guidance”. Lastly, the avifaunal impact assessment has been carried out in accordance with existing guidelines specifically pertaining to the Cape Vulture, namely the Cape Vulture and Wind Farms Guidelines for impact assessment, monitoring and mitigation. Therefore, relevant guidelines have been considered.
4.	19/07/2023, Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Sabelo Malaza, Coenrad Agenbach)	<p>COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE UP TO 240MW INGWE WIND ENERGY FACILITY 2 (WEF) AND ITS ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE NEAR MOLTENO IN THE ENOCH MGIIJIMA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, CHRIS HANI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE</p> <p>The Application for Environmental Authorisation and the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAr) received by the Department on 16 January 2023 and 19 June 2023, respectively, refer.</p> <p>This letter serves to inform you that the following information must be included in the final EIAr:</p>	
5.	19/07/2023, Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023),	<p><u>(a) Specific comments</u></p> <p>(i) According to the Avifaunal Specialist Study (Chapter 8) “the endangered Cape Vulture was recorded flying on site</p>	

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	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Sabelo Malaza, Coenrad Agenbach)	<p>regularly, with a peak in summer, and roosts on powerlines on site.” Therefore, a Cape Vulture Assessment must be done and included in the EIAr. Kindly take note the draft Cape Vulture Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for environmental impacts on Cape Vultures by onshore wind energy generation facilities, should be utilised to inform the Cape Vulture Assessment included in the EIAr.</p> <p>(ii) One of the EA condition recommendations for mitigation on page 99 of the Avifaunal Specialist Study (Chapter 8) is that “The sensitive areas identified by this study should be adhered to”. Kindly provide clarity as to what areas are being referred to as per the sensitivity map. The avifaunal specialist must confirm whether turbines are to be excluded from areas declared as “very high sensitivity” and “high sensitivity” or just “very high sensitivity” as this is unclear in the report.</p> <p>(iii) Kindly take note that the Bird and Bat specialist studies must have support from Birdlife South Africa and SABAA.</p> <p>(iv) The final EIAr must clearly provide a detailed section which addresses the site sensitivity verification requirements where a specialist assessment is required but no specific assessment protocol has been prescribed, as well as the site sensitivity verification and minimum report content requirements for all specialist assessments undertaken, which was included in the screening tool report. Kindly take note that this should be in the form of a report and should</p>	<p>(ii) [Add]The sensitive areas are indicated in Table 14 of the avifaunal report and correlate with the sensitivity map in Figure 18. The table also explains which aspects of the proposed development/components must not be located in the various sensitive areas. It does also clarify what pertains to turbines specifically.</p> <p>(iii) Subsequent to the acceptance of the Final Scoping Report, an Avifaunal Focus Group Meeting was held on 16 May 2023 with BLSA, the EWT, and VulPro and a Bats Focus Group Meeting was held on 11 July 2023 with the SABAA and EWT in order to discuss the avifaunal sensitivities and bat sensitivities associated with the proposed projects, respectively. Refer to Section 4.1 of this CRR for the Avifaunal Focus Group Meeting Notes and Section 4.3 of this CRR for the Bats Focus Group meeting notes which captured salient points from the discussions that followed the presentations. In addition, refer to Appendix M.1 and M.3 of the EIA Report for copies and proof of correspondence with stakeholders regarding the respective Focus Group Meetings, Focus Group Meeting Presentations, and Focus Group Meeting Notes. Furthermore, note that the EWT has also provided some comment on bats (refer to Sections 1.7, 2.2 and 3.12 of this CRR as well as Appendix D.4, F.1 and F.4 of the EIA Report). Therefore, engagement has been extensive with both parties and their comments</p>

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		<p>either confirm or dispute the sensitivity ratings for each theme identified by the screening tool report. Please refer to 1. Site sensitivity verification and minimum report content requirements of the Protocol document.</p> <p>(v) A motivation must be provided in the final EIAR as to why particular studies that were identified in the screening tool were not undertaken.</p> <p>(vi) According to GNR 435, a Generic EMPr must be submitted for the substations. Please take note the Generic EMPr dated June 2023 submitted under Appendix J will not be accepted. The Generic EMPr as it is provided for in the GNR 435 should be submitted as is, and the sections that require specific information should be completed accordingly. There should be no changes of the format or numbering of the Generic EMPr.</p> <p>(vii) Please take note that all the sections of the Generic EMPr should be correctly filled. Ensure that Part B: Section 2 of the EMPr is completed and signed by the applicant, and Part C: Site specific environmental attributes is completed. Please take note failure to submit all the required information that forms part of the Generic EMPr will be regarded as non-compliance. We request that you adequately complete all applicable sections in the Generic EMPr.</p> <p>(viii) Recommendations provided by specialist reports must be considered and used to inform the preferred layout. Specifically, turbines and associated services must be</p>	<p>have been captured in the process (either through written comments submitted or meeting notes) and responded to.</p> <p>(iv) Note that the following specialist assessments were conducted in adherence to the Procedures for the Assessment and Minimum Requirements for Reporting on identified Environmental Themes in terms of Sections 24(5) (a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 as published in Government Notice 320 in March 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agriculture – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for environmental impacts on agricultural resources by onshore wind energy generation facilities where the electricity output is 20 megawatts or more; ○ Avifauna – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for environmental impacts on avifaunal species by onshore wind and/or solar photovoltaic energy generation facilities where the electricity output is 20 megawatts or more; ○ Biodiversity – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for environmental impacts on Terrestrial Biodiversity;

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		<p>removed from all sensitive areas as recommended by the specialists.</p> <p>(ix) Comments must be obtained from this Department's Biodiversity Conservation Directorate at BCAdmin@dffe.gov.za.</p> <p>(x) You are further reminded that the final EIAR to be submitted to this Department must comply with all the requirements in terms of the scope of assessment and content of the EIAR in accordance with Appendix 3 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Biodiversity – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for environmental impacts on Aquatic Biodiversity; ○ Noise – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for noise impacts; ○ Defence – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for impacts on defence installations; and ○ Civil Aviation – Protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for impacts on civil aviation installations. <p>Note that the Terrestrial Biodiversity Specialist Assessment undertaken as part of this S&EIA Process also complies with the Terrestrial Animal Species and Terrestrial Plant Species Protocols (Government Notice No. 1150 of 30 October 2020) as confirmed with the DFFE in the pre-application consultation process during which no objections to this approach were noted. Refer to Appendix E of the EIA Report for a copy of the pre-application consultation correspondence with the DFFE, as well as Chapter 11 of the EIA Report for a copy of the Terrestrial Biodiversity and Species Impact Assessment provided for this project.</p>

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			<p>Note that the specialists have prepared and submit their detailed impact assessments and significance ratings based on a revised and refined project infrastructure layout as assessed during the EIA Phase. Also note that throughout this S&EIA Process, relevant best practice guidelines including any other applicable guidelines have been applied in the specialist assessments during the EIA Phase.</p> <p>(v) Please note that motivation for excluding the Radio Frequency Interference (RFI) study as identified by the Screening Tool was included in Section 4.4.2 of Chapter 4 of the DEIR and has been retained in the Final EIA Report.</p> <p>(vi) This comment is noted. The Generic EMP_r for the Substation was submitted as it is provided for in the GNR 435 with the Final EIA Report. The sections that required specific information was completed accordingly and no changes were made to the format or numbering of the Generic EMP_r. Refer to Appendix J of the Final EIA Report for the Generic EMP_r as it is provided for in the GNR 435, as per the DFFE's requirements.</p> <p>(vii) All the required information that forms part of the Generic EMP_r as it is provided for in the GNR 435 was filled and submitted with the Final EIA Report. Also note that Part B: Section 2 of the EMP_r was completed</p>

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			<p>and signed by the Applicant, Part C: Site specific environmental attributes was completed as well as all applicable sections of the Generic EMPr was adequately completed in the Generic EMPr that was submitted with the Final EIA Report. Refer to Appendix J of the Final EIA Report for the Generic EMPr.</p> <p>(viii) All recommendations made by Specialists were used to inform the preferred project infrastructure layout. Turbines and associated infrastructure have been removed or relocated away from sensitive areas as recommended by the specialists. This is clearly demonstrated in the FEIR which explains the application of the mitigation hierarchy, most notably the reduction in the layout/ number of turbines from that initially presented in the Draft Scoping Report to that provided as the proposed development in the FEIR.</p> <p>(ix) Comments were sought from the DFFE Biodiversity Conservation Directorate at BCAdmin@dfre.gov.za. Refer to Section 3.4.2 of this CRR and Appendix F.4 of the EIA Report for the comments received from this Directorate, as well as the responses provided.</p> <p>(x) This comment is noted. The Final EIA Report that has been submitted to the DFFE has complied with all the requirements in terms of the scope of assessment and content of the EIA Report in accordance with Appendix 3 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations, as amended.</p>

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6.	19/07/2023, Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Sabelo Malaza, Coenrad Agenbach)	<p><u>(b) Listed Activities</u></p> <p>(i) Please ensure that all relevant listed activities are applied for, are specific and can be linked to the development activity or infrastructure as described in the project description. Only activities applicable to the development must be applied for and assessed.</p> <p>(ii) If the activities applied for in the application form differ from those mentioned in the final EIAR, an amended application form must be submitted. Please note that the Department's application form template has been amended and can be downloaded from the following link https://www.dffe.gov.za/documents/forms.</p> <p>(iii) It is imperative that the relevant authorities are continuously involved throughout the environmental impact assessment process as the development property possibly falls within geographically designated areas in terms of numerous GN R. 985 Activities. Written comments must be obtained from the relevant authorities and submitted to this Department. In addition, a graphical representation of the proposed development within the respective geographical areas must be provided.</p> <p>(iv) The EIAR must provide an assessment of the impacts and mitigation measures for each of the listed activities applied for.</p>	<p>CSIR: This comment is noted.</p> <p>The responses are provided below to each comment raised.</p> <p><u>(b) Listed Activities</u></p> <p>(i) Refer to Section 4.3 of Chapter 4 of the EIA Report for additional information. At the Scoping Phase there were some project aspects that still needed to be confirmed during the EIA Phase, and it was necessary to follow the maximum development scenario or precautionary approach at the time. In this regard, concerted efforts were made during the EIA Phase to confirm the applicability of the listed activities and provide clarification, as well as more succinct information in the applicability discussion of each listed activity. An Amended Application for EA was accordingly submitted to the DFFE with the DEIR. In the Final EIA Report more clarification has been provided and only listed activities that are triggered by the proposed development are applied for. In addition, certain listed activities have been removed from the Application for EA as they are no longer applicable. As such, an Amended Application for EA has been submitted to the DFFE with the Final EIA Report (note that there is no additional information, therefore the amendments are not considered substantive). Refer to Chapter 4 of the FEIR for additional information.</p>

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			<p>(ii) An Amended EA Application Form has been submitted to the Competent Authority with the Final EIA Report, as certain listed activities are no longer applicable. The latest available Application Form template was downloaded from the DFFE website provided.</p> <p>(iii) The proposed project will take place outside of an urban area in the Eastern Cape, on sites that contain CBAs and ESAs in terms of the 2019 ECBP. Note however that the WEF development footprint has avoided all Aquatic and Terrestrial CBAs (Type 1 and 2) and, therefore, any listed activities related to development within such areas are not applicable. One proposed turbine tower and associated roads/cabling are proposed to be located in an ESA. Appendix G as well as Chapters 10 and 11 contains maps illustrating the geographical representation of the proposed development within the respective geographical areas in terms of relevant GNR 985 activities. The Eastern Cape DEDEAT has also been consulted regarding the applicability of CBAs and ESAs as identified in terms of the 2019 ECBP but no clarifying comment has been received to date. Refer to Appendix F.3 and F.4 for proof of communication with the Eastern Cape DEDEAT.</p> <p>(iv) The EIA Report has provided an assessment of the impacts and mitigation measures for each of the listed activities applied for.</p>
7.	19/07/2023,	<u>(c) Layout & Sensitivity Maps</u>	CSIR: This comment is noted.

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	Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Sabelo Malaza, Coenrad Agenbach)	<p>(i) All preferred turbine positions must be clearly numbered. The turbine position numbers must be consistently used in all maps to be included in the reports (including specialist).</p> <p>(ii) The final EIAR must provide coordinate points for the proposed development site (note that if the site has numerous bend points, at each bend point coordinates must be provided) as well as the start, middle and end point of all linear activities.</p> <p>(iii) <u>The EIAR must provide a copy of the final preferred site layout map for the WEF, as determined by the detailed engineering phase and micro-siting, and all mitigation measures.</u> All available biodiversity information must be used in the finalisation of the layout map, <u>including the findings and recommendations made by the specialists.</u> Existing infrastructure must be used as far as possible e.g., roads. The layout map must indicate the following:</p> <p>a) A clear indication of the envisioned area for the proposed wind energy facility;</p> <p>b) Position of the wind turbines (wind turbines to be numbered) (1 to 24 turbines);</p> <p>c) Internal roads;</p> <p>d) All supporting onsite infrastructure such as laydown area, guard house and control room etc.;</p> <p>e) Battery Energy Storage System;</p> <p>f) Substations, transformers, switching stations and inverters;</p>	<p>The responses are provided below to each comment raised.</p> <p><u>(c) Layout & Sensitivity Maps</u></p> <p>(i) Please refer to Figure 2.4 in Chapter 2 of the EIA Report which displays the numbered turbine layout for the proposed WEF. The turbine position numbers are used consistently in all relevant maps in the EIA Report (including Specialist Assessments). Refer to Appendix G and Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report for all relevant maps.</p> <p>(ii) Please refer to Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 in Chapter 2 of the EIA Report, in which the coordinates of the proposed development site and associated project infrastructure have been included.</p> <p>(iii) Please note that the final preferred site layout map as indicated in the DEIR (and FEIR) is the layout that is proposed for approval. More detail in terms of detailed engineering design generally occurs post-EA (if approved), prior to construction. Should there be any amendments required in future, these would be applied for as needed. The main body of the FEIR contains all maps as requested, and maps are also included throughout the document (refer to the list of figures upfront in the EIA Report). Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report also includes relevant features and</p>

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		<p>g) Connection routes (including pylon positions) to the distribution/transmission network;</p> <p>h) All existing infrastructure on the site, especially railway lines and roads; and</p> <p>i) Buildings, including accommodation.</p> <p>(iv) Please provide an environmental sensitivity map which indicates the following:</p> <p>a) The location of sensitive environmental features identified on site, e.g. CBAs, protected areas, heritage sites, wetlands, drainage lines, nest and roost sites etc. that will be affected by the facility and its associated infrastructure;</p> <p>b) Buffer areas; and</p> <p>c) All “no-go” areas.</p> <p>(v) The above layout map must be superimposed (overlain) with the sensitivity map and a cumulative map which shows neighbouring and existing infrastructure.</p> <p>(vi) Google maps will not be accepted.</p>	<p>sensitivities identified by the Specialists and the findings and recommendations made by the Specialists have been used to inform the final project infrastructure layout. All relevant maps have also been included in Appendix G of the EIA Report. All relevant maps indicate the WEF development footprint and have been updated to indicate the proposed positions of all key relevant project infrastructure including wind turbines and associated hardstand areas, access roads, laydown areas, construction camps, substation hub, BESS, operational and maintenance buildings, and concrete batching plants. The proposed internal access road network to be constructed was assessed in detail by the specialists and finalised during the EIA Phase and is included in the EIA Report. In terms of grid connection, it has also been explained at length that this is going to be the subject of a separate application, as is a typical approach approved by the DFFE in general for this type of proposed development.</p> <p>(iv) Please refer to Chapters 6 to 17 and Appendix G of the EIA Report for the relevant sensitivity maps which include the locations of all identified sensitive environmental features on-site as well as buffers and “no-go” areas, as per the specifications outlined by the DFFE, which have been informed by specialist’ inputs. It must be noted that specialists’ interpretation of a “no-go” and buffer area differ depending on the nature</p>

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			<p>of each specialist's assessment criteria and sensitivity ratings i.e., "no-go" areas and buffers differ for different components of the proposed development (e.g., a wind turbine would require a larger buffer for a bird nest or roosting area than perhaps a road). What is assigned as a "no-go" area for wind turbines doesn't necessarily mean a road or laydown area cannot be developed in that area. It is also the Applicant's preference to avoid "no-go" areas as far as possible and aim to place infrastructure components such as access roads along or as close as possible to existing road infrastructure on the proposed project site, where practical.</p> <p>(v) Please note that the fine scale sensitivities mapped by the specialists within the proposed project site area, and the fine scale project infrastructure layout cannot be easily seen when combined with a 30 km radius cumulative map. Scale needs to be considered in terms of the 30 km radius cumulative map. Combined "no-go" environmental features maps and combined "no-go" sensitivity maps have been provided in Chapter 5 and Appendix F of the EIA Report to cover these aspects. A separate cumulative map is also provided in the relevant specialist assessments included in Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report.</p> <p>(vi) All maps compiled by the CSIR in the EIA Report are not produced using Google Maps.</p>

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8.	19/07/2023, Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Sabelo Malaza, Coenrad Agenbach)	<u>(d) Specialist Declaration of Interest</u> (i) Specialist Declaration of Interest forms must be attached to the final EIAR. You are therefore requested to submit original signed Specialist Declaration of Interest forms for each specialist study conducted. The forms are available on Department's website (please use the Department's template).	CSIR: This comment is noted. The responses are provided below to each comment raised. <u>(d) Specialist Declaration of Interest</u> (i) Note that the Specialist Declaration of Interest forms, as per the Department's template, for each specialist study conducted is included in each of the Specialist Assessments which are included in Chapters 6 to 21 of the EIA Report.
9.	19/07/2023, Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Sabelo Malaza, Coenrad Agenbach)	<u>(e) Specialist Assessments</u> (i) The Visual Impact Assessment (Chapter 13) indicates that two (2) turbines labelled 216 and 218 (shaded in red), may have a shadow flicker impact on two unknown homesteads (visual receptors 16 and 20, respectively). The following statement made by the specialist "However, these homesteads are located within the farm portions earmarked for the proposed WEF development. It is therefore assumed that these homes are in fact aware of and to a certain extent accepting of the shadow flicker associated with these turbines", is not acceptable. It cannot be assumed that these receptors are aware of the effect of shadow flicker or are accepting of the impact on them. All homesteads that will be affected needs to be consulted and made aware of the impact on their livelihood. Further consultation is to be undertaken as part	CSIR: This comment is noted. The responses are provided below to each comment raised. <u>(e) Specialist Assessments</u> (i) Two (2) turbines labelled 219 and 218 may have a shadow flicker impact on two unknown homesteads (visual receptors 16 and 20 respectively). However, all of these homesteads are located within the farm portions earmarked for the proposed WEF development. Note that during the EIA consultation process it was confirmed that visual receptor 16 is a shed and is not occupied, and visual receptor 20 has been unoccupied for over 20 years and therefore shadow flicker poses no impact to them. Further,

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		<p>of the EIA consultation process with these specific sensitive receptors in order to establish their understanding and concerns regarding this possible impact. Should it be found during the consultation process that the residents of these homesteads are concerned with the impact associated with shadow flicker, it is then recommended that the positioning of the offending turbines be revised or removed. This process needs to be concluded and results of consultation provided in the final EIAR with recommended mitigation measures.</p> <p>(ii) Please provide a detailed description as well as any associated assessments related to the technology required for the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in the final EIAR.</p> <p>(iii) The EAP must ensure that the terms of reference for all the identified specialist studies must include the following:</p> <p>a) A detailed description of the study's methodology; indication of the locations and descriptions of the development footprint, and all other associated infrastructures that they have assessed and are recommending for authorisation.</p> <p>b) Provide a detailed description of all limitations to the studies. All specialist studies must be conducted in the right season and providing that as a limitation will not be allowed.</p> <p>c) Please note that the Department considers a 'no-go' area, as an area where no development of any</p>	<p>in light of this, the significance of shadow flicker is therefore anticipated to be low before mitigation and low post mitigation.</p> <p>(ii) Please note that a full detailed assessment of the technology required for the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) was included in the High-Level Safety Health and Environmental Risk Assessment for the Development of Battery Energy Storage Systems which was included in Chapter 18 of the DEIR and has been retained in the Final EIA Report.</p> <p>(iii) Detailed specialist impact assessments were undertaken during the EIA Phase and comply with Appendix 6 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) and/or the gazetted Assessment Protocols published in March 2020 (GN 320) and October 2020 (GN 1150), where relevant. The full assessments are provided in the EIA Report, which each include (a) a detailed description of the study's methodology, indication of the locations and descriptions of the development footprint, turbine positions and all other associated infrastructure locations that have been assessed and are being recommended for authorisation; (b) a detailed description of all limitations to the assessment, (c) clarification as to the specialist's definition of "no-go" areas and buffers (and how</p>

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		<p>infrastructure is allowed; therefore, no development of associated infrastructure including access roads is allowed in the 'no-go' areas.</p> <p>d) Should the specialist definition of 'no-go' area differ from the Department's definition; this must be clearly indicated. The specialist must also indicate the 'no-go' area's buffer if applicable.</p> <p>e) All specialist studies must be final, and provide detailed/practical mitigation measures for the preferred alternative and recommendations, and must not recommend further studies to be completed post EA.</p> <p>f) Bird and bat specialist studies must have support from Birdlife South Africa and SABAA.</p> <p>g) Should a specialist recommend specific mitigation measures, these must be clearly indicated.</p> <p>(iv) Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations, the EAP must clearly indicate the most reasonable recommendation and substantiate this with defendable reasons; and were necessary, include further expertise advice.</p> <p>(v) It is further brought to your attention that Procedures for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting in identified Environmental Themes in terms of Sections 24(5)(a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998, when applying for Environmental Authorisation, which were promulgated in Government</p>	<p>they differ for wind turbines as opposed to other infrastructure); (d) detailed cumulative impact assessment, (e) detailed, practical and appropriate mitigation measures and management actions; as well as (f) an assessment of the "no-go" alternative. These specialist assessments are considered final and do not recommend further studies to be undertaken post EA (should EA be granted), except for recommended monitoring requirements during construction, operations and decommissioning of the proposed WEF, which is typical of such development and also aligned with the principles of NEMA which require that all phases of development be assessed and that the mitigation hierarchy be applied (i.e. operational mitigation forms part of this). The Terms of Reference for all identified specialist assessments conducted during the EIA Phase are included in Chapter 4 of the EIA Report. Furthermore, all specialists have complied with the protocols in terms of the undertaking of the field surveys in the correct season. Details on the suitability of the season for fieldwork will be provided in the specialist assessments, included in Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report. In addition, officials from BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) and the SABAA were included</p>

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		<p>Notice No. 320 of 20 March 2020 (i.e. “the Protocols”) and in Government Notice No. 1150 of 30 October 2020 (i.e. protocols for terrestrial plant and animal species), have come into effect. Please note that specialist assessments must be conducted in accordance with these protocols.</p> <p>(vi) Please also ensure that the final BAR includes the Site Verification Report and Compliance Statements (where applicable) as required by the relevant themes.</p> <p>(vii) Please note further that the protocols, if applicable, require certain specialists’ to be SACNASP registered. Please ensure that the relevant specialist certificates are attached to the relevant reports.</p> <p>(viii) <u>As such, the Specialist Declaration of Interest forms must also indicate the scientific organisation registration/member number and status of registration/membership for each specialist.</u></p>	<p>on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of State at the outset of the S&EIA Process. BLSA and SABAA were given the opportunity to comment on the Draft Scoping Report. Comments received from BLSA on the Draft Scoping Report are included in Section 1.6 of this CRR and Appendix D.4 of the EIA Report. No comments were received from the SABAA on the Draft Scoping Report, despite regular follow-up; however, they were provided with the Final Scoping Report for their records and have been afforded the opportunity to comment on the DEIR. Note that the EWT has also provided some comment on bats (refer to Sections 1.7 and 2.2 of this CRR as well as Appendix D.4 and F.1 of the EIA Report). Subsequent to the acceptance of the Final Scoping Report, an Avifaunal Focus Group Meeting was held on 16 May 2023 with BLSA, the EWT, and VulPro and a Bats Focus Group Meeting was held on 11 July 2023 with EWT and the SABAA in order to discuss the avifaunal sensitivities and bat sensitivities associated with the proposed projects, respectively. Refer to Section 4.1 of this CRR for the Avifaunal Focus Group Meeting Notes and Section 4.3 of this CRR for the Bats Focus Group Meeting Notes summarising key comments and questions raised during the discussions. In</p>

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			<p>addition, refer to Appendix M.1 and M.3 of the EIA Report for copies and proof of correspondence with stakeholders regarding the respective Focus Group Meetings, Focus Group Meeting Presentations, and Focus Group Meeting Notes. Furthermore, note that the EWT has also provided some comment on bats (refer to Sections 1.7, 2.2 and 3.12 of this CRR as well as Appendix D.4, F.1 and F.4 of the EIA Report)</p> <p>(iv) The Avifaunal Specialist has recommended the painting of at least one turbine blade in a darker contrasting colour as a mitigation measure to make the rotor swept area more visible and therefore minimise bird fatalities due to potential turbine collisions. Painting of turbine blades are subject to approval from the South African Civil Aviation Authority outside of the EIA process (i.e. this is not required in terms of NEMA, but rather the Civil Aviation Act 13 of 2009). It had recently been successfully implemented as a mitigation measure by the Umoya Energy Wind Farm on the West Coast and it is believed to significantly reduce the possibility of turbine collisions of priority bird species. However, the Visual Specialist has indicated that the painting of turbine blades is not preferable as it increases visibility and therefore increases the visual impact of the proposed WEF.</p>

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			<p>Considering these contradicting specialist opinions, it should be noted that the key issues raised by registered I&APs to date are focused on the potential impact of the proposed WEF on birds, particularly Endangered Cape Vultures (and other Endangered species), whereas no concerns were noted regarding the potential visual impact of such a wind farm development in this area. It is likely that due to a similar wind farm development already being operational which is located southwest of the town of Molteno and that is rather visible on the horizon, the local residents and farming community are already familiar with the visual impact and therefore has no objection. Further, following extensive public participation with various I&APs (note that the database of registered I&APs comprises 382 parties), it should be noted that objections to visual impacts were not raised in response to all documentation released for comment during the S&EIA process. It is therefore the EAP's official recommendation that the painting of blades should remain a key mitigation measure as recommended by the Avifaunal Specialist for implementation at the proposed Ingwe WEFs as it will contribute to significantly reduce potential bird fatalities due to turbine collisions.</p>

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			<p>(v) Specialist Site Sensitivity Verifications were conducted in accordance with Part A of the Government Gazette 43110, GN R320, where required. The gazetted procedures for the assessment and minimum requirements for reporting on identified environmental themes in terms of Sections 24(5) (a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998, when applying for environmental authorisation (GG 43110 / GN R320, 20 March 2020) was adhered to in terms of the minimum report requirements for the Scoping Phase, and have been complied with, as applicable, during the EIA Phase. Please refer Chapters 6 to 21 of the EIA Report for the specialist assessments.</p> <p>(vi) Site Sensitivity Verifications and Compliance Statements in accordance with Part A and Part B of GNR 320 of 20 March 2020, have been included in the specialists' chapters, where relevant and applicable (Refer to Chapters 6 to 21 of the EIA Report).</p> <p>(vii) In line with the Assessment Protocols (GN 320 and GN 1150), the following specialist assessments require specialists to be SACNASP registered of which valid certificates have been included in the following chapters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Agriculture (Chapter 6)

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Aquatic Biodiversity (Chapter 10) o Terrestrial Biodiversity (Chapter 11) o Avifauna (Chapter 8) <p>(viii) Specialist Declarations of Interest were included in each of the specialist impact assessment chapters included in Chapters 6 to 21 of the DEIR and have been retained in the Final EIA Report.</p>
10.	19/07/2023, Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Sabelo Malaza, Coenrad Agenbach)	<p><u>(f) Cumulative Assessment</u></p> <p>(i) <u>The cumulative impacts of all intended activities must be assessed together, which include the facility and its supporting infrastructure (including the grid connection infrastructure e.g. the power line and substations even if separate applications have been lodged for these).</u></p> <p>(ii) Should there be any other similar projects within a 30km radius of the proposed development site, the cumulative impact assessment for all identified and assessed impacts must be refined to indicate the following:</p> <p>a) Identified cumulative impacts must be clearly defined, and where possible the size of the identified impact must be quantified and indicated, i.e. hectares of cumulatively transformed land.</p> <p>b) Detailed process flow and proof must be provided, to indicate how the specialist's recommendations, mitigation measures and conclusions from the various similar developments in the area were taken into</p>	<p>CSIR: This comment is noted.</p> <p>The responses are provided below to each comment raised.</p> <p><u>(f) Cumulative Assessment</u></p> <p>(i) Note that the cumulative impacts of all intended activities have been assessed including the proposed facility and its supporting infrastructure which include grid connection infrastructure e.g., substation. Please note that the power line infrastructure forms part of a separate application for EA and has <u>not</u> been lodged yet. This will form part of a separate S&EIA Process that will be undertaken at a later stage.</p> <p>(ii) Refer to the specialist chapters of the EIA Report for high-level cumulative impact assessments. The approach for the cumulative impact assessment includes all renewable energy and EGI projects within a 30 km radius that received an EA and/or have an EIA Process underway</p>

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		<p>consideration in the assessment of cumulative impacts and when the conclusion and mitigation measures were drafted for this project.</p> <p>c) The cumulative impacts significance rating must also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development.</p> <p>d) A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed.</p>	<p>at the time of starting this S&EIA Process (i.e., by 1 December 2022).</p> <p>a) The specialists have identified high-level cumulative impacts as per the above approach, and such impacts have been clearly defined. Where possible the size of the identified impact has been quantified and indicated, i.e., hectares of cumulatively transformed land in the detailed cumulative impact assessments. It is also important to note that in some cases the actual development footprint of the nearby Renewable Energy developments cannot always be easily quantified or accessed spatially. For example, the National Renewable Energy EIA Application Database contains the land parcels, and not the actual development footprint. Nonetheless, it is believed that the high-level assessment of cumulative impacts is adequately captured in the EIA Report. With regards to the levels of transformation, the current state of the affected area must also be taken into consideration.</p> <p>b) The assessment of cumulative impacts is based on the specialists and EAP's knowledge of similar approved Renewable Energy and</p>

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			<p>EGI projects. The list of Renewable Energy and EGI projects was also supplemented by the National Renewable Energy EIA Applications (REEA) database and the Eskom's Generation Connection Capacity Assessment (GCCA) (2022). The projects located within the 30 km radius from this proposed WEF development are considered in the detailed cumulative impact assessments sections in the relevant specialist chapters. Detailed process flow and proof indicating how the specialist's recommendations, mitigation measures and conclusions from the various similar developments in the area were taken into consideration in the assessment of cumulative impacts are included in Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report.</p> <p>c) Note that the specialists assessed cumulative impacts based on their expertise and knowledge of similar projects and management actions. Furthermore, the assessment of cumulative impacts is not necessarily solely focused on an assessment of impacts linked to previously authorised similar developments and consideration of their mitigation measures, but also about the sensitivities of the land on which the projects</p>

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			<p>are proposed. For example, from a heritage point of view, it is also about other heritage resources, the type of locations they could occur in, and any other developments that may have impacted on the heritage resources. The approach to cumulative assessment has also observed the precautionary principle through assessment of developments which are not only currently operational, but also which currently hold EA (regardless of when they would expire) as well as projects which historically held EA. A concerted effort has been made to ensure that cumulative impacts significance rating inform the need and desirability of the proposed development.</p> <p>d) The cumulative impacts significance ratings are discussed in the specialist assessments included in Chapters 6 to 17 of the EIA Report and have informed the need and desirability of the proposed development. The specialist assessments included in Chapters 6 to 15 of the EIA Report also include cumulative impact environmental statements on whether the proposed development can proceed. The FEIR also includes an impact statement in Chapter 22 which addresses cumulative impacts.</p>
11.	19/07/2023,	<u>(g) Undertaking of an Oath</u>	CSIR: This comment is noted.

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	Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Sabelo Malaza, Coenrad Agenbach)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Please note that the final EIAR must have an undertaking under oath/ affirmation by the EAP. (ii) Based on the above, you are therefore required to include an undertaking under oath or affirmation by the EAP (administered by a Commissioner of Oaths) as per Appendix 3 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states that the EIAR must include: “an undertaking under oath or affirmation by the EAP in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the correctness of the information provided in the reports; b) the inclusion of comments and inputs from stakeholders and I&APs; c) the inclusion of inputs and recommendations from the specialist reports where relevant; and d) any information provided by the EAP to interested and affected parties and any responses by the EAP to comments or inputs made by interested and affected parties”. 	<p>The responses are provided below to each comment raised.</p> <p><u>(g) Undertaking of an Oath</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) This comment is noted and an undertaking under oath / affirmation by the EAP was provided in Appendix B of the DEIR and has been retained in the Final EIA Report. (ii) Appendix B of the EIA Report includes the requested undertaking under oath / affirmation by the EAP, signed the presence of a Commissioner of Oaths, as per the requirements of Appendix 3 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations, as amended.
12.	19/07/2023, Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental	<p><u>(h) Details and Expertise of the EAP</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) You are required to include the details and expertise of the EAP in the EIAR, including a curriculum vitae, in order to comply with the requirements of Appendix 3 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended. 	<p>CSIR: This comment is noted.</p> <p>The responses are provided below to each comment raised.</p> <p><u>(h) Details and Expertise of the EAP</u></p>

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	Authorisations (Sabelo Malaza, Coenrad Agenbach)		(i) Please note that the details and expertise of the EAP including a curriculum vitae, was included in Appendix B of the DEIR in line with the requirements of Appendix 3 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations, as amended and has been retained in the Final EIA Report.
13.	19/07/2023, Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Sabelo Malaza, Coenrad Agenbach)	<p><u>(i) Public Participation Process</u></p> <p>(i) The final EIAR must comply with all the conditions of the acceptance of the SR signed on 14 April 2023 and must address all comments contained in the final SR, the draft EIAR and this letter.</p> <p>(ii) The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.</p> <p>(iii) Please ensure that comments from all relevant stakeholders are submitted to the Department with the final EIAR. This includes but is not limited to the Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT), the Chris Hani District Municipality, the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality, the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency, the Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), BirdLife SA, Vulpro, the South African Bat Assessment Association (SABAA), the Endangered Wildlife Trust, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, and the Department of</p>	<p>CSIR: This comment is noted.</p> <p>The responses are provided below to each comment raised.</p> <p><u>(i) Public Participation Process</u></p> <p>(i) The Final EIA Report complies with all the conditions of the acceptance of the Scoping Report signed on 14 April 2023. All comments contained in the Acceptance of the Final Scoping Report Letter are addressed in Section 2.3.1 of this CRR and all comments contained in the DFFE Integrated Environmental Authorisation (IEA) Directorate's Comment Letter on the DEIR is addressed in Section 3.4.1 (i.e., this Section) of the CRR.</p> <p>(ii) Refer to Chapter 4 of the EIA Report, for background on the Public Participation Process, including feedback on compliance with the regulations relating to Public Participation.</p>

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		<p>Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Directorate Biodiversity and Conservation.</p> <p>(iv) Please ensure that all issues raised and comments received during the circulation of the draft SR and draft EIAr from registered Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) and organs of state (including this Department's Biodiversity Sections), as listed in your I&APs Database, and others that have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are adequately addressed and included in the final EIAr and are incorporated into a Comments and Response Report (CRR).</p> <p>(v) Copies of original comments received from I&APs and organs of state, which have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are submitted to the Department with the final EIAr.</p> <p>(vi) Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders must be included in the final EIAr. Should you be unable to obtain comments, proof should be submitted to the Department of the attempts that were made to obtain comments. In terms of Regulation 41(2)(b) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, please provide proof of written notice for the availability of the EIAr for comment.</p> <p>(vii) The CRR report must be a separate document from the main report and the format must be in the table format as indicated in Annexure 1 of this comments letter.</p> <p>(viii) Please refrain from summarising comments made by I&APs. All comments from I&APs must be copied verbatim</p>	<p>(iii) Prior to the commencement of the S&EIA Processes (and advertising the Environmental Authorisation Processes in the local print media), an initial database of potential I&APs (including relevant key stakeholders and Organs of State) was developed based on research and interaction with the DFFE and Project Developer. A detailed copy of the I&AP database is included in Appendix C of the EIA Report that has been released for a 30-day public comment period, which extended from 19 June 2023 to 19 July 2023, excluding public holidays. The database includes the names of the registered I&APs, as well as an indication of the interaction with registered I&APs, as well as all potential I&APs that have been added to the project database based on requests, submission of comments or based on research. This complies with Regulation 42 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended).</p> <p>(iv) Copies of all issues raised, and comments received during the review of the Draft Scoping Report from potential and registered I&APs, Organs of State (including the DFFE Biodiversity and Conservation Directorate) and others which have jurisdiction in terms of the proposed activity, were addressed and included in Section 1 of this CRR, and were addressed, where applicable and necessary and</p>

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		<p>and responded to clearly. Please note that a response such as “noted” is not regarded as an adequate response to I&AP’s comments.</p> <p>(ix) Minutes and attendance registers (where applicable) of any physical/virtual meetings held by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) with Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) and other role players must be included in the final EIAR.</p>	<p>included in Appendix D.4 of the Final Scoping Report. In addition, all issues raised, and comments received during the review of the DEIR from potential and registered I&APs, Organs of State (including the DFFE Biodiversity and Conservation Directorate) and others which have jurisdiction in terms of the proposed activity, were addressed and included in Section 3 of this CRR, and were addressed, where applicable and necessary and included in Appendix F.4 of the Final EIA Report. Furthermore, a number of comments have been received from registered I&APs and Organs of State on this proposed project after the submission of the Final Scoping Report to the DFFE for consideration and were addressed in this CRR, and the DEIR, where applicable and necessary, and are included in Section 2 of this CRR and Appendix F.1 of the Final EIA Report.</p> <p>(v) Copies of original comments received from I&APs and Organs of State, which have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are included in Appendix F.4 of the EIA Report.</p> <p>(vi) Proof of correspondence with various stakeholders during the EIA Phase is included in Appendix F.2 and F.3 of the EIA Report. It includes all necessary proof of written notices, such as newspaper advert (Appendix F.2) as well as emails,</p>

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			<p>text messages, and letters (Appendix F.3) informing I&APs of the availability of the DEIR for comment, in terms of Regulation 41(2)(b) of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations, as amended. It also includes relevant follow-up emails sent in order to remind stakeholders of the comment period closure, in order to seek comments.</p> <p>(vii) The CRR (i.e., this Report) is a separate document from the main report and is in the table format indicated in Annexure 1 of the DFFE IEA Directorate's Comment Letter, as per the DFFE's requirements.</p> <p>(viii) This comment is noted. All comments from I&APs have been copied verbatim and responded to clearly.</p> <p>(ix) Meeting Notes and Attendance Registers of the Avifauna, Landowner/Occupiers of Land and Bats Focus Group Meetings held by the EAP with I&APs and other role players are included in Appendix M of the EIA Report. In addition, the comments and questions raised by I&APs during the Focus Group Meetings, together with the responses from the CSIR/Specialist/Applicant are also included in Section 4 of this CRR.</p>
14.	19/07/2023, Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023),	<u>(j) Environmental Management Programme</u>	CSIR: This comment is noted. The responses are provided below to each comment raised.

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	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Sabelo Malaza, Coenrad Agenbach)	<p>(i) <u>The EIAR must include a final EMPr</u> with measures, as dictated by the final site layout plan and micro-siting, and the recommendations of the EIAR. The EMPr must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Open Space Management Plan b) Watercourse and Wetland Management Plan c) Faunal Relocation Plan d) Botanical Search and Rescue e) Site Clearing Plan f) Rehabilitation and Landscape Management Plan g) Alien Vegetation Management Plan h) Fire Management Plan i) Traffic, Transportation and Road Maintenance Management Plan j) Waste Management Plan k) Emergency Response Plan l) Post-Construction Avifaunal Monitoring Programme m) A storm water and wash water management plan to be implemented during the construction and operation of the facility. The plan must ensure compliance with applicable regulations and prevent off-site migration of contaminated storm water or increased soil erosion. The plan must include the construction of design measures that allow surface and subsurface movement of water along drainage lines so as not to impede natural surface and subsurface flows. Drainage measures must promote the dissipation of storm water run-off; 	<p><u>(j) Environmental Management Programme</u></p> <p>(i) Please note that the EMPr for the WEF and associated infrastructure, included in Appendix I of the EIA Report, includes the following plans or management sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Alien Invasive Vegetation Management Plan; o Traffic Management Plan Including Transportation Plan; o Storm Water Management Plan; o Erosion Management Plan; o Hazardous Substances, Spills, Pollution Prevention and Incidents; o Environmental Awareness and Fire Management Plan; o Specific Project Related Environmental Impacts; and o Post-Construction Avifaunal Monitoring Programme. <p>In addition, note that mitigation measures and management actions specifically relating to Botanical Search and Rescue, Faunal Relocation, Site Clearance, Rehabilitation and Landscape Management, Watercourse and Wetland Management, and Waste and Wastewater Management have been recommended by the specialists and are specified in the relevant environmental themes included in Section 10 on Specific Project Related</p>

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		<p>n) An erosion management plan for monitoring and rehabilitating erosion events associated with the facility. Erosion mitigation must form part of this plan to prevent and reduce the risk of any potential erosion. This plan must ensure to include drainage features that will be infilled and or excavated;</p> <p>o) All recommendations and mitigation measures recorded in the EIAR and the specialist reports as included in the EIAR; and,</p> <p>p) The final site layout plan.</p> <p>q) An environmental sensitivity map indicating environmental sensitive areas and features identified during the assessment process.</p> <p>a)</p> <p>(ii) In addition to the above, the EMPr must comply with Appendix 4 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.</p> <p>(iii) It is drawn to your attention that for substation and overhead electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure, when such facilities trigger activity 11 or 47 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations Listing Notice 1 of 2014, as amended, and any other listed and specified activities necessary for the realisation of such facilities, the generic Environmental Management Programme, contemplated in the Regulations must be used and submitted with the final report over and above the EMPr for the facility.</p>	<p>Environmental Impacts of the EMPr for the WEF (Appendix I of the EIA Report).</p> <p>For the management plans recommended by the DFFE such as a Faunal Relocation Plan or Site Clearance Plan that are not specifically included with the EMPr, detailed method statements based on specialist input for the WEF and its associated infrastructure will only be compiled during the detailed engineering design phase, post-EA (should such EA be granted) prior to construction and will be included with the final EMPr to be submitted with the final site layout plan to the DFFE for approval.</p> <p>Section 4 of the EMPr for the WEF and associated infrastructure (Appendix I of the EIA Report), and the Terrestrial Biodiversity Section included in Part C of the Generic EMPr for the on-site substation (Appendix J of the EIA Report) includes an Alien Invasive Vegetation Management Plan that has been recommended by the specialists. Recommendations provided by the relevant specialists for plant rescue and protection, re-vegetation and habitat rehabilitation are included in Section 10 (Specific Project Related Environmental Impacts) of the EMPr for the WEF and associated infrastructure (Appendix I of the EIA Report). It is recommended that the EMPr compiled as part of this EIA Process, included in Appendix I and Appendix J of the EIA Report be approved concurrently</p>

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			<p>in the EA (should it be granted), as it includes the relevant management actions from a project specific perspective.</p> <p>o) The EMPr comprises all recommendations and mitigation measures as recommended by the specialists and are also recorded in the specialist assessments which are included in Chapters 6 to 15 of the Final EIA Report.</p> <p>p) The recommendations made by the specialists have been duly considered and used to inform the proposed site layout plan for this proposed WEF.</p> <p>q) Combined environmental sensitivity no-go maps indicating the environmental sensitive areas, and combined environmental features no-go maps indicating the environmental sensitive features, as identified during the detailed specialist assessment process in the EIA Phase are included in Appendix F of the EMPr for the proposed project. The EMPr for the WEF is included in Appendix I of the EIA Report. These maps are also included in Appendix C of the Generic EMPr for the on-site substation complex which is included in Appendix J of the EIA Report.</p> <p>(ii) The EMPr for the WEF complies with the requirements of Appendix 4 in the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations, as amended.</p> <p>(iii) A Generic EMPr for the on-site substation complex as it is provided for in the GNR 435 was compiled and is included</p>

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			in Appendix J of the Final EIA Report. Note that the contents are exactly the same as that which was included in the DEIR, therefore no substantive changes have been made.
15.	19/07/2023, Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (Sabelo Malaza, Coenrad Agenbach)	<p><u>(k) General</u></p> <p>The EIAR must provide the technical details for the proposed facility in a table format as well as their description and/or dimensions. A sample of the minimum information required is listed under Annexure 2 of the EIA information required for wind energy facility as requested in the acceptance of the SR dated 14 April 2023.</p> <p>Please also ensure that the final EIAR includes the period for which the Environmental Authorisation is required and the date on which the activity will be concluded as per Appendix 3 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.</p> <p>You are further reminded to comply with Regulation 23(1)(a) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states that: “The applicant must within 106 days of the acceptance of the scoping report submit to the competent authority -</p> <p>(a) an environmental impact assessment report inclusive of any specialist reports, an EMP, a closure plan in the case of a closure activity and where the application is a mining application, the plans, report and calculations contemplated in the Financial Provisioning Regulations, which must have been subjected to a public participation process of at least 30 days and which reflects the</p>	<p>CSIR: This comment is noted.</p> <p>The responses are provided below to each comment raised.</p> <p><u>(k) General</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The technical details for the proposed facility as well as their description and/or dimensions is included in Table 1.3 of Chapter 1 of the Final EIA Report as per the DFFE’s requirements. • The validity period for which the Environmental Authorisation is required, i.e., 15 years, has been stipulated in the Executive Summary as well as Chapter 22 (Conclusions and Recommendations) of the EIA Report. Note however that it is intended that this project will be bid into a future bidding program such as the REIPPPP or another suitable tender process, therefore the date on which the activity will be concluded cannot be determined with any certainty at the time of undertaking this S&EIA Process. • The timeframes in Regulation 23(1)(a) have been adhered to in the submission of this Final EIA Report. The Amended Application Form for EA was submitted to the DFFE, together with the DEIR for comment, on

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		<p>incorporation of comments received, including any comments of the competent authority.”</p> <p>Should there be significant changes or new information that has been added to the EIAR or EMPr which changes or information was not contained in the reports or plans consulted on during the initial public participation process, you are required to comply with Regulation 23(1)(b) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states: “The applicant must within 106 days of the acceptance of the scoping report submit to the competent authority – (b) a notification in writing that the documents contemplated in subregulation 1(a) will be submitted within 156 days of acceptance of the scoping report by the competent authority or where regulation 21(2) applies, within 156 days of receipt of the application by the competent authority, as significant changes have been made or significant new information has been added to the documents, which changes or information was not contained in the original documents consulted on during the initial public participation process contemplated in subregulation (1)(a), and that the revised documents contemplated in subregulation 1(a) will be subjected to another public participation process of at least 30 days”.</p> <p>Should you fail to meet any of the timeframes stipulated in Regulation 23 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, your application will lapse.</p>	<p>28 March 2023. In line with Regulation 23(1)(a) of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended), the Final EIA Report needed to be submitted to the DFFE for decision-making within 106 days of the acceptance of the Final Scoping Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reminder to comply with Regulation 23(1)(b) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, should there be significant changes or new information added to the Final EIA Report or EMPr which was not contained in the reports or plans consulted on during the initial public participation process is duly noted. Note that no significant changes or new information have been added to the EIA Report or EMPr. • The reminder regarding failure to meet any timeframes stipulated in Regulation 23 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended) is noted. • The Project Applicant is aware of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998, as amended).

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		You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.	

3.4.2. THE DIRECTORATE: BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	19/07/2023 Email, The DFFE Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation (Kamogelo Mathetja)	Kindly find the attached comments for your implementation	CSIR: The comments received from the DFFE Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation were well received and duly noted. Note that the direct impact rating for collision risk with turbines was reduced to Moderate Negative post-mitigation as per the Avifaunal Impact Assessment included in Chapter 8 of the EIA Report. The cumulative impact rating for collision risk with turbines was High Negative post-mitigation. Certain buffers / no-go areas for development have been developed in accordance with independent specialist findings across all environmental themes and the proposed development has responded to these (i.e., no infrastructure is located in highly sensitive areas).
2.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), The DFFE Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation (MMatlala Rabothata, Seoka Lekota)	COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE UP TO 240 MWAC INGWE 1 AND 240 MWAC INGWE 2 WIND ENERGY FACILITIES WITH RESPECTIVE ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURES, NEAR MOLTENO IN THE EASTERN CAPE The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation reviewed and evaluated the report. Based on the information provided in the reports, the significance of bird collision with turbines was High Negative pre-mitigation and remained at High Negative post mitigation. However, the number of turbines across the two projects was almost halved, from a maximum	BCAdmin@dfre.gov.za was included on the pre-identified project database of I&APs and Organs of

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		<p>of 89 to a maximum of 48 (24 on Ingwe WEF 1 and 24 on Ingwe WEF 2) and maximum rotor diameter of 190m was reduced (from the previous 200m) to reduce the collision risk. In spite of the above, the impact rating for collision risk with turbines remained High Negative post mitigation. Furthermore, the cumulative impact of the same risk during operation was also rated high significance post mitigation. The Directorate Biodiversity Conservation request clarity in terms of the impact rating post the prescribed above-mentioned measures.</p> <p>The Directorate does not support any development within a very highly sensitive area and that will result with significant negative residual impacts after mitigation.</p> <p>All Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA review and any other Biodiversity EIA queries must be submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation at Email: BCAdmin@environment.gov.za for attention of Mr Seoka Lekota.</p>	<p>State at the outset of the S&EIA Process and will receive future communication regarding the proposed WEF. Refer to Appendix C of the EIA Report for a copy of the I&AP database.</p>

3.5. THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION (DWS)

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	20/06/2023, Email, Department of Water and Sanitation Directorate: Water Abstraction and In-stream Impact Sub-Directorate: Technical Coordination and Support: Specialist Scientist (Roets Wietsche)	Please note that you have to also notify the relevant regional office or CMA as there will be a WUA required.	CSIR: This comment is noted. The Eastern Cape DWS regional office was included on the I&AP project database and received all communication relating to the availability of the DEIRs for the two proposed Ingwe WEF projects. Refer to Appendix C of the EIA Report for a copy of the I&AP database and Appendix F.3 for proof of correspondence sent to the Eastern Cape DWS regional office.
2.	26/06/2023, Email, Department of Water and Sanitation (Pieter Ackerman)	I am not the case officer. The Case Officer will be from the relevant DWS Regional Office	CSIR: The CSIR EIA Project Team inquired whether this Stakeholder is the relevant provincial/regional contact person to comment on the DEIRs for the proposed Ingwe WEF 1 and Ingwe WEF 2 projects on 20 June 2023. This comment was received in response to the above-mentioned inquiry.
3.	03/07/2023, Email, Department of Water and Sanitation Directorate: Water Abstraction and In-stream Impact Sub-Directorate:	Please ensure that the relevant regional office or CMA is also notified as it may also require a WUA.	CSIR: This comment is noted. The Eastern Cape DWS regional office was included on the I&AP project database and received all communication relating to the availability of the DEIRs for the two proposed Ingwe WEF projects. Refer to Appendix C of the EIA Report for a copy of the I&AP database and Appendix F.3 for proof of correspondence sent to the Eastern Cape DWS regional office.

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	Technical Coordination and Support: Specialist Scientist (Roets Wietsche)		
4.	03/07/2023, Email, Department of Water and Sanitation (Pieter Ackerman)	Please obtain water use authorisation where necessary and use the DWS Regional Office as entry and exit for water use authorisation	CSIR: This comment is duly noted and was shared with the Project Applicant for their information and consideration.

3.6. THE CHRIS HANI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY (CHDM)

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	20/06/2023, Email, Chris Hani District Municipality (CHDM): Intern – Municipality Manager's Office (Siphosihle Ngwane)	Your email is kindly received and noted and will be forwarded to the relevant office official. Hoping you find this in order.	CSIR: This comment is noted. Comment was received from the CHDM on 19 July 2023 and responded to below.
2.	30/06/2023 Email, Chris Hani District Municipality (CHDM): PA to the Municipal Manager (Boitumelo Koloi)	Office of the Municipal Manager acknowledges receipt of your email and contents thereof is noted. Your request will be given the necessary attention and be attended to accordingly.	CSIR: This comment is noted. Comment was received from the CHDM on 19 July 2023 and responded to below.

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		Trusting you will find the above in order.	
3.	19/07/2023 Email, Chris Hani District Municipality (CHDM (Zendane Kuboni)	CHDM does not have any objection to the project and the project may be implemented.	CSIR: The CHDM's comment was well received and duly noted. This Stakeholder was informed that their comment will be incorporated into the Comments and Responses Report (i.e., this Report). Refer to Appendix F.4 of the EIA Report for a copy of this comment.

3.7. THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL HERITAGE RESOURCES AUTHORITY (ECPHRA)

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	20/06/2023, Email, Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority: Archaeologist (Ayanda Mncwabe-Mama)	Noted.	CSIR: This comment was received in response to the notification of the release of the DEIRs for the proposed Ingwe WEF 1 and Ingwe WEF 2 projects for comment which was circulated to all registered I&APs (including this Stakeholder) on 19 June 2023.
2.	03/07/2023, Email, Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority: Archaeologist (Ayanda Mncwabe-Mama)	On SAHRIS the PIA for Ingwe WEF1 & WEF2 is the same...or was there a mistake (check even the SAHRIS Case ID is inaccurate on the cover page)? I have tried calling your offices in Pretoria as well, am not sure who to talk to get the right documents.	CSIR: This comment was noted. The CSIR Project Team informed this Stakeholder that the Palaeontology Impact Assessment (PIA) that was uploaded onto the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS) addressed both the Ingwe WEF 1 and Ingwe WEF 2 project areas. One PIA report was prepared by the Specialist (Dr John Almond)

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		If you can, please forward the PIA for Ingwe WEF2. Submission deadline is tomorrow for next weeks meeting.	that covered the entire study area encompassing both project sites. Hence, one PIA report was uploaded onto SAHRIS for both the cases.
3.	04/07/2023, Email, Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority: Archaeologist (Ayanda Mncwabe-Mama)	Thank you for the clarification. Noted.	
4.	17/07/2023, Email, Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority: Archaeologist (Ayanda Mncwabe-Mama)	Att: The CSIR EIA Project Team The Ingwe cases were added in our 11th July meeting but unfortunately that meeting was postponed for the 18 th of July (tomorrow). The comments should be received thereafter – so our aim would be to revert before the stipulated deadline. Thank you for the reminder!	CSIR: The EIA Project Team informed this Stakeholder that this comment was duly noted. Comments from the ECPHRA were received on 19 July 2023 and was responded to below.
5.	19/07/2023, Email, Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority: Archaeologist (Ayanda Mncwabe-Mama)	Please see attached ECPHRA comment regarding the proposed development.	CSIR: The ECPHRA's comments were well received and duly noted. The Battle of Stormberg site has been mapped as a very high sensitivity area and is therefore treated as a no-go area for development. It has been appropriately buffered and no project infrastructure is placed inside or near the battlefield.
6.	19/07/2023, Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023),	BACKGROUND Ingwe Wind Energy Facility 1&2 (Pty) Ltd is proposing the construction and operation of commercial Wind Energy Facilities (WEF) and associated infrastructure approximately 1.5 km north of	Also, all potential rock art sites have been buffered and no project infrastructure has been placed on or near cliffs or

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	<p>Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority: Archaeologist (Ayanda Mncwabe-Mama)</p>	<p>the town of Molteno in Chris Hani District Municipality. It is proposed that the Ingwe Wind Energy Facility 1 will comprise of up to 24 turbines with a contracted generation capacity of up to 240 MWac. During the Scoping Phase, it was proposed that the Ingwe WEF 1 would comprise of up to 41 turbines with a contracted generation capacity of up to 307.5 MWac) and Ingwe WEF 2 would comprise of up to 64 turbines with a contracted generation capacity of up to 510 MWac.</p> <p>ECPHRA COMMENTS in terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (25 of 1999). This matter was tabled at the Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Committee meeting held on 18 July 2023.</p> <p>ECPHRA (Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Authority) formally acknowledges the Heritage Impact Assessments submitted within the Draft EIA Reports.</p> <p>However, there were concerns raised about the highly significant archaeological material and the sensitivity of the cultural landscape within the proposed development sites i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the rock art sites that are not thoroughly documented and, • the Battle of Stormberg site. <p>We consider the entire landscape to be a potential grade II status classification hence the unease of the proximity impact of the</p>	<p>rocky ridges. The potential impact to these rock art sites is therefore minimised and appropriate mitigation measures have been recommended by the Heritage Specialist for implementation during the construction phase of the proposed development.</p>

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		proposed development. ECPHRA will issue a follow-up detailed HIA comment regarding this case.	

3.8. THE SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (SACAA)

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	30/06/2023 Email South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA): Obstacles Inspector (Lizell Stroh)	<p>Good day, kindly find an extract from the CARS towards Obstacle for your respected information.</p> <p>Kindly find links to the caa website, towards process and procedures to follow, with regards to Wind Farm projects.</p> <p>www.caa.co.za</p> <p>www.caa.co.za/industry-information/obstacles/</p> <p>Urgent Notices</p> <p>Obstacle Notice 1/2022 – Appointment of New Windfarm and Solar Obstacle Application Service Provider</p> <p>Kindly be advised, Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS) has been appointed as the Obstacle application Service Provider for Windfarms on 1 May 2021. They will be also responsible for Solar</p>	CSIR: These comments were duly noted and were shared with the Project Applicant for their information and consideration.

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		<p>Obstacle Applications from the 1st of February 2022. All new Solar applications must be lodged to obstacles@atns.co.za or contact XXXX (Obstacle Evaluator) at XXXX.</p> <p>Their responsibility would pertain to the assessments, maintenance, and all other related matters in respect to Windfarms and Solar assessments.</p>	
2.	<p>17/07/2023</p> <p>Email</p> <p>South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA): Obstacles Inspector (Simphiwe Masilela)</p>	<p>Kindly refer to attached comments sent on 17/02/2023, is this not the same project?</p>	<p>CSIR: The CSIR EIA Project Team confirmed that these are the same projects and informed this Stakeholder that this time around, it is the DEIRs that are out for public comment. The CSIR EIA Project Team also acknowledged that comments were received from the SACAA on 30 June 2023. Refer to Appendix F.4 of the EIA Report for this correspondence.</p>

3.9. VULPRO

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	<p>05/07/2023</p> <p>Email,</p> <p>VulPro</p> <p>(Kerry Wolter)</p>	<p>Please find attached our letter with comments and VulPro's formal objection to the above proposed wind development.</p>	<p>CSIR: The stance from VulPro on the proposed development is noted and responses are provided to specific issues raised below.</p>

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2.	03/07/2023 Letter (Received via email on 05 July 2023), VulPro (Kerry Wolter)	<p>RE: <u>OBJECTION TO THE NOTIFICATION OF THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE EIA PHASE AND RELEASE OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORTS FOR A 30-DAY REVIEW PERIOD FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE UP TO 240 MWac INGWE WIND ENERGY FACILITY 1 (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2275) AND THE UP TO 240 MWac INGWE WIND ENERGY FACILITY 2 (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2276), AND ITS ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR MOLTENO IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE</u></p> <p>Thank you for extending VulPro the opportunity to comment and for including us in the focused avifaunal focus meeting on 16 May 2023.</p> <p>VulPro is dissatisfied that concerns raised in this meeting have not been adequately addressed in the above draft Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIA's) and the Avifaunal Specialist Reports (ASR) for both Ingwe Wind Energy Facility 1 (WEF1) and Wind Energy Facility 2 (WEF2).</p> <p>VulPro does not, therefore, support the proposed developments, and would like the following concerns to be placed on record for both WEF1 and WEF2:</p>	

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3.	03/07/2023 Letter (Received via email on 05 July 2023), VulPro (Kerry Wolter)	<p>1. <u>Presence of active Cape Vulture Roost within the development boundary</u></p> <p>There is an active Cape Vulture powerline roost within the boundaries of the proposed developments, with up to 62 birds observed at a time (Pg 55, ASR WEF1/Pg 56, ASR WEF2). This roost was observed by VulPro (Pg 56, Comments and Responses Report WEF1/WEF2) prior to the commencement of the Avifaunal Specialist study. This is also supported by the high number of reported electrocution incidents, which are more likely to occur when vultures utilize pylons as roosts. Reported incidents in the area to the Eskom/EWT partnership, dating from 2014 to date by VulPro, are a total of 16 Cape Vulture electrocutions and 2 Cape Vultures, 14 Blue Cranes and 1 Kori Bustard collisions. A further 10 Cape Vulture electrocutions plus 5 historical incidents (incident no. 3460) were reported by DEDEAT to the partnership on the 31/01/2020. Therefore, despite Wildskies' designation of this as a temporary seasonal roost, it has been active for numerous years. Birdlife Cape Vulture and Wind Farms 2018 guidelines indicate that "Cape Vultures can be expected to regularly use the air-space within 50 km around their roosts and breeding colonies" and "regular or seasonal/occasional roosts should be considered as high to very high sensitivity (with sensitivity influenced by distance from the roost/colony, as well as its size and location)." The guidelines do not distinguish between cliff roosts and powerline roosts. It is therefore unacceptable that Wildskies uses a 3km buffer around the roost (Pg</p>	<p>SPECIALIST:</p> <p>This comment is acknowledged. A technical note is that vulture electrocution is not possible on the power line that they are roosting on (132kV line) but perhaps the electrocutions referred to occurred elsewhere on lower voltage lines, which are common in the landscape. Collision is possible on any voltage line.</p> <p>The avifaunal report complies with and references the BLSA Cape Vulture and Wind Farms guidelines cited by VulPro. The report acknowledges that the project falls within a 'high to very high sensitivity area' for Cape Vultures and identifies them as a high-risk species, and as a result a second year of monitoring was conducted as per the guideline requirements. The results from the second year of monitoring indicate the two active roosts on the OHL are primarily utilised in summer, with vultures more abundant from early October to late March, with some occasional activity in the winter. No breeding activity was observed. The guidelines do not designate these 'high to very high sensitivity areas' (within 50 km of roosts) as no-go for development (and so development within some of these areas could be acceptable should impacts fall within acceptable thresholds). It is inaccurate then to state that the project/impact assessment undertaken did not adhere to the guidelines.</p>

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		78, ASR WEF1/Pg 79 ASR WEF2) as this does not adhere to any guidelines!	The roost buffer should not be viewed in isolation, since we have also recommended deterrence of birds from roosting, plus a suite of mitigation measures.
4.		Wildskies proposed deterrence measures to discourage vultures from roosting (Pg 92, ASR WEF1/Pg93, ASR WEF2) are also unacceptable. It firstly relies on Eskom for installation of bird guards, which have limited deterrence success, as often the Vultures that roost in an area, will just move onto lines in the proximity that do not have bird guards. Secondly, the hooting monitors patrolling the lines only deter the birds from roosting for extended periods on the lines but do little to minimize the presence of the birds in the area and will possibly unintentionally scare the birds into the wind turbines.	SPECIALIST: We have acknowledged both these points in the avifaunal report and a suite of mitigation measures has therefore been recommended in order to approach the matter (as well as others) from a variety of angles and at each phase of the proposed development.
5.		Additionally, Wildskies notes at least 3 active roosts within the 50km radius (Table 12, ASR WEF/ASR WEF2), which confirms the very high sensitivity of the area. Therefore, we completely disagree with Wildskies' statement "The location of known Cape Vulture breeding colonies and roosts was considered and the proposed project was	SPECIALIST: The context of the statement in the avifaunal report is that at the national scale, or species scale, the projects avoid most roosts and all colonies. The report further indicates that the proposed development is located approximately

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		located as far as feasible from these features “(Pg 80, ASR WEF1/Pg 81, ASR WEF2).	<p>90km from the nearest breeding colony, a distance which is acceptable. Further, as per the point made above, the guidelines do not denote high sensitivity areas as “no-go”, and several mitigation measures have been necessitated as conditions of approval, should EA be granted.</p> <p>The report also clarifies the difference in risk to vultures associated with roosts and colonies, noting that no breeding activity was recorded at the roosts that were monitored.</p> <p>Further, the EIA Report had explained the rationale behind the siting of the proposed development both within a provincial scale as well as the application of the mitigation hierarchy at a local and site-specific scale.</p>
6.	03/07/2023 Letter (Received via email on 05 July 2023), VulPro (Kerry Wolter)	<p>2. <u>The location within the Cape Vulture Range</u></p> <p>Wildskies inaccurately states that “the Ingwe study site is on the western edge of the Cape Vulture Range” (Pg 63, ASR WEF1/Pg 64, ASR WEF2). This statement implies that Cape Vultures would frequent this area less frequently than if within the core range. However, Wildskies' own observations of Cape Vultures further west of the proposed development (Proposed Kaladokhwe WEF Development near Cradock) indicate that both Ingwe WEF 1 and WEF 2 fall well within the main Cape Vulture range of the Eastern Cape. Cape Vultures indeed frequent this area extensively as shown by groundwork observations by Wildskies; the power line roost within the proposed development boundary; roosts within a 50km</p>	<p>SPECIALIST:</p> <p>In the national context, these statements remain correct. We have not disputed that vultures utilise the site frequently, that is clearly stated in the report. However, the point being made is that on a relative scale, the site is not as frequently utilised as elsewhere within the species range. This statement is further supported by site-specific data gathered (and reported on) during the two years of monitoring. This data has provided a foundation upon which the impacts of the proposed project, as per the proposed location and extent, has been assessed.</p>

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		radius; power line incident reports; various academic publications and VulPro's tracking data. In addition to the above information a major poisoning incident occurred where 48 Cape Vultures were found dead (2013) by VulPro in this area which supports the fact that this is well within the Cape Vulture range.	Further, the precautionary approach has been applied in the mitigation measures required, which include further monitoring and reporting during the operational phase (i.e., the initial two-year monitoring is not the end of data collection and response/mitigation in this regard and the mitigation measures for operation provide for adaptive management which can respond to new data/information).
7.	03/07/2023 Letter (Received via email on 05 July 2023), VulPro (Kerry Wolter)	<p>3. <u>The mis-characterisation of vulture tracking data supplied by VulPro</u></p> <p>VulPro provided Cape Vulture tracking data as requested by Wildskies post-meeting Avifaunal focus meeting on 16 May 2023 (APPENDIX F WEF1/WEF2). Wildskies has therefore falsely/misleadingly reported that they only received the Cape Vulture Tracking Data map shown in Figure 13 (Pg 67, ASR WEF1/ Pg 68 ASR WEF2) without any additional information. In fact, the data was sent to them in the format which they had requested and thus, VulPro simply followed their requests when supplying the information in the google file format. VulPro initially provided this reference map before this meeting to show the considerable tracking data in the area and how active the birds are within the area to show how this site cannot be developed and the high risks to Cape Vultures should development occur. Wildskies is the responsible Avian Specialist hired to conduct the Avifaunal specialist studies and is required to develop spatial risk assessment models and maps to predict the presence and flight height of birds and "The use of technology to study the movements of vultures (e.g., radar, tracking devices, and/or wind current modelling) is strongly encouraged"</p>	<p>SPECIALIST:</p> <p>WildSkies has not mischaracterised information or misled anyone.</p> <p>Due to the urgency to finalise the avifaunal report post the meeting on 16 May, we initially used the jpeg map provided previously, whilst the admin process for the applicant to buy the data from VulPro took several more weeks. Its correct that we subsequently received KMZ data entitled: CV Colonies; CV tracks; CV restaurants from VulPro. These however added no value/additional information over and above the jpeg map already included in the report and were also very difficult to work with due to the file size (as VulPro has acknowledged in prior discussions). The CV restaurants and CV colonies (these are actually roosts but are mis-labelled as "colonies" in the VulPro dataset) locations were already known to us and were already detailed in the report. The 'CV tracks' KMZ presents a lot of fixes within a 50km radius of the site and is exactly what is portrayed by the jpeg map which is considered in our reporting. This data indicates</p>

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		(Birdlife, 2018). So, it is unclear, why this data was not utilised and included in the report.	that the vultures visited the area frequently, something which our on-site data, and the avifaunal impact assessment report, has already confirmed. What is still missing from the VulPro data is an indication of how many separate birds were responsible for these fixes and over what time period these fixes were obtained. Without this information it is no more useful than the information initially indicated in the avifaunal report. Therefore, the data provided had been utilised and presented in the EIA Report.
8.	03/07/2023 Letter (Received via email on 05 July 2023), VulPro (Kerry Wolter)	<p>4. <u>Cape Vulture windfarm fatalities</u></p> <p>Wildskies estimates that 5.91 Cape Vultures on WEF 1 and 9.55 Cape Vultures on WEF 2 will be killed annually pre-mitigation on these developments (Pg 4, ASR WEF1/Pg 4 ASR WEF2). Collectively this is an estimation of 15 Cape Vultures a year for both developments! These reports emphasize that this was the original estimation before the reduction of turbines post-Avifaunal discussion meeting on 16 May 2023. Wildskies then uses completely different figures in the collective analysis - “Ingwe 1 – 0.64 vultures per year (34 turbines-initially reduced layout) and Ingwe 2 - 1.03 vultures per year (55 turbines-initially reduced layout)” (Table 23, ASR WEF1/ASR WEF2), which are based on Dorper estimates (addressed below). There is a substantial risk disparity between 1 and 9 vultures. So, what is the actual risk estimation for the current number of wind turbines? This is not defined.</p>	<p>SPECIALIST:</p> <p>The pre-mitigation fatality figures indicated in VulPro’s comment refer to the initially reduced layout and not to that of the proposed development whereby each WEF would have up to 24 turbines (the avifaunal assessment notes that this halves the risk to birds-noting again that this is at pre-mitigation). The use of different figures indicates the application of the mitigation hierarchy through the S&EIA process and how estimated anticipated fatalities have been reduced through various iterations of the proposed development layout as the layout has responded to sensitivities identified by the various independent specialists across environmental themes. With respect to the point on “actual risk estimation”, the fatalities assessed were based on a variety of layouts considered for the proposed Ingwe WEFs. This assessment indicates the substantial relative reduction in fatalities among the layout options (i.e., total turbines numbers per WEF) considered.</p>

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		<p>Wildskies argues that there are currently no established thresholds for acceptable impacts on bird species in South Africa, claiming that any suggestions in this regard are subjective. VulPro strongly disagrees because as avifaunal specialists, it is expected that they should be able to determine acceptable impacts based on estimated population statistics, breeding information, and other relevant factors. A basic estimation using Wildskies figures indicates that without mitigation, in just 10 years, 150 birds are estimated to be killed on just these 2 wind developments. This number is highly unsustainable for a species with population estimates ranging from 9,600 to 12,800 mature individuals (BirdLife International (2022)).</p> <p>Furthermore, Wildskies themselves refer to research conducted by Cervantes et al 2023 which states “the ‘Stormberg Wind’ REDZ (very near to the site) is a risk to 271 birds at any time, representing 6.7% of the Eastern Cape’s vultures and 1.6% of the global population” (Pg 63, ASR WEF1/Pg 64 ASR WEF2). This alarming statistic highlights the significant concern surrounding wind farms as a threat to Cape Vultures, particularly as this is not the only threat they face.</p>	<p>The figures that would apply to the impact assessment (and associated significance) is that of the proposed up to 24-turbine layout for each WEF, namely approximately 7.52 Cape Vulture fatalities across the two facilities (total of 48 turbines) per year (pre-mitigation).</p> <p>The avifaunal assessment has indicated the anticipated level of impacts and, with the proposed development with the layout indicated up to 24 turbines per WEF, the anticipated impacts have not been found to be unacceptable. The figures indicated in VulPro’s calculation are incorrect and not aligned with anticipated impacts as presented in the avifaunal report.</p> <p>Although indicated in the text, for further clarity, the approach to the cumulative analysis was initiated with available information/ data from operational facilities in the area (Dorper Wind Farm). The fatality rate at that WEF was then imposed on the 2 Ingwe projects and the other projects we are aware of to obtain total fatality estimates. A second possible scenario could be to use the pre-mitigation fatality estimates at the proposed Ingwe WEFs and impose them on the other projects. However, the original assessments for the other authorised wind farms did not estimate fatalities (as this was not a requirement of the legislation/ guidelines in place at the time). More recent amendments for the other</p>

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			projects used the Dorper WEF data as the starting point, as we have done.
9.		Wildskies uses nearby Dorper Wind Farm bird fatality statistics to highlight only 4 Cape Vultures were killed in 4 years (Pg 73, ASR WEF1/Pg 74 ASR WEF2). However, they fail to acknowledge the significant inherent bias in this data. Dorper Wind Farm lacks a systematic bird fatality monitoring system, and not all 40 turbines undergo thorough searches. This information is also outdated (2014 to 2018) and cannot be used effectively for any assumptions. Furthermore, Wildskies highlights other windfarm fatality information (Pg 83, ASR WEF1/ Pg 84 ASR WEF2) within Cape Vulture range in the Eastern Cape. Whilst, they emphasize “context and detail that must be noted,” they neglect to provide this context or detail regarding original vulture passage rates, monitoring protocols etc., or specifically where these farms are located within the Cape Vulture range. Strikingly, Wildskies does delve into such details when addressing Blue Crane fatalities on wind farms elsewhere (Pg 70, ASR WEF1/Pg 71 ASR WEF2).	<p>SPECIALIST: The statement that Dorper Wind Farm lacks a systematic monitoring system is unsubstantiated. For the period of data cited (2014-2018) WildSkies was involved in the monitoring at Dorper Wind Farm. All 40 turbines were searched once a week. The estimates for Cape Vulture in particular are robust.</p> <p>As explained above, a combination of data was used in the calculations adopting a cautious approach, with the Dorper WEF data being only one of them. The best available information was utilised in order to inform this assessment as much as possible. In terms of available information on operational wind farms and Cape Vulture, these data are the best available, and are not outdated. The alternative (i.e., not making use of Dorper WEFs data) would be disingenuous as using it provides insight into the local context and actual fatalities associated with this type of development therein. The data from 2014 to 2018 is still reasonably recent in terms of the lifespan of an permits/approvals and still offers insight, particularly when coupled with the data gathered on site for the proposed facilities in the two-year monitoring which followed.</p>

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			Context on the use of Cape Vulture of the site is indicated in the avifaunal report. Further, passage rates are also provided for Cape Vulture and all identified target bird species (refer to Table 7) and the Cape Vulture passage rates are indicated in the “Cape Vulture” section (3.3.1) of the report.
10.	03/07/2023 Letter (Received via email on 05 July 2023), VulPro (Kerry Wolter)	5. <u>Mitigation measures</u> Considering the potential magnitude of the vulture risk, the proposed mitigation measures are either inadequate or lack proven effectiveness under all circumstances . Wildskies admits there is uncertainty surrounding mitigation measures (Pg 4, ASR WEF1/ASR WEF2), so we disagree that the risk could ever be classified as “Moderate Negative significance”, even with the reduction of wind turbines. This is especially pertinent as there is an active roost on site.	SPECIALIST: It’s not correct to state ‘under all circumstances’. We have discussed the various mitigation measures (refer to the above point regarding the approach to mitigate in a variety of ways) and any uncertainties in the report. Further, the impact assessment and significance ascribed to each has been undertaken in accordance with the required methodology.
11.		Wildskies is unable to determine which turbines pose a lower risk, stating, “For Cape Vulture (a wideranging species), we cannot easily identify turbines which are higher risk (although turbines closest to the power line roost could possibly be prioritised for exclusion from the layout)” (Pg 4, ASR WEF1/ASR WEF2). While Wildskies suggests reducing the number of wind turbines and blade diameter to mitigate risk, they fail to present evidence supporting the factors driving the revised layout. It appears that economic considerations, rather than avian factors, are the primary driving force.	SPECIALIST: The key avifaunal informants which have informed the revised layouts include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reduce the number of turbines by almost 50%; ○ select those turbines closest to the power line roost for deletion; ○ utilise the opportunity to make the turbine layout more compact, by removing any isolated turbines. Appendix 13 of the avifaunal report also explained the proposed layout revisions.

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			<p>Furthermore, in terms of fatality / risk calculations, the precautionary approach was adopted by ascribing the “worst case” risk to all turbines and so no specific turbines were assigned “lower risks”. This would address the “greatest risk” scenario, even though in practice there may be some that present lower risk. This “greatest risk” approach was also adopted in establishing the proposed 3km buffer. This assessment approach is in line with the principles of NEMA.</p> <p>Evidence of the relatively lower anticipated impacts is provided in the report through the above-mentioned fatality impacts (note that the report indicates impact of fatalities with a layout alternative that has more turbines, as well as the reduced 24-turbine layout in order to indicate the consideration applied in this regard). To be clear, the final estimate for the final EIA layout of 24 turbines at each wind far (total of 48 turbines) is approximately 7.52 fatalities per year (pre-mitigation).</p>
12.		The effectiveness of the Cape Vulture Food Management Programme has not yet been established. To ensure success, this program heavily relies on active monitoring, robust management and the cooperation of all stakeholders involved. Wildskies acknowledges this has only partly been successful. (Appendix F WEF1/WEF2).	<p>SPECIALIST:</p> <p>Any uncertainties regarding mitigation have been described in the avifaunal report, noting that the comment in the report had been made based on another wind farm. Further, a range of mitigation measures has been indicated in order to address anticipated impacts and any possible implementation challenges in a comprehensive manner.</p>

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			One mitigation measure would not be implemented in isolation.
13.		The Shut down on Demand (SDOD) fails to acknowledge the inherent limitations and fallibility of human operators, even when they are “suitably trained.” Relying solely on SDOD as a mitigation measure leads to inadequate protection against vulture-turbine collisions and therefore should be used in conjunction with an automated system.	<p>SPECIALIST: Any uncertainties regarding mitigation have been described in the avifaunal report.</p> <p>Mitigation does not rely solely on SDOD, there are 21 measures recommended. Further, this range of mitigation measures has been intentionally included in order to address anticipated impacts and any possible implementation challenges in a comprehensive manner. One mitigation measure would not be implemented in isolation. Automated systems are less proven in SA than human based, and less able to respond adaptively once operational. At this stage we have not recommended automated systems. As per the adaptive management approach it may become an option during the project life span.</p>
14.		The painting of turbine blades as a solution is contingent upon protocol development by the South African Wind Energy Association (SAWEA). Wildskies, therefore, places a heavy emphasis on unpromulgated/ unpublished protocols. This is ironic as from their own admission that they do not adhere to un-promulgated protocols, as stated on pg. 25/27, ASR WEF1/ Pg 25/29 ASR WEF2 regarding the Draft PROTOCOL FOR THE SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT AND MINIMUM REPORT CONTENT REQUIREMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ON CAPE VULTURES BY ONSHORE WIND	<p>SPECIALIST: Implementing blade painting does not rely on the existence of any protocol. It is envisaged that there is a protocol being developed at an industry level which may make it possible for generic agreement with the CAA on what the painting parameters will be. Note that in this case, the term “protocol” refers more to a general administrative procedure with a view to streamlining process, rather than a gazetted protocol promulgated in terms of NEMA and</p>

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		ENERGY GENERATION FACILITIES” GN No. 47448. This reliance on regulations that have yet to be established raises concerns about the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation.	<p>associated SEMAs to guide the S&EIA process (and that of its associated specialist impact assessments per environmental theme) (refer to Birdlife SA comment below as well). The Cape Vulture & Wind Farms best practice guidelines from Birdlife SA have been adhered to in this assessment, therefore relevant best practice for this particular species has been observed.</p> <p>Therefore, the report merely acknowledges that should SAWEA and CAA not yet have established any administrative measure to allow for blade painting, these specific projects would have to apply to CAA directly on a project basis, as has been done successfully by two operational wind farms recently. Further, blade painting is not a novel mitigation measure and is further included in the suite of measures to provide for comprehensive mitigation. There is also an increasing trend from DFFE to include the requirement for blade painting as a condition of approval for WEFs.</p>
15.		Moreover, the efficacy of painting turbine blades will vary depending on the bird species and their field of vision. Vultures, in particular, have large blind zones which are believed to contribute to their collisions with powerlines. Wildskies fails to provide any evidence that painting blades would reduce vulture fatalities.	<p>SPECIALIST:</p> <p>Any uncertainties regarding mitigation have been described in the avifaunal report. Further, there are several mitigation measures to address impacts across species and so blade painting is not the only measure that would mitigate against Cape Vulture fatalities, as well as that of other bird species.</p>
16.	03/07/2023	6. <u>Economic impact on VulPro</u>	SPECIALIST:

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	Letter (Received via email on 05 July 2023), VulPro (Kerry Wolter)	VulPro's mission is 'Protecting African vultures through collaboration and innovation.' Among VulPro's central initiatives is the reintroduction of captive-bred Cape Vulture fledglings into the wild to reinforce declining populations. VulPro currently has a release site in the Eastern Cape and releases roughly 12 fledglings every year. These released birds are fitted with tracking devices, and the entire process of incubation, rearing, and release costs VulPro approximately R25k for each bird. In 2022, VulPro has already directly lost one of these captive-bred Cape Vultures to a wind farm collision.	These points are noted but are beyond the scope of the avifaunal report.
17.		Aside from the devastating impact on the vulture population, the financial implications for VulPro and its donors cannot be ignored. In addition to the existing risks posed by operating wind farms, based on Wildskies' original unmitigated estimates, the combined effect of WEF1 and WEF2 wind farms is projected to result in the death of approximately 80% of the vultures that VulPro has contributed to the wild population. This not only jeopardizes the bird conservation efforts but also poses a significant financial burden on VulPro, further straining our resources and the generous contributions from our supporters.	SPECIALIST: These points are noted, but beyond the scope of the avifaunal report. The figure of 80% is also taken out of context given that the calculation is based on fatality figures from a previous iteration of the proposed layout, and it cannot be assumed that fatalities would mostly occur within a cohort of vultures released by VulPro. Overall, impacts of fatalities have been assessed and mitigation measures have been included.
18.	03/07/2023 Letter (Received via email on 05 July 2023), VulPro (Kerry Wolter)	7. <u>Avifaunal Specialist Report quality</u> Despite the wide-ranging research and efforts made by Wildskies regarding the impacts of wind farms on Cape Vultures, the avifaunal specialist reports produced for Ingwe WEF1 and WEF2 are poorly articulated, inconsistent, biased and riddled with inaccuracies, grammar, and spelling mistakes, as well as referencing errors. Such	SPECIALIST: The specialist assessments (including the avifaunal impact assessment) have been undertaken in accordance with relevant, applicable legislation and the findings have been presented in a factual manner. Without providing specific notes or references in this regard, a detailed response cannot be furnished, however, any typographical or

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		unprofessionalism suggests a lack of care and concern on the part of the author towards their work and the potential consequences it could entail. Additionally, while not the primary focus of VulPro, it is deeply concerning that there is a failure to acknowledge the cumulative impacts on other bird species not specifically addressed in the existing publicly available specialist avian guidelines.	<p>grammatical aspects that may benefit from improvement do not have any bearing on the findings of the assessment or the mitigation measures required.</p> <p>The cumulative impacts of wind energy on avifauna in the project area has been carefully assessed according to the guidance in the DEA (DEAT (2004) Cumulative Effects Assessment, Integrated Environmental Management, Information Series 7, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), Pretoria); and the IFC guidelines (Good Practice Handbook - Cumulative Impact Assessment and Management: Guidance for the Private Sector in Emerging Markets". The decision-making process with respect to the above has been clearly documented in the report.</p>
19.	03/07/2023 Letter (Received via email on 05 July 2023), VulPro (Kerry Wolter)	<p>In conclusion, VulPro would like to state the following; the Cape Vulture (<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>) is an endangered endemic species that require the utmost protection and conservation efforts. Guidelines/protocols have been created to ensure that they are protected as much as possible.</p> <p>These have not been followed. Hence, we strongly disagree with the notion that the proposed WEF developments "<i>has remained outside of highly sensitive areas</i>" and that "<i>there are no residual cumulative impacts of very high significance.</i>" Additionally, we do not believe that the suggested mitigation measures can adequately address the issues caused by a poorly selected site. These WEF developments are fatally flawed.</p>	<p>CSIR:</p> <p>As demonstrated in the avifaunal impact assessment report, as well as elaborated on in the responses above, all legislative requirements have been met by the avifaunal assessment. The Cape Vulture is a high-risk species and has been identified as such in the reporting, so a second year of monitoring in accordance with the Cape Vulture & Wind Farms best practice guidelines (BirdLife South Africa, 2018) has also been undertaken. Certain buffers / no-go areas for development have been developed in accordance with these findings and the proposed development has responded to these (i.e., no infrastructure is located in highly sensitive areas). Furthermore, a comprehensive suite</p>

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		<p>VulPro strongly objects to this proposed development.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention to this matter.</p>	<p>of mitigation measures is required, which would have to be implemented as conditions of authorisation, if this application is approved.</p> <p>The proposed development has adopted the mitigation hierarchy from initial site selection and layout design through to the S&EIA process undertaken (i.e., adopted at various levels of consideration).</p> <p>In terms of site selection, the need and desirability section of the EIA Report explains the fit of the proposed projects at the site in the current point in time. Given that no further comment in terms of a “poorly selected site” has been delivered, it is assumed this relates to avifaunal impacts, hence the focus of this response. Although the mitigation hierarchy has been adopted for various facets of the proposed development, the avifaunal report expands on how this applies to the avifaunal theme, highlighting the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Avoidance through avoiding areas within 50 km of the six largest Cape Vulture breeding colonies (East Cape Biodiversity Conservation Plan (ECBCP 2019)) in terms of siting the proposed projects; 2) Avoidance through intentionally keeping the proposed projects outside of identified Verreaux’s Eagle nests and associated buffers (note that the VERA model has also been run, with both high

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			<p>sensitivity and medium sensitivity areas fully avoided in the layout development);</p> <p>3) Avoidance of highly sensitive areas has also been informed through rigorous assessment over a two-year monitoring period, as well as by using data from other relevant sources in the area (to the extent that they are relevant and usable);</p> <p>Further aspects include minimisation through locating associated infrastructure in areas which are already disturbed as far as possible. Notably, minimisation is also observed through the requirement of a suite of mitigation measures, which would extend into the operational phase in order to apply an adaptive management approach to a dynamic theme.</p> <p>There has been no need for rehabilitation from an avifaunal perspective (although there are measures in this regard included in the EMPs for disturbed areas post-construction) or offsets. Therefore, these are not applied.</p> <p>Observer-led Shut down on Demand (OLSDOD) is being tested at windfarms in South Africa where avifauna species such as vultures, raptors, cranes and storks occur, with results presented at the Windaba Conference held on 13 October 2022 in Cape Town. These initial results show that this mitigation has a high success rate for</p>

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			avoiding vulture collisions, with a very low loss in yield from the windfarm. This mitigation has potential to enable generation of renewable energy in order to meet severe energy shortages in South Africa, while supporting the energy transformation away from fossil fuels and avoiding the very significant impacts on ecosystem health caused by fossil fuels.

3.10. THE SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY (SAHRA)

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	12/07/2023, Email, The South African Heritage Resources Agency (Natasha Higgit)	Please note that as this development is located in the Eastern Cape, SAHRA does not have jurisdiction to provide comments for development applications. Please contact the ECPHRA for comments in this regard.	CSIR: This comment is duly noted. The ECPHRA was included on the I&AP project database and received all correspondence relating to the availability of the DEIRs for the proposed Ingwe WEF 1 and Ingwe WEF 2 projects for comment. Furthermore, the ECPHRA has noted the aforementioned correspondence and has subsequently submitted comments on these two proposed WEF projects. Refer to Section 3.7 of this CRR as well as Appendix F.4 of the EIA Report for the comments received from the ECPHRA.

3.11. BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA (BSA)

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	13/07/2023 Email, BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	Many thanks for the reminder. Please see our comments attached.	CSIR: BirdLife South Africa's comments were well received duly noted. The responses are provided below for each comment raised.
2.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	RE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORTS FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE UP TO 240 MWac INGWE WEF 1 (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2275) AND THE UP TO 240 MWac INGWE WEF 2 (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2276) AND THEIR ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR MOLTENO IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to comment on the above reports. We appreciate the efforts made to address some of our concerns and recommendations raised during the Scoping stage of the assessments. However, it is important to express our firm position against wind energy development at the proposed sites due to the significant risk of irreversible cumulative impacts on biodiversity, particularly the Cape Vulture.	CSIR: Cumulative impacts on terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity have been assessed by the relevant specialists and have been indicated in the EIA Report (and relevant specialist reports) as Very Low post-mitigation. From an avifaunal perspective, cumulative impacts post-mitigation have also been found to be low, with the exception of Cape Vulture turbine collision. As explained in the EIA Report, cumulative impact assessment has been undertaken through a precautionary lens, notably by assessing not only existing facilities within a 30km radius (but extended to 50km for Cape Vultures, in accordance with the Cape Vulture and Wind Farms Guidelines), but also those with EA (not yet constructed) and those with historical EA. This indicates assessment beyond what is likely to materialise as constructed developments.
3.		We believe that a risk-averse and precautionary approach has not been adopted, and the implementation of the mitigation hierarchy has been inadequate as it was limited to the proposed development	CSIR: The EIA Report explains that the mitigation hierarchy has been applied at various levels including through:

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		<p>site. We strongly recommend considering alternative locations and technologies that can achieve the development objective with lower risks to biodiversity.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Project site selection (within the Eastern Cape as well as a local context) - this avoids very highly sensitive areas across environmental themes and places the proposed development in a spatial and legislative context which would benefit from renewable energy (addressed in Chapters 1 and 5 of the EIA Report); 2) Devising the proposed layout for each WEF (noting that the avifaunal impact assessment provides additional insight into this process by considering an “initially reduced layout” that was first considered in the EIA phase, but which was subsequently disregarded from being a viable layout alternative due to the anticipated adverse avifaunal impact) – this avoids highly sensitive areas across environmental themes and the S&EIA process has been used to inform the scope such that a relatively smaller facility has been proposed for WEF 1 and WEF 2. The reduced facility sizing for the WEFs halves the initial number of turbines considered and also reduces rotor diameter specifications (which is linked to a reduction of the swept area), and provides for a smaller development footprint (addressed in Chapters 1, 2, 5 and 8 of the EIA Report); 3) The requirement for mitigation measures to reduce the significance of adverse impacts anticipated

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			<p>across environmental themes - this brings most adverse impacts across all environmental themes to produce anticipated impacts of an overall low to very low negative significance (with three being moderate) (addressed in Chapters 6 to 17 and 22, as well as Appendix I and J of the EIA Report);</p> <p>4) Some rehabilitation has been provided for in the EMPr whereby any areas which are disturbed beyond the proposed development footprint would need to be rehabilitated (the EMPRs are included in Appendix I and J of the EIA Report).</p> <p>Note that no impacts were identified to be so significant post-mitigation by any of the independent specialists, across all themes, to warrant any type of offset. Therefore, offsets are not required for the proposed developments.</p>
4.		<p>The avifaunal impact assessment has confirmed that a number of threatened and endemic species could be impacted by the proposed developments. These include Cape Vulture (Endangered, regularly recorded flying around the site, with a roost located on a nearby powerline and at least 3 active roosts within the 50km radius), Black Harrier (Endangered, also recorded flying frequently on site in the first year of monitoring), Grey Crowned Crane (Endangered, with up to 7 birds at risk), African Marsh-Harrier (Endangered), Martial Eagle (Endangered), Blue Crane (Near-threatened, with to 129 birds recorded, Verreaux's Eagle (Vulnerable), Secretarybird (Vulnerable), and Jackal Buzzard.</p>	<p>SPECIALIST: This is correct as per the avifaunal impact assessment.</p>

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		While we acknowledge the efforts made to reduce impacts on-site by reducing the number of turbines and amending the layout, we still have several concerns:	
5.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	1. Figure 7 of the avifaunal report indicates that a significant proportion of proposed turbine locations were not covered by vantage point surveys, particularly for Ingwe 2. This does not align with the Best Practice Guidelines, which recommend surveying at least 75% of turbine locations. This introduces uncertainty in the impact assessment, as it is unclear how these areas were assessed for risk or sensitivity.	SPECIALIST: In response to sensitivities identified across environmental themes through the S&EIA Process, the project layout has changed substantially during the course of our studies. An overall study area was covered as well as possible with vantage points. Once a final layout and project split was available, the area highlighted emerged as not being well covered. The further reduced layout (i.e., that which proposes up to 24 turbines per WEF) has far fewer turbine positions in areas outside of 2km radii of vantage points, thereby improving coverage significantly. Given that the vantage point data has been used collectively to highlight and quantify risk, more than to micro site turbines, we are confident that the risk on site has been adequately characterised. Furthermore, the avifaunal data considered as a whole also provides for the assessment of a much greater area than any of the proposed Ingwe WEFs as a standalone project. Considering this, as well as the commensurate mitigation measures required, the precautionary approach has been adopted.
6.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023),	2. The fatality rate estimates have not been updated to reflect the new alternatives (i.e. the reduced number of turbines and new layout). It cannot be assumed that the rates will decrease	SPECIALIST: This is incorrect, the estimates have been updated. The method of estimating fatalities is described in the report and

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	BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	proportionally with the number of turbines, as the size and location of turbines have significant implications for fatality rates.	does not treat turbines individually. In other words, each turbine is treated as posing the same quantitative risk. The reduction in turbine numbers therefore resulted in a proportion reduction in the fatality estimate. Furthermore, in terms of fatality / risk calculations, the precautionary approach was adopted by ascribing the “worst case” to all turbines and so no specific turbines were assigned “lower risks.” This would address the “greatest risk” scenario, even though in practice there may be some that present lower risk.
7.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	3. It is unclear why the cumulative impact assessment uses fatality rates for Cape Vulture based on Dorper Wind Farm, rather than the estimated rates provided in the avifaunal impact assessments for the wind farms already approved within a 30 km radius of the site. We suggest using the predicted rates for Ingwe 1 and 2, as estimated earlier in the avifaunal report, as they would be more appropriate.	SPECIALIST: Although indicated in the avifaunal report, for further clarity, the approach to the cumulative analysis was initiated with available information/data from operational facilities in the area (Dorper Wind Farm). The fatality rate there was then imposed on the 2 Ingwe projects and the other projects that we are aware of to obtain total fatality estimates. A second possible scenario could be to use the pre-mitigation fatality estimates at Ingwe and impose them on the other projects. However, the original assessments for the other authorised wind farms did not estimate fatalities (as this was not a requirement of the legislation/ guidelines in place at the time). More recent amendments to the other projects in the area used the Dorper data as the starting point, as we have done
8.	13/07/2023	4. It is important to note that Dorper Wind Farm has not conducted robust estimates of fatalities, and the turbines at Dorper are	SPECIALIST:

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	Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	much smaller than those proposed at Ingwe 1 and 2 (and presumably the other wind farms already approved). Therefore, we question the appropriateness of using these estimates.	<p>For the period of data cited (2014-2018) WildSkies was involved in the monitoring at Dorper Wind Farm. The estimates for Cape Vulture in particular are robust.</p> <p>As explained above, a combination of data was used in the calculations adopting a cautious approach, with the Dorper WEF data being only one of them. The best available information was utilized to inform this assessment as much as possible. The alternative (i.e., not making use of Dorper WEFs data) would be disingenuous as it provides insight into the local context and actual fatalities associated with this type of development.</p> <p>Note, also, that the final designs have not been concluded so turbine specifications for the proposed Ingwe WEFs are assessed at a maximum development scenario.</p>
9.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	5. Wildskies repeatedly points to the fact that there are currently no established thresholds for acceptable impacts on bird species in South Africa. We suggest that the acceptability of impacts should be measured against the country's national and international commitments to halt and reverse decline of biodiversity. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the threshold for "acceptable" fatalities of threatened species should be zero .	<p>SPECIALIST:</p> <p>The point is that the background work to model the impact of human caused fatalities on the key bird species has not been done to our knowledge. It is not ideal for each and every separate EIA to do this separately, as opposed to an overall species level model.</p> <p>The avifaunal assessment has indicated the anticipated level of impacts and, with the proposed development with the layout indicated up to 24 turbines per WEF, the anticipated impacts have not been found to be unacceptable. Mitigation</p>

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			<p>measures also apply an adaptive approach that grows with the knowledge of the industry for birds and renewables.</p> <p>Impacts on terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity have been assessed by the relevant specialists and have been indicated in the EIA Report (and relevant specialist reports) as Low to Very Low post-mitigation. From an avifaunal perspective, adverse impacts post-mitigation has also been found to be low, except for Cape Vulture turbine collision which is Medium.</p> <p>CSIR:</p> <p>Overall, the impact assessment considers national and provincial strategic requirements for infrastructure development, particularly for renewable energy, as well as the legislative, spatial, socio-economic and environmental context and demonstrates that the projects' benefits outweigh the costs and that the projects would make a positive contribution to sustainable infrastructure development in the Chris Hani District, and the Enoch Mgijima regions of the Upper Eastern Cape Province, especially in the town of Molteno.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Observer-led Shut Down on Demand (OLSDOD) mitigation action is proving effective for avoiding vulture collision fatalities at other sites in South Africa such</p>

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			as the Excelsior windfarm. These results were presented at the 2022 Windaba Conference in Cape Town.
10.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	6. We fail to understand why the establishment of fatality thresholds for these proposed developments has been postponed until just before the " Commercial Operation Date." Defining acceptable levels of risk should be a critical component of the assessment and Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan (EMPr).	SPECIALIST: It was recommended that this be done as a measure to adaptively manage the impact on birds during the operational phase and to be able to respond appropriately to any additional knowledge, data or information that may be available at the time (which is not available at present), hence the requirement to have it in place before operations.
11.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	7. Although significant thought has been put into the proposed suite of operational phase mitigation measures, we are concerned that these measures are associated with risks and uncertainties regarding implementation, human effort, and enforcement. There is low confidence in the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation measures.	SPECIALIST: Not all mitigation measures have low confidence. However, the key measures aimed at mitigating Cape Vulture collision in particular come with some uncertainty. The avifaunal report has discussed these uncertainties. The suite of mitigation measures has been indicated to address anticipated impacts and any possible implementation challenges in a comprehensive manner. Further, the avifaunal report confirms that the confidence in the ability to mitigate adverse impacts significantly improves with the proposed up to 24-turbine layouts for each WEF.
12.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	8. Discouraging vultures from roosting on powerlines would require Eskom to install bird guards, but it is unclear if and when Eskom will be willing to implement this measure and to what extent. Vultures may simply perch on other lines or structures.	SPECIALIST: Many of the mitigation measures require extensive preparation in order to be implemented, this one included. It is envisaged that this would be done if the project achieves preferred bidder status and will definitely go ahead.

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13.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	9. Vultures could become habituated to auditory deterrents, or this measure could even increase the risk of collisions if disturbed birds move closer to the wind turbines.	SPECIALIST: This measure has been discussed in the report. Care will be taken when trialling it prior to turbines being operational, to ensure that no risk is created.
14.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	10. While Cape Vulture Food Management and Observer-led shutdown on demand can help reduce impacts to some extent, both measures face challenges related to landowners, staff, transport, oversight, and enforcement.	SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report has discussed these uncertainties. The suite of mitigation measures has been indicated to address anticipated impacts and any possible implementation challenges in a comprehensive manner. No single mitigation measure would be applied in isolation. CSIR: Observer-led Shut down on Demand (OLSDOD) is being tested at windfarms in South Africa where avifauna species such as vultures, raptors, cranes and storks occur, with results presented at the Windaba Conference held on 13 October 2022 in Cape Town. These initial results show that this mitigation has a high success rate for avoiding vulture collisions, with a very low loss in yield from the windfarm. This mitigation has potential to enable generation of renewable energy in order to meet severe energy shortages in South Africa, while supporting the energy transformation away from fossil fuels and avoiding the very significant impacts on ecosystem health caused by fossil fuels.

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15.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	11. The painting of turbine blades remains untested for vultures, which have very different vision compared to eagles. This measure would require approval from the turbine manufacturer and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). The SAWEA protocol referenced in the report will be a briefing document summarizing considerations for wind farm developers and operators, rather than a comprehensive or enforceable protocol.	<p>SPECIALIST:</p> <p>Implementing blade painting does not rely on the existence of any protocol. It is envisaged that there is a protocol being developed at an industry level may make it possible for generic agreement with the CAA on what the painting parameters will be. Note that in this case, the term “protocol” refers more to a general administrative procedure with a view to streamlining process, rather than a gazetted protocol promulgated in terms of NEMA and associated SEMAs to guide the S&EIA process (and that of its associated specialist impact assessments per environmental theme) (refer to BirdlifeSA comment below as well). The Cape Vulture & Wind Farms best practice guidelines from Birdlife SA have been adhered to in this assessment, therefore relevant best practice for this particular species has been observed.</p> <p>Therefore, the report merely acknowledges that should SAWEA and CAA not yet have established any administrative measure to allow for blade painting, these specific projects would have to apply to CAA directly on a project basis, as has been done successfully by two operational wind farms recently. Further, blade painting is not a novel mitigation measure and is further included in the suite of measures to provide for comprehensive mitigation. There is also an increasing trend from DFFE to include the requirement for blade painting as a condition of approval for WEFs.</p>

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16.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	12. The avifaunal impact assessment and EMPr suggest that “Any residual impacts recorded by operational phase monitoring after all possible mitigation measures have been effectively implemented will need to be mitigated off site”. It is not clear if this is a veiled reference to biodiversity offsets or what off-site mitigation measures would entail. We urge further clarification on this matter.	SPECIALIST: Nothing is ‘veiled’, off site mitigation of other threats to the species is recommended if there is a residual impact. However, at this stage, note that no impacts were identified to be so significant post-mitigation by any of the independent specialists, across all themes, to warrant any type of offset. Therefore, offsets are not required for the proposed developments.
17.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	13. Given the sensitivity of the site(s) and the need for operational phase mitigation, we recommend extending the recommended duration of operational phase monitoring of bird activity and fatalities to cover the lifespan of the facility. Furthermore, such monitoring should be overseen by a suitably qualified and independent bird specialist.	SPECIALIST: Agreed, this is the current understanding by the applicant.
18.	13/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 13/07/2023), BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	In conclusion, while we have provided constructive comments and suggestions above, it is important to note our overarching concern, which is the significant risk of cumulative impacts on vultures. Addressing this concern goes beyond the scope of this Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or the responsibility of the applicant alone.	CSIR: The S&EIA Process has been conducted (and will continue to be conducted) within the ambit of and in accordance with, the relevant law. All applicable environmental themes have been assessed and comprehensive mitigation has been proposed. The mitigation hierarchy has been employed throughout the proposed development siting and layout considerations as well as in this S&EIA process. The process has also engaged I&APs and addressed their comments. The need and desirability for the proposed development within the current social, legislative, spatial, and environmental context has been considered within the principles and

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		<p>In the absence of a robust cumulative impact assessment that incorporates a thorough review of existing environmental impact assessments and authorizations for wind farms in the area, strengthened environmental management programs, effective oversight and enforcement of operational phase mitigation commitments, and the identification of robust biodiversity offsets, we cannot support any additional wind energy development in the area. Until these essential elements are in place, we remain unconvinced that there is a need, nor is it desirable to approve further wind farm development in the area.</p> <p>We trust that you will consider our concerns and that these will be taken into account in decision-making.</p>	<p>framework of sustainable development and the proposed development has been found to be acceptable.</p> <p>The avifaunal report (included in Chapter 8 of the EIA Report) explains that the cumulative impacts of wind energy on avifauna in the project area has been carefully assessed according to the guidance in the DEA (DEAT (2004) Cumulative Effects Assessment, Integrated Environmental Management, Information Series 7, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), Pretoria); and the IFC guidelines (Good Practice Handbook – Cumulative Impact Assessment and Management: Guidance for the Private Sector in Emerging Markets”. The decision-making process with respect to the above has been clearly documented in the report.</p> <p>The EIA Report overall also included impact assessment of cumulative impacts across environmental themes and, in itself, adopts a precautionary approach in this regard by assessing not only existing facilities within a 30 km radius (but extended to 50 km for Cape Vultures, in accordance with the Cape Vulture and Wind Farms Guidelines), but also those with EA (not yet developed) and those with historical EA. This indicates assessment beyond what is likely to materialize as constructed and operational developments.</p>

3.12. THE ENDANGERED WILDLIFE TRUST (EWT)

NO	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	14/07/2023 Email, EWT (Kishaylin Chetty)	Please see attached Endangered Wildlife Trust comments in response to the Draft EIA Reports for the Ingwe Wind Energy Facilities 1 and 2 and their associated infrastructure, near Molteno, Eastern Cape. You are welcome to contact me for any further information.	CSIR: The Endangered Wildlife Trust's comments were well received. The introduction on EWT's mandate is duly noted. Further responses are provided below for each comment raised.
2.	14/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 14/07/2023), EWT (Kishaylin Chetty)	Response to the proposed development of the Ingwe Wind Energy Facility 1 and Ingwe Wind Energy Facility 2, and associated infrastructure, near Molteno, Eastern Cape. The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) is a non-governmental, non-profit, conservation organisation, founded in 1973 and operating throughout southern Africa. The EWT conserves threatened species and ecosystems in southern Africa by implementing research and conservation action towards mitigating threats facing species diversity and supporting sustainable natural resource management. The EWT furthermore communicates the principles of sustainable living through awareness programmes to the broadest possible constituency for the benefit of the region. The EWT is driven by a team of passionate and dedicated conservationists working through 13 specialised programmes across southern and East Africa, each falling under one of our three key strategic pillars: <u>Saving species,</u> <u>conserving habitats,</u> and <u>benefitting people.</u>	

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		<p>While the EWT supports the just transition to renewable energy, these proposed developments are only considered feasible if they follow the mitigation hierarchy and the species environmental assessment guideline and avoid unnecessary and unsustainable environmental impacts. We further support wind energy but only where all possible options for avoiding, reducing, minimising, and offsetting of impacts (in that order) have been considered and implemented. Please refer to the links embedded in this paragraph for further insight into the EWT's perspectives, concerns, and considerations linked to renewable energy in general, and wind energy in particular.</p> <p>The demand for energy is increasing globally and Wind Energy Facilities (WEFs) are considered a viable option for renewable energy production. There are, however, concerns over the impacts of wind farms on wildlife in three key aspects: the disturbance or displacement of species from their habitats due to the construction of the associated WEF infrastructure; bird and bat collisions with turbine blades; and collisions and electrocutions on energy infrastructure associated with WEFs. This concern is compounded by the potential cumulative impacts of ongoing wind energy developments posing a direct risk to collision-prone species across sensitive areas, and an amplified level of disturbance and loss of habitat for wildlife in areas that overlap with WEFs.</p> <p>The EWT believes that some of the impacts of WEFs can be avoided and reduced using suitable remedial actions and mitigation</p>	<p>Regarding the application of the mitigation hierarchy, refer to the response provided for a similar comment raised by BirdLife SA in Number 3 of Section 3.11 of this CRR.</p> <p>These impacts have been assessed by independent specialists with expertise in the relevant fields and the reports were included in the EIA Report. Note that the EIA Report also explained that the grid connection components will be assessed in a separate process.</p> <p>As per the response provided for a similar comment raised by Birdlife SA in Number 18 of Section 3.11 of this this CRR, the avifaunal report explains that the cumulative impacts of wind energy on avifauna in the project area has been</p>

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		measures. Accordingly, we recommend four priority measures that must be considered and implemented to ensure minimum impact of wind energy on wildlife, for details of these four priority measures click here.	<p>carefully assessed according to the guidance in the DEA (DEAT (2004) Cumulative Effects Assessment, Integrated Environmental Management, Information Series 7, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), Pretoria); and the IFC guidelines (Good Practice Handbook - Cumulative Impact Assessment and Management: Guidance for the Private Sector in Emerging Markets". The decision-making process with respect to the above has been clearly documented in the report.</p> <p>The EIA Report overall also included impact assessment of cumulative impacts across environmental themes and, in itself, adopts a precautionary approach in this regard by assessing not only existing facilities within a 30 km radius (but extended to 50 km for Cape Vultures, in accordance with the Cape Vulture and Wind Farms Guidelines), but also those with EA (not yet developed) and those with historical EA. This indicates assessment beyond what is likely to materialize as constructed and operational developments.</p> <p>The Applicant is happy to consider site-specific comments but is not clear on the reference to a general external webpage that is not related to the project and process currently underway.</p>
3.	14/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 14/07/2023),	The National Web-based Environmental Screening Tool is a geographically based web-enabled application that allows a proponent intending to submit an application for environmental	APPLICANT: The Screening Tool has been referenced in the EIA Report and the sensitivity of the Cape Vulture is noted in the avifaunal report. The EIA Report also explained that the

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	EWT (Kishaylin Chetty)	authorisation in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2014, as amended, to screen their proposed site for any environmental sensitivity. Based on the proposed footprint of Ingwe Wind Energy Facility 1 and Ingwe Wind Energy Facility 2, and associated infrastructure , a number of species have been highlighted as potentially occurring in the proposed development area, these include Cape Vultures, Black Harrier, African Marsh-Harrier, Secretarybirds, large eagles (Martial and Verreaux's), Blue Crane and the Grey Crowned Crane, but most importantly this triggers specific concerns about <u>risks to Cape Vultures based on the Cape Vulture Risk Model</u> . The risk of mortality is significant and not only linked to the turbines themselves but also any associated power lines.	grid connection infrastructure would be assessed in a separate S&EIA Process.
4.	14/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 14/07/2023), EWT (Kishaylin Chetty)	In evaluating the above application, we wish to highlight the following impacts and resultant recommendations: <u>Avifaunal Impacts:</u> As a first step we strongly recommend that the impact mitigation hierarchy be followed with avoidance being prioritized to avoid ongoing mortalities over the life of the WEF.	SPECIALIST: The extent to which the project has implemented the hierarchy is described in Section 4.1 of the Avifaunal Impact Assessment which is included in Chapter 8 of the EIA Report. In addition, refer to the responses provided for similar comments raised by VulPro and Birdlife SA in Number 19 of Section 3.9 and Number 3 of Section 3.11 of this CRR, respectively.
5.		<u>Mitigation and impact minimization options, ONLY if avoidance is not possible:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only if avoidance is not possible, and we would like to emphasise that avoidance should be possible, we then highly recommend a shut down on demand system is implemented, either through on the ground observers, or automated systems, 	APPLICANT: As explained, avoidance has been executed within certain aspects of project siting and layout proposal, further, minimisation is also applied in the form of comprehensive mitigation measures which would be conditions of approval, should EA be granted.

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		to shut down turbines when collision prone birds enter wind farms and are heading within rotor sweep zones.	<p>SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report has recommended observer led shutdown on demand (refer to Chapter 8 of the EIA Report).</p> <p>CSIR: The mitigation action of Shut down on Demand (SDOD) is included. Initial monitoring results from South Africa (such as presented at Windaba 2022 in Cape Town) show this can be effective in avoiding collisions for species such as vultures, raptors, cranes and storks.</p>
6.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is critical that no human disturbance associated with any construction activity occurs within the buffers near active breeding eagle nests in the peak breeding period between May and September, i.e. construction vehicles, labourers on foot, etc. All other human disturbance should also be minimized or avoided during this breeding period. 	<p>SPECIALIST: The sensitive areas (both high and medium sensitivity) identified by the VERA model around Verreaux's Eagle nests have been designed out of the project in order to avoid any disturbance. Likewise for various other species nests, detailed in the report (refer to Chapter 8 of the EIA Report).</p>
7.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It should be noted that the power line design associated with this project must minimise bird electrocution incidents through satisfactory phase clearances, and mitigation should account for collisions with shield wires or conductors. With regards to the power lines, fitting Bird Flight Diverters (BFDs) may mitigate collisions involving large raptors, but it will not mitigate (at all) collisions by Ludwig's Bustard. Since lines are likely to be handed over to Eskom (for long term management as per standard power purchase agreements), the lines need to be constructed to specification as determined by Eskom and fitted with approved BFDs at the Eskom recommended intervals. 	<p>SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report has recommended these measures (refer to Chapter 8 of the EIA Report).</p>

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8.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New power lines need to be placed, as far as possible, in areas where linear infrastructure already exists and ideally as close to the existing lines as possible. 	SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report has recommended these measures (refer to Chapter 8 of the EIA Report).
9.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should new, more effective BFDs become available, the developer needs to be ready to procure and fit these. The EWT is in the process of expanding its current long-term line marking experiment near De Aar where a further 4 BFD designs will be tested, specifically to reduce Ludwig's Bustard collisions. If this development proceeds, we urge the developer to contact the EWT Wildlife and Energy programme directly and to participate in this important and ongoing research. If a more effective BFD is identified and approved, this must be applied to the line. Possibly including the replacement of old BFDs where possible. 	SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report has recommended these measures (refer to Chapter 8 of the EIA Report).
10.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power lines need to be seasonally monitored (according to the ESKOM/EWT partnership national protocol) for fatalities and these fatalities should be reported to the Eskom/EWT Strategic partnership. 	SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report has recommended this monitoring as part of the overall monitoring of the wind farm, noting that the grid connection component will be assessed as part of a separate Scoping EIA Process (refer to Chapter 8 of the EIA Report).
11.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the turbine design has not yet been finalised, we recommend that minimum blade tip height be set as high as is possible (even more than the 25 m recommended). 	SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report has recommended the combination of turbine hub height and rotor diameter must be optimised to maximise the lower blade tip height above ground (refer to Chapter 8 of the EIA Report).
12.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not clear in confidence that the mitigation measures provided in the avifauna report will adequately deal with the collision risk to avifauna, especially related to the Cape Vulture. 	SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report has discussed the uncertainty and/or confidence levels in the mitigation measures and explained

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			that the significance of turbine collision cannot be reduced more than currently the case, due to this uncertainty. Further, the avifaunal report also confirms that the confidence in the ability to mitigate adverse impacts significantly improves with the proposed up to 24-turbine layouts for each WEF (refer to Chapter 8 of the EIA Report).
13.	14/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 14/07/2023), EWT (Kishaylin Chetty)	<u>Cape Vulture Collision Risk:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cape Vultures are known to frequent the landscape within the proposed wind farm envelopes; thus it is recommended that a carcass management system is implemented on site to remove food sources that will certainly attract birds to the site, even from extensive distances away. 	SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report has recommended these measures (refer to Chapter 8 of the EIA Report).
14.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current Cape Vulture and Windfarms guideline recommends that a buffer of approximately 50 km around all colonies, and regular or seasonal/occasional roosts should be considered as high to very high sensitivity (with sensitivity influenced by distance from the roost/colony, as well as its size and location). A buffer of approximately 18 km around breeding colonies should be considered as very high sensitivity. Please contact Dr Gareth Tate garetht@ewt.org.za for further information about the Cape Vulture Risk Model. 	SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report has complied with and referenced these guidelines (refer to Chapter 8 of the EIA Report).
15.	14/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 14/07/2023), EWT (Kishaylin Chetty)	<u>Bat collision risk:</u> Bats are particularly susceptible to anthropogenic changes because of their low reproductive rate, longevity, and high metabolic rates, limiting their ability to recover from declines and to maintain sustainable populations. Bat fatalities due to wind turbines raise serious concerns about population-level impacts. The main	APPLICANT: Pre-construction bat monitoring has been undertaken and the results informed the bat impact assessment which followed the relevant guidelines. This report was included in Chapter 9 of the EIA Report. Impacts on bats were found to be low, post-mitigation.

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		documented direct impacts of wind energy on bats includes fatality via mainly direct collision with turbine blades or less likely by barotrauma. Indirect impacts include roost disturbances and/or destruction (if construction, operational or decommissioning activities occur close to bat roosts), destruction of foraging habitat (due to WEF construction and habitat change), displacement of bats from their foraging habitat (bats avoid the WEF area) and obstruction of movement paths to drinking, foraging, roosting and migration sites.	
16.		Impacts of wind turbines on bats vary depending on site selection, specifications of the wind turbines, species occurring in the area, season, and time of night. Bat fatalities may outnumber bird fatalities by 10:1 and fatality rates may be affected by turbine size and wind speed (low-wind nights are generally associated with increased fatality). Until we have a better understanding of South African bat population levels and fluxes, bat ecology and migration, it is recommended that a precautionary approach is adopted, and all known bat data are carefully considered. For detailed pre-construction monitoring, operational phase monitoring and mitigation guidelines please click here.	
17.	14/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 14/07/2023), EWT (Kishaylin Chetty)	<u>Biodiversity offset</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In determining whether a biodiversity offset is required, a detailed assessment of the mitigation hierarchy must be undertaken, and where residual impacts have been identified, it should be determined and suitably shown, if the impacts can be mitigated through a biodiversity offset. Avoidance, minimization and restoration/rehabilitation measures must be adequately 	APPLICANT: The mitigation hierarchy has been considered and adopted in devising the specifications and location of the proposed development as well as in the S&EIA process. The DEIR has included this information and has been retained in the Final EIA Report.

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		shown in the strategy. It must be stressed that not all residual impacts can be mitigated through a biodiversity offset and if a residual impact is deemed to be significantly high, the project should not proceed.	Note that no impacts were identified to be so significant post-mitigation by any of the independent specialists, across all themes, to warrant any type of offset. Therefore, offsets are not required for the proposed developments.
18.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is imperative that <u>all residual impacts</u> of the proposed development are included in the biodiversity offset determination, which should follow the like-for-like principle or if the project is deemed to have strategic significance, follow the ecological compensation measure route, ensuring equity and reasonable decision-making. 	Refer to the response above.
19.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The offset should be designed for the life span of the project impact and/or into perpetuity. 	Refer to the response above.
20.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The biodiversity offset should have a conservation outcome leading to a net positive impact where possible and must be measurable and achievable. For detailed guidelines please see here. 	Refer to the response above.
21.	14/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 14/07/2023), EWT (Kishaylin Chetty)	<u>General recommendations:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recommend that this WEF not be approved unless all Cape Vulture and other relevant threatened species collisions can be confidently and entirely avoided or mitigated throughout the life of the WEF as per the mitigation hierarchy. 	CSIR: The mitigation hierarchy has been applied. Refer to the responses provided to similar comments raised by VulPro and BirdLife SA in Number 19 of Section 3.9 and Number 3 of Section 3.11 of this CRR, respectively.
22.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We further recommend a comprehensive, long-term avifaunal and terrestrial monitoring programme be implemented by an independent qualified service provider. Little is known about terrestrial impacts of large wind developments and as such this project, if approved, will provide an opportunity to measure baselines and changes over time for terrestrial species. 	SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report has recommended these measures. Avifaunal monitoring has been done and would continue for the life of the project during the operational phase (refer to Chapter 8 of the EIA Report).

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23.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avifaunal impacts need to be closely monitored with seasonal line surveys and surveys in the vicinity of turbines. 	SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report has recommended these measures (refer to Chapter 8 of the EIA Report).
24.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The developments will constitute an additional pressure on biodiversity in the area. This runs against the purpose of the conservancies and formal protected areas in the region, that have taken many years of conservation investment to get off the ground. Therefore, the EWT would like to see a commitment to conservation from the developer. A variety of options are available, and the developer is welcome to contact the EWT to discuss these. 	CSIR: Impacts on aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity have been assessed and found to be low, post-mitigation (refer to Chapter 10 and 11 of the EIA Report, respectively). The proposed development has responded to environmental sensitivities through siting and layout design, as well as comprehensive mitigation measures across environmental themes.
25.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant adverse impacts can be expected during the construction phase including vehicular collisions with wildlife, collection and cutting of shrubs for firewood, potential snaring, pollution, etc., and as such strict controls and protocols are required during this phase. 	CSIR: These potential impacts are addressed through construction phase specifications within the EMPr (refer to Appendix I and J of the EIA Report).
26.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We strongly advise the appointment of an independent consultant to monitor activities during the construction phase and to report issues and non-compliance to the authorities and developer, should this project go ahead. 	SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report has made this recommendation (refer to Chapter 8 of the EIA Report). The requirement for an ECO is also included in the EMPr (refer to Appendix I and J of the EIA Report).
27.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is seldom evidence of sufficiently robust implementation of the mitigation hierarchy in the process of site selection. Avoidance, which is the first and most important step, must be duly considered as the priority irrespective of budget constraints, REDZ status or grid access. 	SPECIALIST: For avifauna, this has been described in Section 4.1 of the Avifaunal Impact Assessment which is included in Chapter 8 of the EIA Report. Also, refer to the responses provided to similar comments raised by VulPro and BirdLife SA in

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			<p>Number 19 of Section 3.9 and Number 3 of Section 3.11 of this CRR, respectively.</p> <p>The EIA Report also explained the process of site selection and the rationale behind this (refer to Chapter 5 of the EIA Report).</p>
28.	14/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 14/07/2023), EWT (Kishaylin Chetty)	<p>The EWT appreciates the opportunity provided by the developer to comment and we look forward to the opportunity to participate in the process of informing the responsible placement of turbines. We would value the opportunity to provide our detailed landscape planning data and to assist through negotiation to inform decision making, but we cannot support high-risk options. We further request that the relevant competent authority and Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) take these concerns into consideration, including the associated power lines and other infrastructure that will be required because of the proposed wind energy development.</p> <p>The EWT reserves the right to revise initial comments presented here if additional information becomes available.</p>	<p>CSIR:</p> <p>The proposed development is not considered high risk.</p> <p>Based on the findings of the detailed specialist assessments, which are included in Chapter 6 to 18 of the EIA Report, the proposed projects based on their current site layout comprising up to 24 wind turbines each is considered to have an overall Low to Very Low negative environmental impact across most specialist/ environmental themes, with an overall Moderate negative impact for Heritage and Visual during construction and operations, and a Moderate negative impact for turbine collision fatality of Avifauna during operations (with the implementation of recommended mitigation measures and management actions as included in the EMPr). The proposed project is also considered to have an overall Moderate to Low positive socio-economic impact (recommended mitigation measures and management actions as included in the EMPr).</p>

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			Note that the EIA Report explained that a separate S&EIA Process would be conducted for proposed grid connection infrastructure.

3.13. THE EASTERN CAPE PARKS AND TOURISM AGENCY

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	19/07/2023 Email, The Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency: Environmental Planner (Londeka Jilimane)	Thank you for affording the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (EAPTA) opportunity to engage on the Environmental Impact Assessment study for the proposed Ingwe Wind Energy Facilities 1 and 2 and their associated infrastructure. The project area occurs outside ECPTA's areas of concern and therefore no direct impacts to ECPTA nature reserves are foreseen at this stage. Please note, however, that it is the responsibility of the Environmental Assessment Practitioner to inform ECPTA of the changes in locality as this may result to a different response. ECPTA would appreciate further opportunities of involvement in the process.	CSIR: This comment was well received and duly noted. The CSIR EIA Project Team informed this Stakeholder that should there be any further changes regarding these two proposed Ingwe WEF projects, the ECPTA will be duly informed.

3.14. AVDS ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

NO.	DATE OF COMMENT, FORMAT OF COMMENT, NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	19/07/2023 Email, AVDS Environmental Consultants (Andre van der Spuy)	Please find attached objection, with annexures, for your attention.	CSIR: These comments were noted. Responses to comments raised are provided below.
2.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), AVDS Environmental Consultants (Andre van der Spuy)	SECOND OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED ABO WIND INGWE WIND ENERGY FACILITIES 1 AND 2, AND ITS ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, NEAR MOLTENO, EASTERN CAPE. (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2275) (DFFE REF: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2276) 1. This objection follows that submitted by AVDS Environmental Consultants by email on 17/2/2023. That objection identified, with reasons, the fatal flaw that these wind energy facilities and infrastructure pose in terms of their threat to Cape Vultures. There exists sufficient evidence to identify this obvious and serious fatal flaw from a very early stage and the fact is confirmed by the conservation organisations of VULPRO and BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA whose informed objections to the project have concluded the same. Our first objection also identified the manipulative EIA process being managed by the EAP in order to unfairly advantage and protect the interests of the applicant.	Only VulPro noted their view that the proposed WEFS are fatally flawed, BirdlifeSA did not mention "fatal flaws".
3.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), AVDS Environmental Consultants (Andre van der Spuy)	<u>AVIFAUNAL IMPACT</u> 2. We have reviewed the comprehensive objections against this development by VULPRO and BIRDLIFE SA. Both organisations have stated in no uncertain terms that they regard the proposed	CSIR: 2. Only VulPro noted their view that the proposed WEFs are fatally flawed, BirdlifeSA did not mention "fatal flaws".

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		<p>development as being fatally flawed in terms of its potential impact upon the Cape Vulture population, as well as probably other bird species. We fully endorse and support their objections which reach the same conclusion (that the project is fatally flawed) as our first objection of 17/2/2023 did and as this objection repeats. Accordingly we do not find it necessary here to deliver further comprehensive comment and objection in terms of the avifaunal impact issue.</p> <p>3. The objections of Birdlife SA and Vulpro expose the undue and unsubstantiated reliance of the avifaunal specialist (Wildskies) reliance upon proposed avifaunal mitigation in order to table his reduced post-mitigation avifaunal impact ratings. The fact is that avifaunal mitigation measures that have been implemented on operating wind farms in South Africa have all but failed and particularly so in the instance of vultures and which is likely on account of their visual characteristics (in conjunction with other characteristics and reasons). The vagueness and speculative manner in which Wildskies has presented so-called bird impact mitigation measures is entirely unconvincing and smacks of a desperate effort to justify the development in that face of the obvious avifaunal threat. It should not be forgotten that the avifaunal specialist, despite his desperate efforts keep the project alive, had to concede that the, "(t)he No-Go alternative therefore has much lower impacts on avifauna than the proposed projects, and would be preferred from an avifaunal perspective."</p>	<p>3. Please refer to responses to VulPro and BirdlifeSA comments which address the mitigation hierarchy applied as well as the rationale behind the proposed mitigation measures.</p> <p>The methodology employed in the impact assessment (and related mitigation measures) has been conducted and presented in terms of applicable law and relevant guidelines.</p> <p>NEMA and associated EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended) require that the no-go alternative be evaluated. This was done by all specialists and this finding is presented in the EIA Report along with all the others.</p>
4.	19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023),	<u>MATERIAL ABUSE AND VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS OF INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THE PUBLIC</u>	CSIR:

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	AVDS Environmental Consultants (Andre van der Spuy)	<p><u>PARTICIPATION PROCESS AND TO INFLUENCE DECISIONS WHICH AFFECT THEM.</u></p> <p>4. On 4/5/2023 an email was received from the EAP in which notice was given that the scoping report had been accepted by the Depart of Fisheries, Forestry and the Environment (DFFE, or the “competent authority”). In the notification the EAP stated,</p> <p>“As a registered I&AP on the projects, you are duly informed of the outcome of the <u>DFFE’s decision on the Final Scoping Reports</u>” (underlining supplied).</p> <p>5. The failure of the EAP to have advised I&APs of their right to appeal the competent authority’s decision on the Final Scoping Reports constitutes a fundamental violation of the rights of I&APs by the EAP.</p> <p>6. Of importance, the EAP did not provide Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) with a copy of the record of the competent authority’s decision in the matter. Accordingly, we sent an email on 12/5/2023 to the EAP requesting a copy of the competent authority’s letter for review. This request was refused by the EAP who instead advised that the subject letter would only be provided at a later stage of the EIA process and at the same future time when the Draft EIR would be made available to I&APs for review. See Annexure A.</p> <p>7. In anticipation of preparing and submitted an appeal against the “DFFE’s decision on the Final Scoping Reports”, and as is</p>	<p>5. Please refer to Appendix K of the EIA Report where these comments and issues have already been addressed. The DFFE also confirmed that the acceptance of the Scoping Report cannot be appealed.</p> <p>6. Same as above.</p> <p>7. Same as above.</p> <p>8. Same as above.</p> <p>9. Same as above.</p> <p>10. Same as above. Further, registered I&APs were afforded all opportunities in terms of NEMA to provide comment.</p> <p>11. There is no right of appeal on acceptance of a Scoping Report. Refer to the above.</p> <p>14. While the refusal of a DSR is an appealable decision, the acceptance thereof is not (as the S&EIA process remains in progress). This is made clear in DFFE’s response. Note also that the DFFE’s acceptance of the Scoping Report was included in the DEIR and no further comments were delivered by I&APs in that regard. AVDS consulting did not issue any comment</p>

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		<p>permitted in terms of NEMA Section 43(1), we also sent an email to the EAP with a request to be provided with a copy of the I&AP database (as allowed for in terms of the EIA Regulations) and which is a necessary item in order to fully comply with the legislative requirement for any appeal submitted under NEMA to also be provided in copy to the registered I&APs in the application. The EAP however ignored our request to be provided with a copy of the I&AP database.</p> <p>8. As the EAP knows, the NEMA Section 43(1) provides for any administrative decision taken under NEMA by a delegated official to be appealed against and which appeal must be submitted to the responsible Minister (in this case Minister B. Creecy) via the Appeal Administrator.</p> <p>9. Furthermore, the failure of the EAP to have provided registered I&APs with of copy of the DFFE's record of decision at an appropriate time constitutes a further violation of I&AP rights to be timeously informed of important procedural matters which may significantly affect them. The EAP's prejudicial actions to belatedly provide the record of the decision only much later effectively prevented I&APs from being able to submit an informed appeal against the decision within the prescribed 20 date period which is provided to I&APs under the NEMA National Appeal Regulation 4(1) within which to submit their appeal to the Minister.</p> <p>10. The EAP's intentional actions, designed to prevent I&APs from being able to fully and properly appeal against the</p>	<p>on the contents thereof, and only the procedural aspects which appear to be misunderstood.</p> <p>15. The documentation was included in the DEIR, and this will be included in the Final EIA Report as well. Therefore, the records thereof remain available to the DFFE and registered I&APs.</p> <p>16. Refer to the above.</p>

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		<p>administrative decision to accept the scoping reports, amounts to a fundamental violation of I&AP rights and has effectively also rendered the decision to accept the scoping reports as defective and of no legal standing. This is because the EAP is obligated under NEMA and the EIA Regulations with a critically important role which is to empower I&APs to access and give effect to their full rights under NEMA. This speaks to the critical importance of the EAP to be an independent party in the process and to act fairly. Obviously Mr. P. Lochner has not acted accordingly and cannot therefore be considered to be independent nor fair in his actions and his obviously prejudice towards registered I&APs is evidenced by his actions in this matter. The EAP, Mr. Lochner, has through his actions in preventing registered I&APs from freely and fairly appealing the decision, effectively fatally flawed the applications(s) from a procedural point of view.</p> <p>11. The matter does not however end there. On account of the author being an environmental consultant (of AVDS Environmental Consultants) himself he is in the privileged position of being knowledgeable regarding the rights of registered I&APs to appeal any administrative decision taken under NEMA by a delegated official. The vast majority of registered I&APs will obviously not be aware of this right unless specifically advised of such by the EAP.</p> <p>12. Notwithstanding the limitations imposed by the EAP on account of his refusal to provide us with a copy of the competent authority's decision and the I&AP database, on 24/5/2023 AVDS Environmental Consultants submitted by email to the Appeal</p>	

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		<p>Administrator of the Department of the Environment an appeal against the procedurally flawed and invalidated decision of the competent authority to accept the scoping reports. See Annexure C.</p> <p>13. On 10/6/2023 we received a response from the Minister Creecy, advising us that the decision on the scoping reports taken by the competent authority was not an appealable one. See Annexure D for a copy of her letter.</p> <p>14. In an emailed response of 13/6/2023 (see Annexure E) we contested the Minister's bizarre (mis)interpretation of the matter with the appeal administrator in the matter, Ms. M. Monyai, and pointed out the contradictions inherent within the Minister's own advice. In subsequent dialogue it was emphasised that one of the options available to the competent authority under EIA Regulation 22 when considering whether or not to accept the scoping reports was to refuse the application(s) at that stage and which is clearly an appealable decision and thus it stands to reason that the other decision options (in this instance, the decision to accept the scoping reports) are also appealable. Despite the convincing and obvious flaws in the Appeal Administrator's interpretation and advice she remained unmoved and refused to allow consider our appeal any further.</p> <p>15. We have not withdrawn our appeal and consider that it remains valid notwithstanding the fact that the EIA process has been rapidly and significantly advanced by the EAP.</p>	

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		<p>16. Of concern is the manner in which the Appeal Administrator has acted prejudicially against us in denying us the right of appeal in the subject matter. The actions of the administrator have effectively allowed the applicant, with assistance of the EAP, to advance the EIA process for the applications of the developer rapidly and unfairly and at the expense of all registered I&APs rights, not just our own. The right of appeal given to I&APs is not a trivial one and is most often the last avenue of relief practically available to aggrieved parties in matters where they have been unfairly treated, such as is the case here. It is therefore incomprehensible that the appeal administrator herself should join forces with the EAP and Applicant in denying us (and other registered I&APs) the right of appeal. All in all the actions of the appeal administrator point to an intention on her part to collaborate with the EAP in order to unfairly advance the applicant's interests at the expense of registered I&APs.</p>	
5.	<p>19/07/2023 Letter (received via email on 19/07/2023), AVDS Environmental Consultants (Andre van der Spuy)</p>	<p><u>CONCLUSION</u></p> <p>17. We, along with several other parties, have confirmed that the proposed Ingwe WEFs are fatally flawed. They are beyond salvage as the location (and region) chosen by the applicant is fundamentally unsuitable for wind farm development. We point out that the applicant(s) of their own volition spurned the opportunity to consider alternative locations for the proposed development and which would have been potentially more acceptable for wind farm development. The environment cannot be allowed to be compromised by a private party on account of its own failure to have undertaken proper environmental planning (and which the NEMA and EIA Regulations explicitly</p>	<p>CSIR:</p> <p>17. Refer to the above, the only additional party that noted their interpretation of the proposed development as a fatal flaw is VulPro, therefore the phrase "several other parties" is misleading and inaccurate.</p> <p>This comment does not highlight any specific aspects of the site selection and application of mitigation hierarchy that were explained in the EIA Report, therefore a response on particular issues cannot be delivered. However, the EIA Report does explain the</p>

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		<p>require in order to ensure that the best practical environmental option prevails).</p> <p>18. According to evidence, the applications are fatally flawed on account of the potential avifaunal impacts that will be delivered and which are beyond effective mitigation. The applicant has been advised of this but the EAP, with the assistance of the avifaunal specialist, has attempted to keep the applications “alive” despite the compelling evidence provided by different registered I&APs and various reputable conservation organisations involved in vulture and bird conservation.</p> <p>19. The applications are also fatally flawed on procedural grounds. The intentional limitations imposed upon registered I&APs in terms of their right to submit appeals against the decision of the competent authority to accept the scoping reports, and have the appeals administered, is a fatal flaw. In this regard both the EAP and the Department’s Appeal Administrator (Ms. M. Monyai) must stand to account. The subject decision is crucially important in directing the scope and nature of the EIA process and ultimately the findings and outcome of the final EIRs. Since that decision has been rendered defective the subsequent EIA phase and its products are also defective and invalid and must ultimately be nullified.</p>	<p>site selection rationale, need and desirability of the proposed development as well as alternatives assessed.</p> <p>NEMA and associated EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended) has been followed in this process.</p> <p>18. Please refer to previous responses and avifaunal report regarding avifaunal impacts and mitigation measures (included as Chapter 8 of the EIA Report). No specific issues have been highlighted in this comment; therefore, a detailed response cannot be delivered.</p> <p>19. Note that AVDS Environmental were invited to a meeting during the comment period for the DEIR to better understand concerns. AVDS Environmental did not provide a response to the invitation, despite repeated attempts to engage them . Refer to Appendix F.3 of the EIA Report for proof thereof.</p> <p>Refer to the above, a decision is yet to be issued by the Competent Authority, therefore there has not yet been an opportunity to appeal in terms of the National Appeals Regulations, 2014. When a decision is issued, registered I&APs will be informed of their right to appeal.</p>

4. FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS HELD WITH INTERESTED AND/OR AFFECTED PARTIES

The tables below include summarised comments, questions and/or issues raised by stakeholders and registered Interested and/or Affected Parties (I&APs) during the Focus Group Meetings, together with the responses from the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) project team. **Please note that in pursuit of efficiency, the meeting notes included in the tables below are salient points from the discussion that followed the presentation and does not serve as detailed minutes of the entire meeting.** These meeting notes are also included in Appendix M of the EIA Report.

The approach followed for this Comments and Responses Report (CRR) was guided by sections 3(3), 9, 12(1) and (2), 11 as well as 18 of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 14 of 2013) (POPIA). Note that in accordance with the POPIA, the CSIR conducts itself responsibly when collecting, processing, storing, and sharing any personal information collected for the purposes of Public Participation Processes (PPP) in terms of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations (as amended). By registering as an I&AP and/or submitting information and comments, stakeholders consent to the collection, collation, processing, and storing of such information and the use and disclosure of such information for the aforementioned purpose (<https://www.csir.co.za/csir-privacy-notice>). Therefore, erring on the side of caution as recommended by the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), the names and affiliations of non-governmental I&APs are represented by an 'XXXX' in this CRR.

An integrated Public Participation Process was undertaken for the proposed Ingwe Wind Energy Facility (WEF) 1 and Ingwe WEF 2 projects. **The comments included in this CRR only apply to the proposed Ingwe WEF 2.** Comments relating to the Ingwe WEF 1 have been included for context or background purposes (where necessary). Comments and responses for the Ingwe WEF 1 project is included in the respective CRR. The comments received have been grouped per organisation, based on the structure recommended by the DFFE.

4.1. AVIFAUNAL FOCUS GROUP MEETING HELD WITH BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA, THE ENDANGERED WILDLIFE TRUST AND VULPRO VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 16 MAY 2023

NO	NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS/QUESTIONS RAISED	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	VulPro (Kate Webster)	Why was VulPro not approached for GPS tracking data available for the area as that data would have given a better perspective on the movement of Cape Vultures within the proposed site?	Specialist: I have very recently asked VulPro for the data on this project and I also have requested data from VulPro on multiple other projects; however, I have not received any data to date. I am happy to discuss better channels to obtain data from VulPro, outside of this meeting.
2.	BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	We acknowledged the amount of work done on the projects thus far, but BirdLife South Africa considers the site to be highly sensitive and the projects present a risk to avifauna. Jon, can you give us a sense of the passage rates that you recorded for Cape Vultures? What are your anticipated fatality rates without mitigation? Please also provide information on collision data.	SPECIALIST: Across the full monitoring period, we have recorded 0.79 Cape Vultures per hour. The method of calculation employed is conservative and assumes a worst-case scenario with the estimated fatality rate for Cape Vulture for the Ingwe WEF 1 site being just under 6 Cape Vultures per year and for the Ingwe WEF 2 site about 9 Cape Vultures a year, pre-mitigation. Data sourcing for collisions was done through the monitoring that has taken place on site; however, the risk map was consulted, noting that it does not contain roosts/power line roost data. Post meeting note from the Specialist: Note that the above-mentioned estimated Cape Vulture fatality rates for the proposed Ingwe WEF 1 and 2 sites are as per the old layouts and have since been updated. Post this meeting, the layout was reduced to 24 turbines with a consequent reduction in estimated fatalities to 3.76 fatalities per year.

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3.	The Endangered Wildlife Trust (Dr Gareth Tate)	We note the extensive work that has already been done on the proposed projects and the utilization distribution models for Cape Vultures were also used. One of the concerns around this model is that Cape Vultures are underrepresented as the modelling process takes into consideration proximity to roosts and with the confirmation of a power line roost, it really raises a red flag. If you incorporate that power line roost, you may find that this site is almost fatally flawed from a Cape Vulture perspective. The anticipated fatality rate for Cape Vultures being 6 fatalities a year for the proposed project is concerning. EWT is concerned about the cumulative risk. There is a need to look at what the cumulative impact on Cape Vultures is going to be.	APPLICANT: The cumulative impacts do need to be considered/assessed as per the legislated requirements (which will be done in the EIA phase), and this is also adopting the precautionary approach in terms of NEMA, particularly within the renewable energy industry because there are projects that get approved but do not necessarily obtain preferred bidder status or reach agreements for off-take.
4.	BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	BirdLife South Africa is also extremely concerned about the cumulative impact of these proposed projects on Cape Vultures	
5.	VulPro (Kate Webster)	I can confirm that VulPro has noted a number of Cape Vultures in the area. Furthermore, according to VulPro's data there have also been a number of Blue Cranes and a Marshall Eagle that have been killed by power line collisions in the area which indicates that this area could be considered a very high-risk area. There is a lot of (bird) activity in that area and I feel that it is actually a 'no-go' if we take the cumulative impact into consideration. It does not make sense to proceed with this kind of development.	
6.	BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	There is a general agreement that the site is of high to very high sensitivity for avifauna, but BirdLife South Africa is also concerned that none of the proposed mitigation measures will be 100% effective considering human error and lack of enforcement etc. Jon, what is your confidence in each of these mitigation measures and what have you assessed the residual significance of impacts to be after all these mitigation measures are in place?	SPECIALIST: I agree that there is a bit of uncertainty around the effectiveness of some of the mitigation measures, but I don't believe it is fair to discredit the measure in principle based on poor implementation by early projects that were assessed under earlier standards, protocols, and guidelines and without having had the benefit of current knowledge on the matter.

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			<i>Post meeting note from the Specialist: Further, we have recommended multiple mitigation measures, which collectively reduces overall uncertainty and increases effectiveness.</i>
		I agree. Some of the measures have been effective in some areas, but the key is that it is not 100% effective even where it is implemented well. There have been implementation errors at the wind farms in the past so how can these errors be avoided and how can we ensure that the measures are being implemented and enforced?	<p>SPECIALIST: The industry as a whole as gained a lot of knowledge over the past few years that will help towards implementing mitigation measures better. The key thing this is that skilled people are required in order to ensure that these measures, e.g., the Observer-led Shutdown on Demand (OLSDOD) measure is implemented. It is agreed that no mitigation measure can be 100% effective, but it can be quite close if it is resourced and managed correctly.</p> <p><i>Post meeting note from the Specialist: It is agreed that no mitigation measure can be 100% effective, but it can be quite close if it is resourced and managed correctly, and if in combination with multiple other mitigation measures.</i></p>
		How can these requirements be embedded into the Environmental Authorisation (EA) and/or the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) so there is assurance that these measures will be put in place?	<p>SPECIALIST: Going forward, the approach would be (particularly compared to the past) proactive in that the adaptive management plan and threshold policy will be written into an annexure of the EMPr as a safety net that will ensure it is implemented. These measures also need to be implemented independently and the knowledge gained from people with experience in implementing these measures successfully elsewhere must be contracted to enforce it.</p>
		There should be very clear requirements in the EMPr in terms of what is being measures and the impact management outcomes must be clearly specified. If these projects go ahead, these requirements need to be very clear and specific, measurable and enforceable or they won't be implemented and audited. In addition, a last-resort "safety net" that is also typically considered is biodiversity offsets. In	

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		this case, Developers need to consider what that would mean, what this could look like and the related cost implications.	
7.	The Endangered Wildlife Trust (Kishaylin Chetty)	What alternatives were considered in terms of the layouts and whether or not the impacts can be minimised from a layout perspective?	<p>SPECIALIST: From an avifauna perspective, there were a lot of iterations of layout designs and reducing the developable area as avifaunal findings were made. There has been a lot of avoidance or minimization of risk, but not layout alternatives.</p> <p>APPLICANT: We have used the EIA Process to inform our design. We have engaged with specialists and BirdLife South Africa very early on so that our design is very responsive to the environmental context and associated sensitivities on the site. A fatal flaw assessment was initially conducted, followed by early-stage avifaunal monitoring and engagement with BirdLife South Africa. This was also supplemented by running the VERA model (upon receipt of the advice from BirdLife South Africa). We have used this information and intentionally proposed turbines in places that are lower risk. Hence, there are no specific layout alternatives, other than two substation locations and battery energy storage system (BESS) technology that have been considered. Initially, there was a much larger area that was considered for these proposed projects, but a large portion of the land was excluded in response to environmental sensitivity information that came to light through the early assessment and consideration in this regard, and the layout was further refined due to the potential risk and sensitivities of those areas.</p>

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		<p>EWT is not opposed to renewable energy and wind energy specifically, but it is important to find the most suitable opportunity for development and to minimise impacts to biodiversity and avifauna. EWT understands that there are certain constraints that force development in certain areas. Are there any other solutions that could be considered from a technical perspective?</p> <p>The result is that we need to start looking at it from a suite of different perspectives to ensure that we can try and minimize these impacts as best as we can. Otherwise, we are heading towards a situation where if these projects are approved then it's going to create those residual impacts that result in compensation measures or biodiversity offsets. We want to try and avoid that as best as we can as that is the last resort.</p>	<p>SPECIALIST: In terms of these proposed projects, the approach was that the specialists informed the developer where they cannot build and the developer narrowed down the developable area based on the specialists' recommendations so a lot of the risks to birds, in particular, have been avoided by this approach.</p> <p>APPLICANT: It is important to note that due to grid capacity issues, not all developments that received EA will be constructed; therefore, it is difficult to quantify the cumulative impacts as not all of those projects identified via cumulative impact assessment would be necessarily built. We as the Developer, are always open to different ways of mitigating and reducing the risk as much as possible. We also want to make sure that we are doing things in a transparent manner where parties who are engaged are on-board with the approach.</p>
8.	BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	Can you talk a little bit about the conservation planning context of the area? Are we looking at Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) and what other biodiversity issues are relevant to the site?	CSIR: Based on the specialist findings to date, from an overall biodiversity point of view, the majority of the impact significance ratings were found to be generally low post mitigation. A lot of intention has been placed into the proposed design and associated mapping of the project layouts to avoid all the 'no-go' areas and delineated buffers. All CBAs have also been avoided by the proposed development components.
9.	VulPro (Kate Webster)	Jon, how many Cape Vulture Food Management Programmes have you been involved with and how many of them were actually managed successfully?	SPECIALIST: There are two operational sites I am involved with that are currently implementing it and of these two sites, one has worked very effectively. Since implementing the programme, fatalities have been reduced almost

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			entirely. However, at the other site, this programme was not implemented and managed very effectively.
		Thanks. With regards to the OLSDOD, have you ever looked at the automated shutdown on demand option? As previously mentioned, there is an implementation problem. If we are relying on the human side of OLSDOD, what guarantee do we have that it will be managed properly?	SPECIALIST: I am familiar with the automated shutdown on demand option, but it has not been implemented at operational sites in the country yet. In terms of the technology-led approach, an immediate concern for me is the shutdown is only implemented when the birds enter a 300 m range, and this is not enough to give me more assurance than the human based programme. Humans can also get it wrong, but I am concerned about the technology option and calibrating it for our local species. In addition, this measure has been used in scenarios where you have migrating birds i.e., a vast number of birds flying in a distinct straight line, and not in a scenario such as this where birds are meandering through a site, foraging. Therefore, it might be difficult for this technology to be effective in this case. However, some operational sites are starting to implement the technology option and we will have more experience in this regard in a few years of its implementation. If the technology option is proven to work better than the human based option, then we can begin recommending this technology for future projects.
		I agree. Implementation of a programme is my biggest concern. I am not sure if all these mitigation measures are going to have any positive effect on avian species, particularly on this particular site/s.	SPECIALIST: I think there are challenges in terms of finding the correct human resource, but I also think if South Africa is going to expand renewables in the country, it is important to find a way of mitigating the risk to birds. So there has to be some sort of a bigger skills development program or career pathing for people so we can be more confident in

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			hiring good people to implement the mitigation measures effectively.
10.	BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	I think with mitigation measures such as the Cape Vulture Food Management Programme and OLSDOD, it is important that monitoring is in place and to get approval from the landowners to have people monitoring the implementation of these measures on site.	SPECIALIST: I agree. I think that with newer projects, these measures can be negotiated, and an agreement can be made with the landowners at the outset so that they are aware and approve of it.
11.	VulPro (Kate Webster)	How do you plan to deter Cape Vultures from roosting on existing power lines? What is the durability of the technology and who would be responsible for implementing these measures?	SPECIALIST: The avifaunal report recommends that Eskom bird guards be installed on pylons, and they must be installed to cover all the horizontal perching substrates on each of these pylons for a certain length of that power line, although it may be a challenge. There needs to be a partnership with Eskom to ensure these bird guards are installed. With regards to durability, it is recommended that monitoring should be done during operation to assess the durability of these devices and to have them replaced should they fail.
12.	BirdLife South Africa (Samantha Ralston-Paton)	In conclusion, although we have discussed mitigation and the ways we can improve in terms of implementation, BirdLife South Africa does not think it is a good idea to develop on this site. We are trying to minimise the impact as much as possible but given the information that was presented here, I don't think that this is the ideal place to put a wind farm.	SPECIALIST: Thank you all for the input and the valuable points put forward. APPLICANT: it is very useful to get such valuable insights on issues around mitigation such as implementation challenges, and all suggestions and ideas in terms of a way forward are very much appreciated.
13.	VulPro (Kate Webster)	I would also like to say that from VulPro's side, we do not sanction the proposed development in this area because we feel it is a very sensitive site, particularly for the Cape Vultures. I agree with SRP, despite all the mitigation in place, I cannot see that this development	CSIR: Thank you for your time and valuable insights, all your suggestions and inputs will be taken into consideration. Please be informed that you will be notified of the availability of the DEIRs for comment inclusive of all

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		is not going to have a huge impact on the Cape Vulture population in the Eastern Cape.	specialists' findings and recommendations. Note that the recording of the Focus Group Meeting, a copy of the presentation and the meeting notes from the discussion will be shared with all attendees via email following the meeting.

4.2. FOCUS GROUP MEETING HELD WITH LANDOWNERS/OCCUPIERS OF LAND AT THE MOLTENO COUNTRY CLUB ON 22 JUNE 2023

CSIR Note: The nature of the discussion that followed the presentation was very interactive and several questions were asked by various attendees as part of the collaborative discussion; therefore, these meeting notes do not specifically identify an attendee by name and surname.

NO	NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS/QUESTIONS RAISED	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	Attendee (I&AP)	What is the size of a turbine? Will it be the same size as the Dorper Wind Energy Facility (WEF) turbines?	<p>APPLICANT: At this stage of the process, we are not in the detailed design stage. We are seeking approval for turbines of up to 10 MW with a hub height of up to 180 meters. It could be anything up to those specifications or smaller, depending on the outcome of the design phase and wind speeds. At present, we cannot confirm if it will be the same as Dorper WEF or not.</p> <p>CSIR: Essentially, we are undertaking an impact assessment for the maximum development scenario. We are assessing the largest turbine size for which you can receive Environmental Authorisation (EA), however the final design will also depend on the technology available at the time of construction. The larger the generator, the less turbines are required to generate electricity. This could also decrease the footprint on the ground, which is a positive.</p>
2.	Attendee (I&AP)	Where is the footprint of the two substations?	<p>CSIR: For both Ingwe WEFs, two substation alternatives are being proposed. Substation Alternative 1 (SS1) is located towards the centre of each WEF and is the preferred substation location, whereas Substation Alternative 2 (SS2) is located alongside the R56 main road.</p>

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3.	Attendee (I&AP)	When will the construction period commence?	APPLICANT: It is important to discern between the various processes. LK presented only one of the permits that we require for the facility. Once we have all the permits, the project is ready to bid. Based on our business model, we sell the project to potential investors, who will enter them in the Renewable Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) bidding process or else privately. This makes it difficult to provide an exact date. The date of construction is also reliant on the market, as well as grid availability.
4.	Attendee (I&AP)	Will it take less than five years before construction commences?	APPLICANT: We optimistically plan for it to be as soon as possible, but we still must work within the space that the government and Eskom allow for. CSIR: It is also important to consider the EA's validity period. We request the maximum number of years e.g., 15 years, but the DFFE can reduce the validity of the EA to a period of only 10 years. The projects then ideally are aimed to be finalised, sold to investors, and developed during the EA's validity period.
5.	Attendee (I&AP)	How long would the WEF generate electricity?	APPLICANT: We usually typically state a minimum of 20 years.
6.	Attendee (I&AP)	What happens after 20 years?	APPLICANT: We have not had any projects exceed a lifespan of 20 years in South Africa, so there is no case study yet. The EIA Processes assesses the Decommissioning Phase, meaning that the turbines will either be dismantled, and the site is rehabilitated, or the turbines will be replaced with newer technology. Alternatively, the technology might have

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			<p>changed so much by then that you might need new permits. It is difficult to say now what will happen in 20 years.</p> <p>CSIR: Some projects refer to 20 to 25 years, however, our reports refer to “A minimum of 20 years.” In other words, depending on the advancement of technology, the WEF can operate for up to 30 years. The EA that the Applicant refers to is a permit required in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA). Other laws require other permits to be in place. For example, if the turbines could potentially impact on endangered plant species, a permit in terms of the NEM: Biodiversity Act needs to be applied for in order to transport or transplant the plant species. It is also important to apply for Water Use Licenses in terms of the National Water Act, as it is not always possible to transport water for construction to site, in which case water will be extracted from boreholes on the affected farm portions. The Construction Phase lasts roughly 18 to 24 months, followed by the Operational Phase that lasts a minimum of 20 years. The Operational Phase has lower water use requirements compared to the Construction Phase, as water is predominantly used for drinking and sanitation. The Developer is also required to conduct an obstacle evaluation assessment in terms of the Civil Aviation Authority’s (CAA) requirements to illustrate that the turbines will not impact aviation infrastructure or flight paths that might occur near the WEF. You will notice that the EIA Report includes a Site Sensitivity Verification for Civil Aviation and Defence, since we are required to prove that</p>

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			the WEF will not impact on any Civil Aviation or Defence installations. The Developer also has to apply for permission to transport abnormal loads, as well as permission from Port Authorities. The CSIR is only involved in the environmental aspects.
7.	Attendee (I&AP)	Will the CSIR apply for the Water Use Licenses if needed? Does the CSIR determine whether a license is required?	CSIR: Water Use Licenses (WUL) will be required and have been determined by the Geohydrology Assessments (for groundwater abstraction) as well as the Freshwater/Surface Water Ecological Assessments (for river and stream crossings). The geohydrologists specifically have a list of capacities of each borehole. The geohydrologists then have to determine whether there is enough groundwater available in the boreholes to facilitate the construction of the turbines, if water supply will be required from the project site.
8.	Attendee (I&AP)	Will water abstraction for construction not affect the boreholes?	CSIR: No, water abstraction will be done without overusing the groundwater to the point where it affects agricultural activities. Thank you for your time and participation in this Focus Group Meeting. The meeting notes and presentation will be circulated to all attendees via email following the meeting.

4.3. BATS FOCUS GROUP MEETING HELD WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN BAT ASSESSMENT ASSOCIATION AND THE ENDANGERED WILDLIFE TRUST VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 11 JULY 2023

NO	NAME OF ORGANISATION/I&AP	COMMENTS/QUESTIONS RAISED	RESPONSE FROM EAP/APPLICANT/SPECIALIST
1.	The South African Bat Assessment Association (SABAA) (Eleanor Kate Richardson)	The results for both the WEFs seem identical and inquired whether these projects were run as separate impact assessments?	SPECIALIST: The pre-construction monitoring study encompassed the two proposed wind farms.
		Did you use one at height metrological (met) mast for both wind farms?	SPECIALIST: That is correct, with two additional monitoring locations.
		Does that fit in with our pre-construction monitoring as one of the wind farms does not have an at height met mast?	SPECIALIST: The larger study area was assessed as a whole and the two wind farms fall within that study area; therefore, the same pre-construction monitoring study was used to inform the impact assessments of both wind farms. In addition, note that the site boundaries of the two WEFs are larger than the Area of Influence (AOI), which is less than 10 000 ha combined.
		Where is the location of the at height met mast?	<i>CSIR indicated the larger study area that was assessed as part of the initial screening study on the locality map and also indicated the approximate location of the at height met mast on the locality map.</i> CSIR: When the preliminary monitoring started, an initial screening study of a much larger study area was undertaken. Note that the maps from the Bat Impact Assessment reports are included later on in the presentation and the met mast is indicated on those maps.

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		The table of key bat species identified in the Ingwe WEF study area in the presentation differs from that of the bat report in that the bat species listed as 'not recorded on site' in the presentation were listed as 'recorded on site' in the bat report. The table in the presentation is accurate and the table in the bat report should be updated.	SPECIALIST: Noted. The wording in the table of key bat species identified in the Ingwe WEF study area will be updated in the bat report.
		In addition, the chances of <i>Eidolon helvum</i> (Straw-Coloured Fruit Bat) occurring on this site is likely zero. The chances of <i>Epomorphorus wahlbergi</i> (Wahlberg's Epauletted Fruit Bat) occurring on site is extremely high; however, this species was not included in the table.	SPECIALIST: We identified possible bat species that could occur onsite by using some of the datasets available and checking the recordings within 100 km or 200 km of the site, but I understand, the Epauletted Fruit Bat is likely to occur in the area and the table will be updated in the bat report to include this bat species.
		<i>Rousettus aegyptiacus</i> (Egyptian Rousette) is likely to occur, the species that should probably be excluded from the table is the <i>Eidolon helvum</i> (Straw-Coloured Fruit Bat) as they do not really occur in that area. <i>Rousettus aegyptiacus</i> (Egyptian Rousette) can travel many kilometers at night looking for food, so they still could occur in that area. Note that there is no way to record for fruit bats as they do not come up on the ordinary Song Meter SM4 or Song Meter SM2 that are used.	
2.	The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) (Lourens Leeuwner)	What is the total height of the turbine from base to tip?	APPLICANT: We have assessed a maximum development scenario with each turbine comprising a hub height of up to 180 m and a rotor diameter of up to 190 m.
		The blade length will then be 95 m, and if the hub height is 180 m, that means the bottom of the rotor tip will be approximately 90 m from the ground, which is quite high.	APPLICANT: In terms of the assessment approach, we have covered a maximum development scenario. We took a conservative approach to assessment in terms of following the precautionary principle; therefore, the hub height, rotor diameter and blade length will be up to 180 m, up to 190 m and up to 95 m, respectively, or less.

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			SPECIALIST: With regards to our bat sensitivities, we have accommodated the worst-case scenario of where the lower blade tip almost touches the ground. As per the bat report, it is advisable to select a combination of hub height and turbine blade length to maximize the lower blade tip height as turbines with a lower ground clearance run the risk of reaching the fatality thresholds sooner.
3.	The South African Bat Assessment Association (SABAA) (Eleanor Kate Richardson)	I suggest adding the mitigation measure that any corpses found must be sent to a museum or equivalent for proper identification. Reason being, <i>Cistugo</i> bats can occur in the area, and we are trying to classify this species back to being Near Threatened. No one has seen one in years, and they are still classifying them as Least Concern and I cannot see how that is. Another reason is we are splitting <i>Tadarida species</i> , and we need to know what species you have got in that area.	SPECIALIST: I think that is a good point and we will add that measure into the bat report to ensure that any corpses found onsite are sent to a museum for identification.
4.	The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) (Lourens Leeuwner)	What is the generation cut-in speed specified by the Developer?	SPECIALIST: I am unsure of the exact turbine that the Developer will use for these projects. APPLICANT: We cannot confirm the specific turbine model to be used at the moment as it will depend on the design and will only be confirmed during the detailed engineering design phase prior to construction, post Environmental Authorisation (EA) (should such an authorisation be granted).
		The generation cut-in speed being referred to here, is the minimum wind speed that the turbine can produce electricity at. Will you consider increasing the generation cut-in speed so that the turbines are in fact feathered when the bats are not flying around? Note that bats do not fly in high wind conditions; therefore, this could prevent a lot of unnecessary bat fatalities. If we can prevent the turbines	SPECIALIST: The starting point is to have it below the generation cut-in speed and as the fatality thresholds are assessed on a quarterly basis during operational monitoring, if it is found that the thresholds are reached then the generation cut-in speed can be increased.

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		from spinning during periods when bat activities are high and through sacrificing minimal operational losses, we can actually avoid 80% of all bat fatalities due to WEFs.	
5.	The South African Bat Assessment Association (SABAA) (Eleanor Kate Richardson)	The mitigation measure relating to the surveying for dead bats should be from the time the blades start turning and not from the COD.	<p>SPECIALIST: I agree. The COD can be later than when the blades actually start turning. I will make a note to amend that mitigation measure in the bat reports.</p> <p>SPECIALIST: I also agree, and I assume that the bird specialists on these projects might have had a similar recommendation in terms of when the blades start turning. I want to also extend apologies from CB for not being able to attend this meeting.</p> <p>CSIR: I would also like to confirm that the Avifaunal Specialist on these Ingwe WEF projects also recommended a similar mitigation measure around the generation cut-in speed.</p>
6.	The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) (Lourens Leeuwner)	It is very difficult to monitor bats specifically, we have very little information about them. However, taking the precautionary principle into consideration, we could build in a clause or implement programme before construction to minimise bat impacts. After a year or two of monitoring, Bat Specialists can determine in which seasons and what weather conditions, temperatures and wind speeds are conducive to high bat activity for this area and can thus determine when the chances are of killing a lot of bats. The Developer could consult the Bat Specialists in this regard and could build in a clause stating that only in specific seasons and during periods of high bat activity, the generation cut-in speed will be	<p>SPECIALIST: I think that is a very good point and I also agree that we need to consider the effects of El Niño and as a result we may need to increase the sampling efforts during operational acoustic monitoring. I also agree with LL in that we need to show what will happen if the thresholds are reached. The Bat Specialists should inform the Developer when the bats will be most active in the area and if unacceptable levels of bat fatalities are reached then the generation cut-in speed should be raised.</p>

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		increased to minimise bat fatalities. I understand that we cannot put met masts everywhere and so we sample small areas and then extrapolate. As a result, we tend to make big decisions based on very little data about these animals that are quite important. I also understand that there are power purchase agreements and there are a lot of operational risks in terms of increasing the generation cut-in speed as one may lose out on potential electricity production. However, we have enough information that clearly shows that we can protect these bats by intervening and building in a clause such as increasing the generation cut-in speed at specific times, if possible, could help minimise bat impacts due to WEFs.	
7.	The South African Bat Assessment Association (SABAA) (Eleanor Kate Richardson)	Thanks, Lourens, I agree with you. In addition, we also know that some of our bat species on the east coast are very dependent on the El Niño fluctuations and so the bats are migrating depending on El Niño. Therefore, instead of monitoring bat activity levels every 5, 10, and 15 years, I think we might need to look at what El Niño is doing to the rainfall.	
8.	The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) (Lourens Leeuwner)	This is a possible mitigation measure, depending on the bat species and as EKR pointed out, depending on where you are in the country. Essentially it is very difficult to mitigate for bats, it is difficult to quantify how many bats will be killed if we just look at what work has been done already which does involve operational minimization under certain conditions. I understand this is outside of the process and the guidelines, but I am just making a statement that as an industry, how will we move forward with this. There is no doubt that we need wind turbines, but we know so little about these bats and it is very difficult to monitor their activities so if there is an opportunity to add extra mitigation measures, as conservationists we want to see that.	<p>SPECIALIST: Yes, correct, we will have to stay on track with operational results, it is difficult to get all the results from the different Developers, but it is good to look into in order to adaptively manage these projects in future.</p> <p>APPLICANT: With regards to the points made by Lourens, we appreciate the sensitivities of the site, and we are looking to ensure that the provision of renewable energy is in line with conservation efforts; we are not trying to disregard conservation goals. With respect to the generation cut-in speed, it is difficult to set a specific one now as we do not have the details of the turbines to be used. However, this is</p>

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			not the only thing that is being applied in terms of mitigation. It started with finding the site and narrowing it down in response to the sensitivities that have been found there so it is a holistic approach in terms of mitigation and following the mitigation hierarchy.
9.	The South African Bat Assessment Association (SABAA) (Eleanor Kate Richardson)	Yes, I agree. In addition, if these wind farms are going to last 20-25 years, just a note that in 20 years things might be a bit different.	
10.	The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) (Lourens Leeuwner)	I understand. Should there be bat fatalities that might not have been predicted in any of these studies, will the operator be willing to look at operational minimization at times when bat activities are extremely high?	APPLICANT: That is what Michael was alluding to earlier, when the thresholds are met, curtailment is considered, and these measures are included in the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) and the same applies for avifauna.
11.	The South African Bat Assessment Association (SABAA) (Eleanor Kate Richardson)	If possible, can the operational fatalities of these Ingwe WEF projects be put in the public domain so that SABAA can have access to it as it is often difficult to acquire such data from other wind farms.	SPECIALIST: I agree. I think that SABAA should be able to have access to such data on bats. CSIR: I think that if this bird and bat fatality data is more readily available, it will greatly contribute to the development of WEFs going forward in terms of selecting more suitable areas and improving on the mitigation measures currently being implemented. If such data is more readily available, we can understand what the consequences are in specific areas and the impacts on the specific bird or bat species present. Are there any further questions or comments?
12.	The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) (Lourens Leeuwner)	I think we have come a long way in terms of how we assess these developments and I think that in South Africa, from the start we have been doing it right and I just want to see it continue. The cumulative effect of these WEFs is so difficult to understand and it is difficult to speak on behalf of the whole industry, but I think that we keep learning from what we see and what is happening, and the important thing is to adapt how we manage the WEF. If we see that things are	CSIR: Thank you all for your time and valuable insights, all of your suggestions and inputs will be taken into consideration and, where appropriate, will be incorporated into Final EIA Reports that will be submitted to the DFFE for decision-making. The SABAA and EWT's recommendations will be incorporated into the EMPrs to ensure we reduce the impacts of these proposed WEFs on bats as much as

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		<p>problematic, and we are willing to take on new mitigation measures at any cost then I think it will be fine. The EWT will not comment on these WEFs unless there is a problem, and if we have new information to bring forward to illustrate sensitivities or potential impacts to species. However, for these projects it looks like this has been done thoroughly.</p>	<p>possible. You are also reminded that the DEIRs inclusive of all specialists' findings and recommendations are available for comment and any further comments or inputs from SABAA and EWT are welcomed. Please note that the recording of the Focus Group Meeting, along with a copy of the presentation and the meeting notes from the discussion will be circulated to all attendees via email following the meeting.</p> <p>CSIR Note: The CSIR EIA Project Team attempted to obtain written confirmation from the SABAA stating that the inputs and comments provided by the SABAA as discussed during the Bats Focus Group Meeting serve as official comments from the SABAA on these two proposed Ingwe WEFs. However, the CSIR EIA Project Team has not yet received a response from the SABAA in this regard at the time of submitting the FEIR to the DFFE for decision-making. Refer to Appendix F.3 for proof of such correspondence sent to the SABAA.</p>